

312

# SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for  
TEACHERS  
AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. 25.]

JANUARY, 1891.

[No. 1.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

Aceldama.....	i
New Series of Banner.....	ii
To Sunday-School Superintendents, Officers and Teachers.....	iv
Get the Best!.....	v
Holiday Books.....	v
Opening and Closing Services.....	v
International Bible Lessons.....	2

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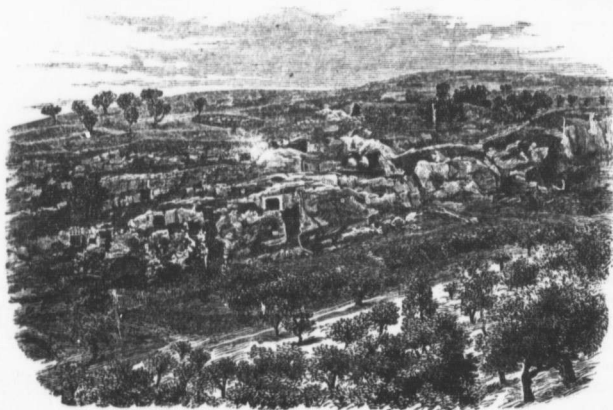
# SUNDAY SCHOOL BARRER

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YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. XXV.]

JANUARY, 1891.

[No. 1.]



ACELDAMA.

## Aceldama.

BY THE REV. GEO. J. BOND, B.A.

As the traveller pursues the winding pathway past the tombs, in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, he comes ere long to a striking point. Before him the valley opens out, and just at its opening, half-built of squalid huts, half-burrowed out of ancient tombs, is the filthy Arab village of Silwam—the ancient Siloam—where vile dogs and even viler human beings render progress in that direction the reverse of pleasant. Away in front the view terminates in the rocky hills, on whose nearer slopes lies the traditional Aceldama—a gruesome region, where nature's laughter seems forever to have ceased. Indeed, all about in this Vale of Hin-

nom is material enough for gloomy thought, and it is little wonder that its very name should have become associated, even apart from its ancient fiery and unhallowed traditions, with the hopeless doom of the eternally lost. The valley curves below one on the left around the southern slope of Olivet, toward the east, and, on the right, around Ophel, toward the west. In it are the Pools of Gihon, the Upper Pool, some seven hundred yards from the Jaffa Gate, and the Lower Pool, less than a hundred yards farther east. As one stands facing the valley, Olivet rises in terraces on the left hand, while, on the right, rise the abrupt slopes of Zion, crowned with the serrated walls of the Holy City, which here present a particularly fine appearance, and reveal in their lower courses some of the massive stones used by Hiram's cunning workmen in the days of Solomon.

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## Sunday School Banner.

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

TORONTO, JANUARY, 1891

### New Series of Banner.

We are sure that our readers will all be greatly pleased with the enlarged and improved series of the SUNDAY-SCHOOL BANNER. The clear, distinct, open-faced page and the bold headings are a marked contrast to the rather crowded appearance of the page heretofore. This change will make the BANNER much more easy to study, especially to those whose eyes are not so good as they once were. We promised an increase from 32 to 36 pages, and we have been even better than our word, and have an increase of from 32 to 44 pages. This, of course, means considerable additional expense in the preparation of the BANNER, nevertheless, no additional charge is made. No effort shall be spared to make it in every way deserving of the patronage of our friends, all of whom we wish, in its best and highest sense, a very happy, useful and prosperous New Year.

HONEST and courageous people have very little to say about either courage or honesty. The sun has no need to boast of his brightness, nor the moon of her effulgence.

## To Sunday-School Superintendents, Officers and Teachers.

DEAR BRETHREN,—We beg earnestly to solicit your co-operation in introducing our new paper, "Onward," into the senior classes of our schools, especially in our larger schools in towns and cities. Already many cheering testimonies have been received of its adaptation to such classes, and of its tendency to keep them in touch with the religious life of the Church, and to retain them in the Sunday-school. This it will do in many ways. An interesting serial story, for instance, which will appear from week to week, will tend to insure regularity of attendance; and the suggestions for intellectual and religious activity will help to develop in the young the spirit of Christian earnestness in connection with Mission Bands and religious work that cannot fail to train up a body of energetic workers in the Church.

### THE SUPERIOR ADVANTAGES OF OUR GRADED SUNDAY-SCHOOL SYSTEM.

Some schools we find have not yet apprehended the superior advantages offered by the new graded arrangement of our Sunday-School periodicals. They seem to think that "Onward," as a weekly, is dearer than *Home and School* and *Pleasant Hours* taken together, weekly; whereas, though it contains about one-fifth more matter, it is just the same price per year as those two taken together in quantities less than twenty. The illustrations also will be more numerous and of a higher class. In combination with *Pleasant Hours* it will give a much greater variety and amount of reading than could be procured for the same money heretofore. Thus \$22.00 would have purchased fifty copies of *Pleasant Hours* and *Home and School*, giving fifty papers every Sunday for a year, while \$21.86 will pay for twenty-five copies of "Onward" every week and thirty-nine of *Pleasant Hours*; giving sixty-four papers of two sorts every week for a less price than fifty papers of one sort a week cost previously.

Let the school appropriate for papers just the same amount of money as last year, and if they will order in proportion of twenty "Onwards" to thirty "Pleasant Hours" they will receive considerably more for their money—a larger number and a greater variety of papers than heretofore.

See full statement and demonstration of this fact on page eight of "Onward," first number.

Subscriptions will be received at the rate of 50 cents each a year, in quantities over five; for six months, 25 cents, or for three months, 12½ cents each.



If it still be thought, in some cases, that the school cannot afford to put a copy of "Onward" in the hands of each family represented in the senior classes, it may, perhaps, be advantageous to pay half such cost, or 25 cents a year, asking the senior scholars to pay the other half.

We hope you will give one of these methods a trial, as we are confident that once introduced, the advantages of the paper will secure its permanent retention. "Onward" will be an improved *Home and School*, issued weekly. It will have copious lesson notes suitable for senior scholars.

This graded system is the result of much thought and careful study of the needs of our schools and of the best methods to supply them.

#### "ONWARD" BETTER AND CHEAPER THAN S. S. LIBRARIES.

In no way can such a large amount of high class reading-matter—fresh, crisp, intensely interesting, of vital importance, and mentally and spiritually stimulating—be supplied for so small an amount of money. The eight pages of "Onward" each week will be equivalent in one year to over 1,660 octavo pages; or, they will equal nearly seven volumes of 250 pages each, which would cost, if bound, about 75 cents each, or \$5.25 in all. This amount of reading will be furnished at the low price of 50 cents. It will thus be seen that subscriptions to "Onward" are by far a cheaper way of supplying our schools with good reading than purchasing libraries.

Moreover, every line which enters "Onward" is carefully guarded, and is designed to be mentally, morally and spiritually helpful. Amid the many excellent and admirable books found in our S. S. libraries it is a matter of notoriety that there are often found a considerable proportion whose moral teaching and tendency do great disservice to religion. In many cases they are utterly frivolous, and in others are absolutely pernicious. The substitution of carefully pondered reading, which shall combine both interest and instruction, and, above all, religious truth, will help to solve the problem which many of the most thoughtful and earnest of our superintendents and teachers have felt to be a difficult one to grapple with.

#### NO CHANGE IN CHARACTER OF "PLEASANT HOURS."

*Pleasant Hours* will retain the same popular features which have made it such a favorite, and carried its circulation up to over 60,000. It will now come every week, thus keeping its attractive serial fresh in mind. It does not become a lower class paper. The scholars will like it better than ever.

If superintendents prefer, we will be happy to send every fortnight two numbers of *Pleasant*

*Hours* for distribution together, and on alternate weeks a number of "Onward." This will be very little different from the issue of *Pleasant Hours* and *Home and School* as heretofore, at a very slightly increased cost. viz.: 24 cents for *Pleasant Hours*, in quantities over twenty, and 25 cents for "Onward," in quantities over five. We recommend, however the weekly edition of both.

#### HOW "ONWARD" IS RECEIVED.

Already numerous testimonials as to the high appreciation of "Onward" have been received.

The REV. DR. PARKER, of Barrie, writes:—"I have received the first number of 'Onward,' your bright and spicy claimant for patronage and perusal by the cherished young people of our homes and Sunday-schools. Such a timely visitant, conveying matter of such variety and excellence, with the promise of 'much original correspondence,' and the prospect of the kind of original articles you can produce or procure, cannot long wait for a warm welcome and a hearty appreciation by the large and promising constituency to which it appeals."

The REV. PROF. SHAW, LL.D., of Montreal, writes:—" 'Onward' comes to us a bright, joyous representative of the better manhood yet to be. It speaks not only for the Epworth League, but for the whole movement of which this is but a part, leading to the best, most progressive, cheerful, intelligent type of Christian life the world has known."

The REV. D. C. McDOWELL, of Sunderland, writes:—"I have examined the Sunday-school periodicals, and am delighted with their fullness and adaptability to meet the wants of our schools. Certainly there will be no necessity to look for Sunday-school literature beyond our own publications. We can recommend them with confidence as pure and scriptural in their teaching, and eminently calculated to furnish the young mind with suitable instruction. A large patronage must reward your labor. I am favorably impressed with the appropriateness of the title of your last publication; it seems to be the watchword and crown of your progress—"Onward."

The REV. DR. CORNISH, of Hespeler, writes:—" 'Onward,' it is just the thing needed for our young people, and ought to have a large circulation. Our Church now undoubtedly stands in the first place in regard to its periodicals. In number, quality and price, no other branch of the Christian Church can compare with them."

The REV. E. ROBSON, of New Westminster, writes:—"I am pleased with the new venture, 'Onward,' and hope it may be a great help in keeping touch with our young men and women."

The *Ottawa Citizen* says:—"The Methodist Book and Publishing House is to be congratulated on providing for the young people of the rising generation so excellent a weekly publication as 'Onward,' the first number of which

has just made its appearance. It is a cleanly printed, well got up, eight page illustrated paper, and is a marvel of cheapness at sixty cents a year; in clubs of five or over, only fifty cents."

The *Guelf Herald* says:—"The Methodist Book and Publishing House makes another stride forward in its popular periodicals. A new paper for the young people, with the progressive name 'Onward,' an eight-page, well-illustrated weekly, is issued at the low price of sixty cents a year."

The best endorsement, however, is that of large orders. Grace Church, Winnipeg, sends the first order for 160 copies of 'Onward,' in addition to a full supply of *Pleasant Hours* and the other papers.

Richmond Hill follows with an order for 100 copies of 'Onward.' If schools of similar size offer in like proportion 'Onward' will be still more successful than any of our other Sunday-school periodicals.

A few schools have objected to the change; but so did also a number of schools when the successive changes were made which have made our Sunday-school periodicals so successful.

We again invite, dear brethren, your earnest and cordial co-operation in endeavoring to furnish for our young people everywhere the mental and moral aliment whereby they may grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Give "Onward," and the new series of *Pleasant Hours* a three-months' trial, and we are confident you will be pleased with the result.

The SUNDAY-SCHOOL BANNER will not only be much enlarged in size, but will be printed in clear, bold, leaded type, a great improvement on the previous method.

I remain, dear brethren,

Yours very faithfully and fraternally,

W. H. WITHEROW,  
Editor.

### Get the Best!

*Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*. Quarto, pp. 2118. G. & C. Merriam, Springfield, Mass. Toronto: William Briggs, and Methodist Book Rooms in Montreal and Halifax. Price, \$12.50; indexed, \$13.50.

We have used Webster's Unabridged for 25 years and have always found it an exceedingly reliable and satisfactory dictionary. Successive revisions have kept it abreast of the advances in philological science, but this new book is in advance, we think, of every other. It is not a mere revision; it is a new book from cover to cover; printed from new plates, cast from new type, the whole reset, enlarged and improved, bringing it in every department up to date. It has not been a hurried revision; it has been in progress for over ten years and has engaged

the services of more than 100 paid editorial co-laborers. Before the first copy was printed there was expended upon this new book a sum exceeding \$300,000.

The page is considerably larger than in the old Unabridged and is very clearly printed. The black-faced type make the catch words, moreover, very distinct. A feature of great importance is the enumeration of synonyms with their careful discrimination in connection with all important words. The derivation of words and their pronunciation are carefully indicated, and their proper use is illustrated by citations from a very wide range of authors.

Pictorial illustration is more largely used than ever by means of small, clear engravings in the text and by classified list at the end of the volume, covering 82 pages. In the numerous departments of science the definitions and illustrations are especially helpful, so that the book really becomes almost a cyclopaedia. The different combinations of the word "photo," for instance, as photograph, etc., fill completely two columns, with 75 titles. The combinations of "phon" such as phonograph, cover 40 titles, and those of "phos" as in phosphorus, 32 titles. These are but specimens of the very careful treatment of the recent applications of science. Eight colored plates are prefixed giving the official flags, seals, arms, etc., of the nations of the world; also a very full and succinct history of the English language by Prof. James Hadley, LL.D., of Yale College; also guides to pronunciation, orthography, etc.

A series of valuable appendices are added, giving names of noted persons and places in fiction and familiar pseudonyms, covering 31 pages; a pronouncing gazetteer, a geographical dictionary of the world, containing over 21,000 titles, filling 95 pages; a vocabulary of Greek and Latin proper names covering 19 pages; quotations from classical and modern authors 12 pages, and a biographical dictionary containing 10,000 names. So complete is this latter that even the name of so humble an individual as the present writer is included.

The whole book is a magnificent specimen of book-making and book-binding—strong, firm and flexible, with a patent leather index in the margin. The price of this book in best style is \$12.50, with leather index, \$13.50.

The definitions in important departments: as architecture, botany, chemistry, geology, law, mechanics, medicine, music, physiology, etc., have been revised by experts in these different departments.

ONE Sunday a boy who had always been noted for his respectful demeanor observed a rummy old citizen yawning on a street-corner, and said to him, "Better not open your mouth too wide." "Why?" was the surprised query. "There's a law against opening a saloon on Sunday."

## Holiday Books.

THE extensive publishing house of Estes & Lauriat, Boston, issue a fine series of books, not only for the holidays, but books suitable for the whole year around. One of the most interesting of these to Canadian readers is Mr. Hezekiah Butterworth's "*Zigzag Journeys in the Great Northwest, or a Trip to the American Switzerland.*" This is the twelfth volume of these zigzag journeys, books which have reached the enormous sale of 300,000 copies. The present volume is the result of a tour through Canada from end to end, and especially over the Canadian Pacific Railway and through the great Northwest. It describes, in a free conversational manner, the vast extent and almost exhaustless resources of our country. It is admirably illustrated with 120 engravings. No Canadian boy or girl can read this account of his native land without a glow of patriotic pride. Many quaint Indian legends and anecdotes and stories are given.

*Through Thick and Thin; or, School Days at St. Egbert.* Edited by LAURENCE H. FRANCIS. Estes & Lauriat. Boston. Pp. 224. Fully illustrated.

This is an account of public school life in England. It gives a sketch of the mischievous pranks and escapades of a lot of lively boys at boarding school. Some very humorous pictures of the pillow fights and cricketing exploits of the boys are given. It will be enjoyed by our boy readers.

*Feathers, Furs and Fins; or, Stories of Animal Life for Children.* Estes & Lauriat. Boston. Pp. 279.

This is a very bright volume, full of short sketches on subjects of natural history, in all countries of the world. The illustrations, to the number of 280, are particularly attractive, and are in themselves most interesting and instructive. Some of the stories are really charming in their point and go; with the good morals they so often draw and the useful information so profusely given. The cover itself will fairly fascinate the children and the book is well calculated to make us all wish we were young again. We much prefer works like these, which combine instruction with entertainment, to those of narrative interest only.

*Poky Clark.* A Story of Virginia. By N. D. BAGNELL. New York: Hunt & Eaton. Toronto: William Briggs. Pp. 232.

The most objectional feature about this book is its hideous name. It is a rather cleverly written story of life in the old Dominion. The negro dialects are very well rendered, and some of the colored characters are very amusing.

(Continued on page 40)

## Opening and Closing Services.

### FIRST QUARTER.

#### OPENING SERVICE.

##### I. Responsive Sentences.

*Supt.* I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord.

*School.* Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; he shall prosper that love thee.

*Supt.* Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.

*School.* For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.

*Supt.* Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good.

##### II. Singing.

##### III. Prayer.

##### IV. Reading Scripture lesson.

#### LESSON SERVICE.

##### I. Class Study of the Lesson.

##### II. Singing Lesson Hymn.

III. Recitation of Title, Golden Text, Outline, and Doctrinal Suggestion by the school in concert.

IV. Review and Application of the Lesson, by Pastor or Superintendent.

##### V. The Supplemental Lesson.

VI. Announcements (especially of the Church service, and week-evening prayer-meeting).

#### CLOSING SERVICE.

##### I. Singing.

##### II. Responsive Sentences.

*Supt.* The Lord bless thee, and keep thee.

*School.* The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee.

*Supt.* The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

##### III. Dismissal.

#### APOSTLES' CREED.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

## INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FIRST QUARTER: STUDIES CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

B. C. 975.]

LESSON I. THE KINGDOM DIVIDED.

[Jan. 4.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Prov. 16. 18.

## Authorized Version.

1 Kings 12. 1-17. [Commit to memory verses 12-14.]

1 And Re'ho-bo'am went to Shechem: for all Is'ra-el were come to Shechem to make him king.

2 And it came to pass, when Jer'o-bo'am the son of Ne'bat, who was yet in E'gypt, heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence of king Sol'o-mon, and Jer'o-bo'am dwelt in E'gypt.)

3 That they sent and called him. And Jer'o-bo'am and all the congregation of Is'ra-el came, and spake unto Re'ho-bo'am, saying,

4 Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.

5 And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.

6 And king Re'ho-bo'am consulted with the old men, that stood before Sol'o-mon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people?

7 And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants forever.

8 But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him:

9 And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?

10 And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.

11 And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

12 So Jer'o-bo'am and all the people came to Re'ho-bo'am the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day.

13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him;

14 And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

15 Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the

## Revised Version.

1 And Re'ho-bo'am went to Shechem: for all 2 Is'ra-el were come to Shechem to make him king. And it came to pass, when Jer'o-bo'am the son of Ne'bat heard of it, (for he was yet in E'gypt, whither he had fled from the presence of king Sol'o-mon, and Jer'o-bo'am dwelt in E'gypt, 3 and they sent and called him,) that Jer'o-bo'am and all the congregation of Is'ra-el came, and 4 spake unto Re'ho-bo'am, saying, Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will 5 serve thee. And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the 6 people departed. And king Re'ho-bo'am took counsel with the old men, that had stood before Sol'o-mon his father while he yet lived, saying, What counsel give ye me to return answer to 7 this people? And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will 8 be thy servants forever. But he forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him, and took counsel with the young men that were grown up with him, that stood before him. 9 And he said unto them, What counsel give ye, that we may return answer to this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke that 10 thy father did put upon us lighter? And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou say unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou speak unto them, My little finger is thicker than my father's loins. 11 And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. So Jer'o-bo'am and all the people came to Re'ho-bo'am the third day, as the king bade, saying, Come to me again the 13 third day. And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the counsel of the old men 14 which they had given him; and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, 15 but I will chastise you with scorpions. So the king hearkened not unto the people; for it was a thing brought about of the Lord, that he

people; for the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by A-hijah the Shi'lo-nite unto Jer'o-bo'am the son of Ne'bat.

16 So when all Is'ra-el saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in Da'vid? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Is'ra-el; now see to thine own house, Da'vid. So Is'ra-el departed unto their tents.

17 But as for the children of Is'ra-el which dwelt in the cities of Ju'dah, Re'ho-bo'am reigned over them.

might establish his word, which the Lord spake by the hand of A-hijah the Shi'lo-nite to Jer'o-bo'am the son of Ne'bat. And when all Is'ra-el saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel; now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed 17 unto their tents. But as for the children of Is'ra-el which dwelt in the cities of Ju'dah, Re'ho-bo'am reigned over them.

**TIME.**—B. C. 975. **PLACE.**—Shechem, in central Palestine. **RULERS.**—Rehoboam, son of Solomon, King, by hereditary claim, of all Israel, King of Judah (975-957 B. C.); Shishak, or Resonchis, King of Egypt; Rezon, King of Syria, at Damascus. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The fulfillment of prophecy.

#### HOME READINGS.

- M.* The kingdom divided. 1 Kings 12. 1-11.  
*Tu.* The kingdom divided. 1 Kings 12. 12-17.  
*W.* Consideration for others. Rom. 12. 3-16.  
*Th.* A New-year's song. Isa. 12.  
*F.* Evil counsel. Prov. 15. 1-9.  
*S.* Pride humbled. Isa. 2. 10-17.  
*S.* The blessed nation. Psa. 33. 12-22.

#### LESSON HYMN.

- No. 113, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 Just as I am, without one plea.  
 No. 220, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 Try us, O God, and search the ground.  
 No. 219, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 More love to thee, O Christ.

#### DOMINION HYMNAL.

- Hymns, Nos. 122, 222, 124.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. **The Old Men's Counsel**, v. 1-7.  
 Why did Rehoboam go to Shechem?  
 Who was Jeroboam?  
 Why had he fled to Egypt?  
 What was the complaint of the representatives of the ten tribes?  
 Were those men sincere?  
 What characteristic was displayed in Rehoboam's answer?  
 Can you name any of the old men whom Rehoboam probably first consulted?  
 What is the true ideal of a governor?  
 What may we learn from the old men's advice?  
 Why is it wise to consult old people?

#### 2. **The Young Men's Counsel**, v. 8-11.

- What sort of counselors were preferred to the old men?  
 What characteristic does this show?  
 What sort of folly was manifested by these young men?  
 What was meant by scorpions?  
**3. The King's Decision**, v. 12-15.  
 How had the king received the delegates on their second visit?  
 Whose advice had been chosen?  
 How were the Lord's words fulfilled by this action of Rehoboam's?  
 Was Rehoboam perfectly free to do as chose?  
**4. The Consequence**, v. 16, 17.  
 What did the people say after hearing the king's decision?

- When had this cry been uttered before?  
 What is the meaning of the seventeenth verse?  
 In what was Jeroboam thus far a proper example for us?  
 In what three regards does Rehoboam's conduct stand as a warning?

#### Practical Teachings.

Where does this lesson teach—

1. That delay is dangerous?
2. That the tendency of power is to make men despotic?
3. That a soft answer turneth away wrath?
4. That when God is disregarded trouble comes?

#### Hints for Home Study.

1. Find out four remarkable facts in the history of Shechem up to date.
2. Find some equally remarkable facts in its subsequent history.
3. Read the history of Jeroboam up to this date.
4. Find out all you can about the instrument of torture known as a scorpion.
5. Ascertain some customs of Oriental monarchs in their choice of counselors.

#### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. **The Old Men's Counsel**, v. 1-7.  
 Of what great gathering does the lesson tell, and what was its purpose?

What fugitive in Egypt heard of this gathering?  
Why had Jeroboam fled to Egypt? (See chap.

11. 40.)

What request did Jeroboam make of the king?  
What was the king's answer?  
Of whom did the king seek advice?  
What was the old men's counsel?

**2. The Young Men's Counsel, v. 8-11.**

How did the king treat the old men's advice?  
Of whom did he then take counsel?  
What question did he ask the young men?  
How did they advise the king to answer?

**3. The King's Decision, v. 12-15.**

Who came to the king as he had requested?  
In what spirit did the king answer the people?  
What wise saying of his father did he then disregard? (Prov. 15. 1.)

Whose counsel did he reject?

What answer did he make?

Why did he not hearken to the people?

By whom had the Lord made a promise, and to whom?

What was that promise? (See chap. 11. 31.)

**4. The Consequence, v. 16, 17.**

What reply did the people make to the king?

Where did they then go?

Over whom did Rehoboam reign?

What warning have we against a haughty spirit?  
(GOLDEN TEXT.)

#### Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. To be careful of whom we take advice!
2. That kindness will win friends!
3. That harsh words stir up strife!

#### Home Work for Young Bereans.

Find what sort of home Rehoboam's grandfather chose for his counselors.

Find what Rehoboam's father had said about counselors.

#### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What great king built the beautiful temple?  
**Solomon.**

Who became king when Solomon died? **His son, Rehoboam.**

Where did the people of Israel come to crown him king? **To Shechem.**

What did they first ask him to do? **To lighten their burdens.**

Whom did Rehoboam consult about this? **Some wise old men.**

What did they advise him? **To be kind to the people.**

What did young men of the court advise him? **To make the burdens heavier.**

How did he show that he was a foolish king? **By taking their advice.**

How did he answer the people? **Roughly.**

How did he say he would treat them? **More harshly than his father had done.**

How did this make the people feel? **Very angry.**

What did ten of the tribes do? **Set up a new kingdom.**

Whom did they choose for their king? **Jeroboam.**

What name was given to the new kingdom? **Israel.**

What tribes were left to Rehoboam? **Judah and part of Benjamin.**

By what name was this kingdom called? **Judah.**

#### Words With Little People.

THE GREATEST THINGS IN THE WORLD IS LOVE.

Do you want to change enemies into friends? **Love them.** Do you want to comfort sorrowful people? **Love them.** Do you want to win souls to Christ? **Love them.** "Love suffereth long, and is kind."

#### Whisper Motto.

The greatest of these is LOVE.

#### General Statement.

Rehoboam's grandfather, David, at the age of twenty-nine, had been crowned King of Judah eighty-one years before the incident of this lesson, and recognized as King of all Israel seventy-three years before it. In the fortieth year of his reign David resigned his scepter to Solomon. Solomon reigned from 1016 B. C. to 975 B. C., and now Rehoboam inherits his dominions. But he is not permitted to take the crown unchallenged. The empire won by the sword of David was composed of different nations, never welded into unity, and all ripe for revolt, with able leaders at Shechem, Damascus, and Edom. The ten tribes, disaffected for many reasons, had chafed under the exacting rule of Solomon. They found a leader in Jeroboam the son of Nebat, a man of great ability, whose coming royalty had been a subject of prophecy. Rehoboam was compelled to come to Shechem, the very nest of treason, to redress their grievances before he could assume complete control of his inherited monarchy. The agitators presented their demands, and the king weakly asked for three days in which to consider them. The old statesmen whose wisdom had strengthened the throne of his father with one voice counseled politic gentleness and a promise of reform. Moderation now, they said, would enthrone the king forever in the hearts of his people. But Rehoboam turned from these wise counselors, and sought advice from the youths who had been his companions in the palace. Ignorant of the true condition of affairs, and inexperienced in statecraft, they bade him meet petition with arrogance, and crush rebellion with a cruel hand. This counsel was in



accord with his own feelings. He followed it promptly in word, but failed to act with vigor. The opportunity was lost. Solomon's empire was rent in fragments; a rival throne arose almost within sight of the "palace of cedars;" the subject monarchies revolted; and the opportunity for Israel to become the controlling power of the East forever passed away.

### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verse 1. Rehoboam.** Son of King Solomon and Naamah, an Ammonite princess. He was at this time probably forty or forty-one years of age, though some biblical scholars believe he was only twenty-one. **Shechem.** A very ancient town in central Palestine. It was so situated as to be a natural gathering place, and had once, for a few years, been the capital of a little monarchy founded by Abimelech. Rehoboam's journey from Jerusalem was doubtless made by easy stages and with lavish splendor. **For.** A little word that shows the power of the people. The king dare not remain away from this gathering. **All Israel.** The bulk of the northerly ten tribes. The assembly was doubtless a representative one. **To make him king.** But evidently he had already ascended the throne in Jerusalem. His coming to Shechem was therefore of itself a concession, however unintentional, to a tendency toward independence which the northerly tribes, and especially Ephraim, had always shown, and which was fraught with danger to the united kingdom. "The scepter" had been promised to Judah, but down to the time of David nearly all the men who had effectively wielded either sword or scepter had come from Ephraim and Manasseh, or from Benjamin—for example, Joshua, Gideon, Deborah, Abimelech, Jephthah, Samuel, and Saul. These tribes had maintained a separate monarchy during the first seven years and a half of David's rule over Judah, and the revolt of Sheba a few years later showed how ready they were for rebellion. With clashing interests and an inherited rivalry, they had felt the taxes and drafts of Solomon to be unreasonable exactions, and were disposed to assert their rights. Remember that almost every incident of this emergency had been foretold; the exactions of the king, the supremacy of Judah, the enthronement of Jeroboam. (1) *God's words all come true.*

**2. Jeroboam.** One of the most remarkable characters in Hebrew history. He was an Ephraimite, and popular with his tribe. His great ability had been early recognized by Solomon, who made him superintendent over the taxes and labors exacted from the tribe of Ephraim. Ahijah the prophet foretold his brilliant future. He seems to have been impatient in his ambitions, and probably conspired against Solomon, who sought his life and compelled him to flee into Egypt. **Heard of it.** Of the political changes which began with Solomon's death.

**3. They sent and called him.** He was an exceptionally able man, had been their ruler for years, and had, like themselves, a grievance against

Solomon. This call must have preceded Rehoboam's journey to Shechem.

**4. Our yoke.** "The symbol of servile work." —*Bahr.* See Deut. 28. 48; Lev. 26. 13; Jer. 28. 10, 11. Solomon's public buildings had been erected by laborers levied from the common people. The great structures of the ancient Orient were nearly all raised (as many of our modern battles are fought) by drafted men, and conscription is never popular. Solomon had done worse deeds than this, however. He had introduced idolatry. (2) *Carnal men are more careful for the body than for the soul.* (3) *Every temptation is plausible to the rebellious heart.*

**5. Depart.** (4) *Hesitancy in action shows weakness in character. The people departed.* The special commissioners who had presented their protest and petition to the king now withdrew, and for three days the nation was in suspense.

**6. Consulted with the old men.** Thus far Rehoboam acted wisely. Statesmen trained under David, with long and varied experience, were fitting counselors for an inexperienced king. Some of their names may be found, probably, in 1 Kings 4. 2-6. **How do ye advise.** Cabinets and congresses are always puzzled when "hard times" come; for "common people" naturally look to the government for relief. Solomon's luxury may have brought about a financial crisis.

**7. They spake.** They well understood the temper of the people. Had Rehoboam followed their advice the "evil day" might have been postponed. **Be a servant.** Not a weakling nor a merely nominal king, but one who sought the good-will of his subjects by first of all seeking their interests. (5) *The true master is the one who serves, and the apparent follower is sometimes the shrewdest leader. They will be thy servants.* A few kind words might have outdone all Jeroboam's plottings. With Israel united all of David's conquests might have been retained, the rising power of Assyria have been held in check, the house of David made dominant over all western Asia, and a pure religion have taken the place of the barbarous idolatry of Tyre and Babylon. (6) *Fidelity to God and gentleness to men give power.*

**8, 9. He forsook the counsel.** His kingly humor was bent on despotism. (7) *Weak people are apt to be overbearing. Consulted with the young men.* They had probably been brought up in the seclusion of the palace harem, and were without sympathy for the hard-pressed people. Like the nobles of France under Louis XV., they



said, "After us, the deluge!" **What counsel?** (8) *People are apt to ask for the advice which suits their own inclinations.*

**10. The young men.** The whole realm could not have furnished more foolish counselors than these; but their counsel found favor with the king. **Thy father made our yoke heavy.** The temple, royal palaces, fortifications, aqueducts, and public roads had been built by Solomon with lavish expenditure. Doubtless his treasury was drained, and not improbably there was much incidental oppression. **Make thou it lighter.** By a less expensive government, and a return to the "constitution" of Samuel, which recognized the privileges of the people as well as the prerogatives of the king. **My little finger,** etc. Probably a current proverb.

**11. I will add to your yoke.** These young aristocrats regarded the people as slaves to be held, not as citizens to be governed. **I will chastise you with scorpions.** This is also supposed to have been a proverbial expression. It may allude to an ancient instrument of torture, called a scorpion because it had as many stinging lashes as the reptile has legs, or it may refer to the reptile itself.

**12. The third day.** (9) *It is well to take time for thought, but it is better to use it wisely.*

**13, 14. Answered the people roughly.** In an imperious, despotic manner. How different from the manner of his grandfather David, who "bowed the hearts of all" the people, and won them by his gentle words! (10) *Nothing is ever lost, and often much is gained, by a kind and courteous manner. Forsook the old men's counsel.* He determined upon a course of bravado and threatening, when he had no power to carry out his threats, since, after all, he was entirely dependent upon the people, for there was no sufficient standing army to compel obedience to his behests. **I will add to your yoke.** Rehoboam, like Saul, sought to rule "like the kings of the nations around," as an absolute monarch, and not as the representative of God, whose will was to be interpreted by the prophets. (11) *It is never safe for God's people to copy the customs of the world.*

**15. The cause was from the Lord.** These events, wrought out by human passions, ambition, and selfishness, in which Rehoboam, Jero-

boam, and the people all were guilty, God overruled for the accomplishment of his own spiritual purposes. He had foreseen the result and provided for it, and pre-dicted it by the mouth of his prophet. He did not make Rehoboam rebellious nor Rehoboam tyrannical, but he ordained that through their acts his purposes of salvation should not be thwarted, but promoted. (12) *How blessed it is that an Almighty Hand and an Omniscient Eye directs this world's affairs.* **By Abijah the Shilonite.** This was a prophet living at Shiloh, the ancient home of the tabernacle. He had foretold to Solomon the sundering of his kingdom and to Rehoboam his coming royalty. Afterward he gave other predictions less pleasant to Rehoboam, and wrote a history of Solomon's reign. See 1 Kings, chaps. 11 and 14, and 2 Chron. 9, 29.

**16. When all Israel.** Here, as in many other places, "all Israel" means the ten tribes, as distinguished from Judah and Benjamin. We can trace this separation of interests at least as early as the reign of Saul (1 Sam. 18, 16), who was perhaps chosen as the result of a compromise between the two great tribes. David tried in vain to harmonize the tribal relations, and almost lost his throne in the attempt, for Absalom's rebellion arose on the side of Judah, and Sheba's on the side of Israel. Solomon eradicated boundary-lines in his rule, but could not break down the old tribal feeling, a "state rights" sentiment, which finally severed the kingdom. **What portion have we in David?** The motto of rebellion sixty years before (2 Sam. 20, 7) was again the cry of the people. It meant, "We have no interest in the family of David." **The son of Jesse.** The name by which David was often referred to. **To your tents, O Israel.** A popular war-cry, dating back to the days of the exodus. **Israel departed unto their tents.** The representatives dispersed with war-like purposes.

**17. Which dwell in the cities of Judah.** Such families of the ten tribes as had settled within the tribal limits of Judah, especially the Timonites, whose territory had been taken out of Judah on the south, and who, from their close connection with that tribe, and their separation from the others, were compelled to submit to Rehoboam.

#### CAMBRIDGE NOTES.

BY REV. JAMES HOPE MOULTON, M.A.

In this familiar story the political student will find most of the conditions transparently clear. For centuries past the nation had been divided in reality, though not in name. Ephraim and Judah, like Athens and Sparta, could unite for a great national enterprise, and the personal force of a born leader could reconcile them to a single monarchy, though occasional outbursts reminded the states-

man that a volcano slept beneath this seeming peace. Forty years of magnificent servitude had now dulled the people's memory of their hero-king. A great man's strength or a greater man's gentleness might have held the throne for David's dynasty. There succeeded one of the sorriest fools that ever strutted in the purple, dowered with the obstinate, self-important stupidity of the first

Charles Stuart and the wickedness of the second. An astute and energetic representative of the people formulated their just demands, and on their insolent rejection he was marked out by every natural qualification for the vacant throne. Scores of similar revolutions have been brought about by forces of this kind. But here we are bidden to recognize another force, an ever present fact which historians of this world are wont to ignore. The event was "from Jehovah." Solomon had gone aside to idols, and his people had followed him. His statecraft required that vast harem of "fair idolatresses" and the worship that was to appease deities whose peoples he conquered. Now came the nemesis, teaching the heirs of his magnificence that idolatry meant weakness and obscurity. And so it fell that centuries of insignificance and suffering prepared the way for a Son of David whose kingdom knows not revolution or decay.

**Verse 1.** For all we know to the contrary, Rehoboam was Solomon's only son (two daughters are mentioned, chap. 4, 11, 15), and this would explain his undisputed accession. His name, "enlargement of the people," is characteristic. How bitter the irony of it must have been to Solomon when he knew that the son of his far-reaching dreams was born to rend and not enlarge his kingdom! The heir-apparent's succession was evidently taken for granted in the Davidic capital, and regarded as conditional among the northern tribes. As with Saul (1 Sam. 11, 15), a "renewing of the kingdom" took place, and was naturally fixed at Shechem, the chief city of the great tribe of Ephraim.

**2.** The variations of Chronicles and the LXX. make some changes of text probable, implying that Jeroboam stayed in Egypt till Solomon's death, returned then to Zeredah (chap. 11, 26), and was summoned thence by the people.

**3. Congregation.** Through representative elders.

**4.** We are instinctively carried back to the time when the prophet foretold all this to a former generation who clamored for a king. See 1 Sam. 8, 10-22. Solomon's magnificent public works were mainly for the glorification of the capital of Judah, and the forced labor on them naturally irritated the men of Israel. Jeroboam had been overseer of the Ephraimites, and knew their feelings well.

**5, 6.** The king seems to have asked for the three days in order to bring his advisers down from Jerusalem. **Stood before.** Comp. chap. 10, 8; 17, 1, etc. It is the regular phrase to describe the attitude of an inferior awaiting his lord's command.

**7.** The old men's counsel, as given in this narrative, has an appearance of astuteness which is probably to be understood as an appeal to expediency such as would impress the selfish young monarch. The chronicler gives it an air of sincerity which seems natural in men who had imbibed Solomon's

spirit. That great king seems to have ruled severely rather than to make his people grant than to serve mere selfish ends. **Be a servant.** It is the earthly counterpart of the great principle of the kingdom of heaven (Mark 10, 43, sq.). **Answer.** That is, grant their demand. **Forever.** Hebrew, "all the days," a very effective contrast to the "this day," during which he was to swallow his pride. As in Matt. 28, 20, the phrase is far more forcible when literally rendered.

**8.** "We are none of us infallible, not even the youngest"—to quote a famous Cambridge dignitary lately deceased. It is tolerably certain that Rehoboam and his well-matched counselors were really what we should call "young men," for the age assigned him in chap. 14, 21 (placing his birth before Solomon's accession), is palpably a copyist's error.

**10. That were grown.** Note how effectively this repeated description brings out the hint that their counsel was the reflection of Rehoboam's own mind. The advice of these spoil children needs no comment beyond the facts of past and present history. Three thousand years have not yet slain the idea that government has rights but not duties. **Is thicker than.** What exquisitely ludicrous flattery! Rehoboam doubtless relished it, but even he found himself unequal to repeating it. See verse 14.

**11.** Solomon's authority had been so absolute that they took it to rest on the people's weakness rather than on the king's strength, and so thought to cow them by an exhibition of firmness. Such policy needed a stouter instrument than a "lath painted to look like iron." **Scorpions.** Some scourge like the brutal Roman *flagellum* seems intended (comp. Matt. 27, 26), made of thongs knotted with lead and pieces of bone, and very aptly named after the scorpion. It does not follow that Solomon's forced labor was literally done under the lash; the phrase is a vivid figure to describe a severe government.

**15. A thing brought about.** A striking word, answering to our "turn of affairs." But perhaps Klöstermann is right in translating it "infatuation," a judicial blindness like Pharaoh's. As so often in Scripture phraseology, the fact is stated after the manner of men. The writer did not think, we may be sure, that this wicked answer was prompted by Jehovah, though he puts it as if it were. In all such cases God leaves his laws to work their own fulfillment. Solomon's luxury and idolatry educated his son into the temper which was to work the penalty of the father's sin. **By the hand of.** A common Hebraism to denote the instrument or means. **Shilonite.** The last allusion to the now deserted holy place. For Ahijah see the last chapter (notes thereon in the JOURNAL, December 22, 1889).

**16. All Israel.** The revolt is national, for

Judah was only a remnant for many years to come. **What portion....?** A familiar insurrection cry. See 2 Sam. 20. 1. It expresses alienation from David and his dynasty, lords of a tribe and not of the nation, who will henceforth have "neither part nor lot" with them. **To your tents.** Possibly a formula of revolt first heard in the old nomad times, but appropriate on this occasion, with so many from all parts crowded into one town and doubtless living in tents. The phrase cried true to farther parley, and proclaimed open rebellion. **Now see to.** The LXX. reads, "Now shepherd thine house," which has considerable point in a sarcastic address to the shepherd king. In any case the emphasis is on "thine," an emphasis not unlike the words of our Lord in their true form, "Behold your house is left unto you!" The "house" is not, however, as there, the temple; David's own tribe, no more the people as a whole, are the "house" he is bidden see to.

17. This seems to describe the Levites, Benjaminites, Simeonites, and members of other tribes who happened to live in Judah's territory.

### The Lesson Council.

#### Question 1. What were the causes of the sudden collapse of Solomon's empire?

There were in operation what are called natural causes, which are, after all, only God acting according to the eternal laws of righteousness, which ordain that virtue conserves and vice destroys kingdoms as well as individual men. But the cause behind all others was the immediate divine act fulfilling God's warnings, repeatedly given, that the disobedience and sin of the king should bring disruption of the kingdom. The theocracy had been merged in the kingdom, yet God was still in a special sense the King of Israel, and as such might and did specially interpose his power to destroy.—*Joel W. Eaton, S. T. D., Albany, N. Y.*

Four causes in particular may be mentioned: 1. *Commercial.* The business which Solomon carried on with other nations was regal, not national; and while it enriched the king it impoverished the people. Permanent prosperity is only possible where wealth is distributed. 2. *Political.* Solomon's was an absolute monarchy. His government was not divided or shared. Strong capable men were not given any place in his councils, and at his death the nation fell to pieces. 3. *National.* Excessive taxation aroused general discontent. Oppression and poverty had undermined the faith and loyalty of the people. Revolution follows hard upon unfair legislation. 4. *Religious.* Solomon removed God from the statute book, and with God taken away nations and laws fall into a sand-heap.—*J. Wesley Johnston, D. D., New York City.*

1. His reign was begun in the spirit of revenge

and cruelty. Witness the execution of Adonijah, Joab, and Shimei (1 Kings 2. 34-46). 2. The religious foundations of the empire were weakened by his alliance with foreigners who brought their idolatrous worship with them. Solomon himself became an idolater; hence the fate of which he was warned (1 Kings 9) befell his house. 3. Solomon's extravagances had exhausted the material resources of the people (1 Kings 4. 23, 25, 26; also 1 Kings 10. 22-27). All this surely was ground for the complaint to Rehoboam, "Thy father made our yoke grievous." Hence, when Rehoboam refused their just demand, what wonder that they cried, "Now see to thine own house, David!"—*Rev. H. W. Ewing, B. D., Crisfield, Md.*

### Analytical and Biblical Outline.

#### The Elements of Success Shown by a Failure.

##### I. POPULAR SYMPATHIES.

1. *Our yoke grievous...lighter.* v. 4.  
"Bear ye one another's burdens." Gal. 6. 2.
2. *I will add to your yoke.* v. 14.  
"This wisdom....is earthly, sensual." Jas. 3. 15.

##### II. WISE COUNSELORS.

1. *Consulted with the old men.* v. 6.  
"With the ancient is wisdom." Job 12. 12.
2. *Forsook the old men's counsel.* v. 13.  
"Woe unto....wise in their own eyes." Isa. 5. 21.

##### III. RIGHT AIMS.

- Be a servant unto this people.* v. 7.  
"Chiefest among you....servant." Mark 10. 43, 44.  
"Took upon him the form of a servant." Phil. 2. 7.

##### IV. GENTLE MANNERS.

1. *Speak good words to them.* v. 7.  
"A soft answer turneth away wrath." Prov. 15. 1.
2. *Answered the people roughly.* v. 13.  
"Be not hasty....to be angry." Eccl. 7. 8, 9.

##### V. GOOD COMPANIONS.

- The young men....with him.* v. 8.  
"Walketh with wise men....wise." Prov. 13. 20.  
"Evil communications corrupt." 1 Cor. 15. 33.

##### VI. THE FEAR OF THE LORD.

- The cause was from the Lord.* v. 15.  
"Commit thy works unto the Lord." Prov. 16. 3.  
"Trust....and do good." Psa. 37. 3.

### Thoughts for Young People.

#### Lessons From Rehoboam's Blunder.

*In one's hour of weakness one's enemy may be expected.* Whoever else will be tardy, he will be "ca-

time." This is as true of spiritual enemies as of secular rebels.

Men determined to carry out their own plans are generally not over-scrupulous in their statements.

All "glory" has to be paid for. The splendor of Solomon's career was made possible by the grievous yoke put upon the people.

"A soft answer turneth away wrath." Kind and considerate words are always timely when complaints have been made.

Young people are especially exposed to the temptation of inconsiderate self-assertion. These young men simply wanted to "put on airs" and let the poor people know that the court was stronger than they. They all learned a lesson before the week was up.

The tendency of power is to make men despotic, and the tendency of unearned wealth to make men hard-hearted.

"Delay is dangerous," and a "double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." The king manifested weakness when he told the people to depart for three days. A vacillating enemy is never feared.

### Lesson Word-Picture.

BY REV. E. A. RAND.

The people want to make somebody king. Who shall it be? Look! What a multitude! And here he comes, Solomon's successor, riding in his father's gorgeous chariot. What a princely body-guard, what valiant soldiers, rank upon rank! How like a gaudy flower out of a showy garden-bed rises that swarthy king, clad in gold and purple, all about him a crowd of richly robed attendants! The people to make him king swarm before him. They crowd. They jostle. They seem almost ready to shout, "Live forever, O king!" But who is it among the people that is so conspicuous? He has a splendid bearing, a stalwart frame, a magnificent presence. He is intelligent, he is ambitious, he is deep. That man? Solomon knew and feared him as Jeroboam. Like a savage beast Jeroboam was hunted out of Judea, and he fled for his life to Egypt. Here he is though. Solomon is dead; Jeroboam is alive. Solomon bequeathed to Rehoboam houses and lands, fields and vineyards, cities and plains, navies and armies, and—Jeroboam! But not Jeroboam hiding away in Egypt; it is Jeroboam stalking boldly in Shechem. Look out, Rehoboam! Go softly! Deal gently! Speak prudently! But listen, O monarch with the crown of gold and robes of purple! The people have something to say to you.

What?

Murmuring, fault-finding, desirous for a redress of grievances and not ready to cry, "Live forever, King Rehoboam!" Jeroboam, too, coming to the front, and haughtily mouthing his grievances? The king's brow wrinkles with wrath. However,

he lays yoke on his anger, and, reining in his pride, bids them come again in three days.

Three days to talk it over, and three nights to sleep over it. Three days to resolve imprudently, and three nights to undo the imprudence. Three days in which to take counsel, and three nights in which to digest the counsel. But who shall advise? How the gray-beards gather about the king! How mild and paternal their adjectives of government! How wise the relationship they advise: "You be a servant to this people, and then they will be thy servants."

How the black-beards gather about him! How rough the words they use in describing measures of government: "A heavy yoke;" "whips;" "chastise;" "scorpions."

The three days go by, the three nights also. Or Rehoboam, in your dreams do you ever see an old prophet, one Ahijah? Do you see him, as your father must have described him to you, tearing up a certain garment into twelve pieces, giving Jeroboam ten? If so, you forget it when you meet the people again.

Your head is stiffly set.

Your brow is wrinkled deep.

Your eyes flash fire.

Your voice is harsh.

Your speech is about whips and scorpions and yokes.

The black-beards have out-generated the gray-beards.

But, O, what a shout of anger arises from the people! What a proclamation of rebellion! What a storm of defiance swelling and sweeping on, a whirlwind of wrath and revolt! And in it all is heard the solemn voice of Ahijah, saying to Jeroboam, "Take thee ten pieces!"

### By Way of Illustration.

BY JENNIE M. BINGHAM.

"All Israel were come to make him king." One of the mottoes on the walls of the temple at Delphos was, "Know thy opportunity." Rehoboam failed to know that this was his opportunity to win back the people to his reign. Opportunity is like a favoring breeze springing up around a sailing-ves-el. If the sails be all set, the ship is wafted onward to its port; if the sailors are asleep or ashore, the breeze may die again, and when they would go on they cannot. Wise men have their sails set for opportunities.

"Consulted with the old men." One generation benefits another, such as the Indian chief benefited his tribe. Whenever he reached a dangerous bog in the swamp, he would put up a stake to mark the spot.

"If thou wilt be a servant unto this people." Men have become great in proportion as they have

served humanity. The boy is but a shepherd; but he hears from his panic-stricken countrymen of the giant clumpion of their enemies. He takes his sling and goes down to save them. He is soon a military leader and the king of his country. Paul and Luther and Washington and Lincoln became worthy of honor by the same law. They served their generations. And a greater than all declared, "I am among you as he that serveth."

The steam-ship *Great Eastern* is known only as a great failure, because on her few trips she came and went comparatively empty, having been a dead loss to her owners, while smaller vessels have become really famous because of the number of people they have served.

"The king hearkened not unto the people." A poor old woman had often attempted to obtain a hearing before Philip of Macedon. The king at last told her he did not have leisure to hear about her wrongs. "No!" exclaimed she. "Then you have not leisure to be king." Philip was confounded. He pondered over her words, listened to her story, and made it a rule of his conduct ever afterward to listen attentively to his subjects.

*Golden Text.* Take for example the four proud-est rulers that ever sat upon a throne: 1. Alexander, when he had so completely subdued the nations that he wept because there were no more to conquer, at last set fire to a city, and died in a scene of debauch. 2. Hannibal, who filled three bushels with the gold rings taken from the slaughtered knights, died at last by poison administered by his own hand, unwept and unknown in a foreign land. 3. Caesar, having conquered eight hundred cities and shed the blood of one million of his foes, was stabbed by his best friends in the very place which had been the scene of his greatest triumph. 4. Napoleon, after being the scourge of Europe and the desolator of his country, died in banishment, conquered and a captive.

On the eve of Napoleon's departure for his Russian campaign he detailed his schemes to a noble lady so arrogantly that she tried to check him, saying, "Sir, man proposes, but God disposes." "Madam, I propose and dispose too," the emperor haughtily replied. A few months later the disastrous retreat from Moscow, and the loss of his crown, army, and liberty, vindicated the power of God.

### The Teachers' Meeting.

Begin by drawing a sketch-map of Solomon's empire from the Red Sea to the Euphrates. Show the space occupied by the twelve tribes, and indicate the location of Jerusalem and Shechem....Bring out by questions the story of the lesson, and by lines on the map show how Solomon's empire was destroyed and Israel divided....Lessons from Rehoboam: 1. Every youth is a king—of oppor-

tunities, possibilities, influence, etc. 2. Every youth comes to his kingdom to face dangers—past mistakes, serious questions, temptations, etc. 3. The wise youth will profit by the experience of others, especially of the wise and old. 4. The foolish youth seeks advice from those whose voices are the echoes of his own opinion. 5. Youths should cultivate sympathy with humanity. 6. Young people should be courteous and gentle.... A more textual treatment is suggested by the Analytical and Biblical Outline. If it be followed, let the texts be searched and read by members of the class.... History is full of analogies to the times of Rehoboam (for example, England under Charles I., France under Louis XVI., and Russia now), and common life in city and village will present many ready illustrations.

### References.

FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Ver. 6: Prose, 45, 1115, 1116; Poetical, 542. Vers. 8-11: Prose, 47, 1112, 1114, 1117, 6358, 6359, 6239, 4677, 4679, 4184. Ver. 14: Prose, 7391, 5275, 5276, 5277, 6017; Poetical, 1981-1984, 4683, 4676, 4680, 11175.

### Blackboard.



**EXPLANATION.** The key-stone is the stone in the center of the arch that binds it together. On the blackboard is the arch representing the twelve tribes of the Israelites. Whenever they put their trust in God, and made him the center of their national life, they were blessed beyond measure, and prospered. He was the key-stone. Rehoboam took counsel of men, but not of God. He ignored the mighty key-stone, and tried to put himself in its place, consequently the arch fell apart, and the twelve tribal stones were separated. No one spoke of God. The people complained about taxes; the old men counseled worldly-wise forbearance, and the young men advised oppression.

This is the great mistake made by many young people starting out in life. They do not take counsel of God. There is no friend like Jesus. Make him the center of your life, and he will uphold you, guide you, bless and save you.

## Primary and Intermediate.

BY MAITHA VAN MARGER.

The beginning of a new year calls us to remember that "the time is short"—these swift-flying months or years in which it may be given us, by God's help, to write lessons on little hearts that may endure forever.

It is a solemn thought that to us this grace is given, and one that ought to send us humbly and constantly to the God of all wisdom for both manner and matter of our lessons.

Whatever we may teach or fail to teach in this year 1891, let us not fail to set forth before the children, in season and out of season, that the only way in which any one can show that he really believes in God is by expressing him in the common acts of life; by being honest, gentle, patient, obedient, kind, because God is all this and infinitely more; and that this great living God is a loving God, as much interested in a child's doings as in the creation of a world. If we can succeed in making our little ones see that God is in them, waiting to be expressed in their every-day acts, this will indeed be a "year of our Lord" to those whom we teach!

**LESSON THOUGHT.** *Sin separates from God.*

**Introductory.** Make twelve spaces on the board. Number these, letting the children call the numbers as you write them. Tell that these may represent the twelve tribes of Israel, and surround them by a circle, on the circumference of which print, "One Kingdom. Solomon, King." Talk a little about Solomon, and tell how in his old age he let self come before God. Instead of making God known by his acts, he made Solomon known. This always leads to trouble, whether it be a child or a king that does it, for it is disobeying God, who says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Self must not take God's place. Show how letting self rule makes us selfish, unkind, and unloving. It made Solomon unkind to his people. He made them pay heavy taxes and work like slaves for him. At last Solomon died, and the people said they would ask the new king to make their burdens lighter.

Print "Rehoboam." He was Solomon's son. How can we learn if he was a good man and would make a good king? *By seeing what he did.* Read from the Bible, "Even a child is known by his doings" (Prov. 20. 11).

Pin a crown to the board. The people of Israel had come to Shechem to make Rehoboam king.

Jeroboam, a brave man, went at the head of a band of Israelites to ask if Rehoboam would make their burdens lighter. They were not bold and haughty to the new king. They said they would serve him if he would be kind to them, only they asked that their heavy yoke might be made lighter.

The king sent them away to wait three days. He wanted to ask some one what to do. *He did not*

*ask God.* This shows that he did not put God first. He asked some wise old men. They told him to be kind to the people and promise to make their yoke lighter. He did not like this advice, so he talked with some proud young men, who told him to tell the people that he would treat them more harshly than Solomon had done. This pleased Rehoboam, and on the third day he answered the people roughly, saying, "My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions."

Then the people were angry, and said they would not serve such a king. Cut off with a light mark ten of the spaces in the circle. Let the children count these to show how many tribes left Rehoboam and took Jeroboam for their king, and so the kingdom was divided.



What divided the kingdom? **SIN.** Rehoboam was proud, self-willed, self-loving. Just what separated him from his people separates from God now. Every time a child chooses his own way he adds a stone to a wall of separation

between him and God! Satan loves to see this wall built. He does all he can to help it along. Let children name some of the stones in this wall—anger, impatience, pride, disobedience, etc., etc.—and show how all these evil things come from self. Teach that only love can tear down this wall which self builds. Jesus came to do just that work. Let him come in every day to undo all that Satan tries to do.

### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

Come, said Jesus,  
How firm a foundation.  
Is this thy time of trouble,  
Fear not,  
In thy cleft,  
Come unto Me.  
My Jesus, as thou wilt,  
Saviour, listen to my  
Lord, at thy mercy-seat,  
Glorious things of thee,  
I love thy kingdom, Lord.

### The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. Whom did Rehoboam succeed as King of Israel? **His father, Solomon.**
2. What did the people ask Rehoboam to do? **To make their burdens lighter.**
3. What answer did Rehoboam give? **"I will add to your yoke."**
4. How did the people receive this answer? **Ten tribes revolted.**
5. Whom did the ten tribes afterward choose to be king? **Jeroboam the son of Nebat.**

### CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

1. What do you mean by religion?
- Our whole duty to God our Creator.
2. How may you divide that duty?
- In two parts: What we have to believe; and what we have to do.



B. C. 970.]

## ESSON II. IDOLATRY IN ISRAEL.

[Jan. 11.]

GOLDEN TEXT, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. Exod. 20. 4.

## Authorized Version.

1 Kings 12. 25-33. [Commit to memory verses 28-30.]

25 Then Jer'o-bo'am built She'chem in mount E'phra-im, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Pe-nu'el.

26 And Jer'o-bo'am said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of Da'vid:

27 If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Je-ru'sa-lem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord. *even* un'o Re'-ho-bo'am king of Ju'dah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Re'-ho-bo'am king of Ju'dah.

28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Je-ru'sa-lem: behold thy gods, O Is'ra-el, which brought thee up out of the land of E'gypt.

29 And he set the one in Beth'-el, and the other put he in Dan.

30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, *even* unto Dan.

31 And he made a house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Le'vi.

32 And Jer'o-bo'am ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Ju'dah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Beth'-el, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Beth'-el the priests of the high places which he had made.

33 So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth'-el the fifteenth day of the eighth month, *even* in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Is'ra-el: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.

## Revised Version.

- 25 Then Jer'o-bo'am built She'chem in the hill-country of E'phra-im, and dwelt therein; and he went out from thence, and built Pe-nu'el.
- 26 And Jer'o-bo'am said in his heart, Now shall 27 the kingdom return to the house of Da'vid; if this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the Lord at Je-ru'sa-lem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Re'-ho-bo'am king of Ju'dah; and they shall kill me, and return to Re'-ho-bo'am king of Ju'dah.
- 28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold; and he said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Je-ru'sa-lem; behold thy gods, O Is'ra-el, which brought thee up out of the 29 land of E'gypt. And he set the one in Beth'-el, and 30 the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made 31 houses of high places, and made priests from among all the people, which were not of the 32 sons of Le'vi. And Jer'o-bo'am ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Ju'dah, and he went up unto the altar; so did he in Beth'-el, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made; and he placed in Beth'-el the priests of 33 the high places which he had made. And he went up unto the altar which he had made in Beth'-el on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and he ordained a feast for the children of Is'ra-el, and went up unto the altar, to burn incense.

**TIME.**—About B. C. 970. **PLACES.**—1. Shechem, in central Palestine; 2. Penuel, on the brook Jabbok, in eastern Palestine; 3. Dan, at the source of the Jordan; 4. Beth-el, in the tribe of Benjamin. **RULERS.**—1. Jeroboam, son of Nebat, King of Israel; 2. Rehoboam, son of Solomon, King of Judah. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—God a spirit.

## HOME READINGS.

- M.* Idolatry in Israel. 1 Kings 12. 25-33.  
*Tu.* The punishment. 1 Kings 13. 1-10.  
*W.* Former experience. Exod. 32. 1-19.  
*Th.* Words of warning. Deut. 4. 14-24.  
*F.* Abijah's warning. 2 Chron. 13. 4-12.  
*S.* Punishment accomplished. 2 Chron. 13. 13-20.  
*S.* Trust in the Lord. Psa. 115. 1-11.

## LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 118, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 Let him to whom we now belong

- No. 119, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 Oh, the bitter pain and sorrow.  
 No. 120, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 I am thine, O Lord, I have heard thy voice.

DOMINION HYMNAL.  
 Hymns, Nos. 233, 246, 249.

## QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

- I. Policy, v. 25-27.**  
 What means did Jeroboam first take to strengthen himself in his kingdom?  
 Give reasons for the selection of Shechem and Penuel as fortifications.  
 What cause of disintegration and rebellion did Jeroboam probably most fear?  
 Was there good reason for this fear?  
 What should a man do when he fears that right conduct will bring him into secular difficulty?  
 Is it ever wise policy to do wrong?  
 Is wrong-doing ever justifiable?



**2. Deceit, v. 28.**

When Jeroboam erected his calves of gold, did he introduce idolatry?

Were the Israelites familiar with "calves" as sacred images?

Is it right to worship the true God by means of symbol?

What did Jeroboam mean by saying it is "too much" to go to Jerusalem?

What should God-fearing people do when their rulers lead them in the way of sin?

**3. Idolatry, v. 29-33.**

Why, probably, did Jeroboam select Beth-el and Dan?

What was the result of this symbol-worship?

What is meant by a "house of high places"?

Why was it wrong to take all sorts of people for priests?

What fact compelled Jeroboam to go outside of the tribe of Levi?

What may have led Jeroboam to his choice of date for the feast?

Define Jeroboam's sin.

**Practical Teachings.**

Where does this lesson teach—

1. That the most dangerous temptations are the most plausible?
2. That one sin leads directly to another?
3. That sin is always a blunder?
4. That thorough-going energy wins temporal success?

**Hints for Home Study.**

Find reasons—

1. For Jeroboam's desire to establish a separate worship.
2. For his choice of Dan and Beth-el for places of worship.
3. For his choice of calves as a religious symbol.
4. For his ignoring the tribe of Levi in his choice of priests.

Read the account of the curse pronounced on the altar of Beth-el.

**QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.****1. Policy, v. 25-27.**

What two cities did Jeroboam build?

Who had before destroyed Shechem? (Judg. 9. 45.)

What did Jeroboam say in his heart?

For what reason did he fear this?

What command had God given about a place of sacrifice? (Deut. 12. 5, 7.)

**2. Deceit, v. 28.**

What objects of worship did Jeroboam make?

What did he say was too much for the people to do?

What about the images he had made?

Who before him had made similar objects of worship? (Exod. 32. 4, 8.)

**3. Idolatry, v. 29-33.**

Where were the golden calves set up?

Into what sin were the people led?

What commandment did they violate? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

Whom did Jeroboam make priests?

For what month and day did he order a feast?

Where was this feast observed?

Of what feast in Jerusalem was this an imitation? (See Lev. 23. 33, 34.)

Where did he place his priests?

**Teachings of the Lesson.**

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. The duty of religious service?
2. That idolatry is a sin?
3. That one sin leads to another?

**Home Work for Young Bereans.**

1. Find in the Bible allusions to the worship of God under the similitude of a young bull.
2. Note in Jeroboam's conduct how one sin leads to another.
3. Find accounts of the earlier institution of worship in Dan and in Beth-el.
4. Read the account of the curse pronounced on the altar at Beth-el.

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.**

What was the name of the King of Israel? **Jeroboam.**

Where did he live? **At Shechem.**

How did he make his kingdom strong? **With walled cities and forts.**

Where did the King of Judah live? **At Jerusalem.**

Who went to worship at Jerusalem? **All the tribes.**

Who had commanded them to do so? **The Lord.**

Who began to be afraid to have them go? **Jeroboam.**

What did he fear? **That his people would return to Rehobam.**

What did Jeroboam do? **He made two golden idols.**

What did he tell the people to worship? **These idols.**

What did he build for these idols? **Temples.**

Whom did he appoint to serve in the temples? **Priests.**

Where were these idols set up? **At Dan and at Beth-el.**

What did the king himself do? **Worshiped these idols.**

What commandment did he break? **"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."**

What did King Jeroboam do? **Sinned himself, and led his people into sin.**

**Words with Little People.**

PUTTING GOD FIRST.

As soon we begin to put self first we get into trouble. The only safe way is to put God first, always, every-where. It is no worse to worship a

golden calf than to worship self, or to be led by our will, our pleasure!

**Whisper Motto.**

"None of self, and all of Thee."

**General Statement.**

Jeroboam appeared in the last lesson as a popular leader, chivalrous and bold, attacking old abuses, and demanding for the people their just rights. He was the idol of the commons and the friend of the golly prophets. The goal of his ambition is now reached, and at once he throws off his disguise and reveals his true character—a self-centered, unprincipled politician. He sits upon the throne of Israel, master of ten out of the twelve tribes, from the suburbs of Jerusalem up to Mount Lebanon, and from the desert to the Great Sea. It is well for him to fortify his capital and to establish an outpost on the wilderness-border. But with the eye of a politician, rather than a statesman, keen to see the outward aspects of the time, but blind to the deeper realities of moral and spiritual truth, he beholds perils rising in the distance, when his subjects shall enter the courts of the Lord's house as worshippers. He resolves to institute a "church" of his own, and ignore the proper priesthood, which had proved itself loyal to the house of David and loyal to the true worship of God. He would have showy emblems of worship; a temple at each end of his dominions; a priesthood of his own followers; and forms of service in which he could participate, standing robed and crowned before his own altar. It was a crafty plan, but left out of the account Almighty God, and came to naught. The results were a people turned toward idolatry, his throne possessed by a new dynasty, and his name pilloried in Scripture as "Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin."

**EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.**

**Verse 25. Jeroboam.** A man of strength of character, but careless of moral considerations. (See notes in Lesson L.) **Built Shechem.** It was an old city. He fortified it as his chief stronghold, and beautified it as his capital. It is *Nablus*, situated in the center of Palestine, between the mountains Gerizim and Ebal. Here the law was read by Joshua, and the people pledged themselves to the services of God. (See notes in last lesson.) **Mount Ephraim.** Rather, "the hill-country of Ephraim." It was named from the powerful tribe which occupied the territory. **Went out from thence.** Still holding it as his capital and making it the base of military and political operations. **Built Penuel.** The place of Jacob's wrestling with the angel (Gen. 32. 31). Jeroboam took possession of it in order to control the region east of the Jordan and the caravan route between Egypt and the Euphrates. (1) *Jeroboam forgot what Jacob learned at Penuel, that the "strength of man is in God."*

**26. Said in his heart.** He reasoned with himself, but did not consult God. Hence the horizon of his thought was narrow. **Now shall the kingdom return.** The people might soon be as eager to dethrone him as they had been to crown him. He placed no confidence in God, though a sure house had been promised him if he would remain faithful to the true King of Israel (2 Kings 11. 38). **To the house of David.** The name of David was still a power among the people. His achievements were recited, his psalms were sung, and he was a great national hero, with a name like Washington in America or Napoleon in France. (2) *How weak is the king who cannot put his trust in God!*

(3) *How unstable a foundation is popular opinion!*

**27. If this people go up to do sacrifice.**

The temple at Jerusalem was the center of the national religion, and three times in each year all the heads of families were called to celebrate the feasts around its altar. There were ties of race, of religion of history, and of common interests binding the people together. **Then shall the heart of this people turn again.** There seems just ground for this fear of a reaction in public sentiment; and Jeroboam's plan to prevent it was wise from the stand-point of worldly policy. But God had promised to keep him secure, and he could afford to trust even in the face of danger. **They shall kill me.** His own death would be the inevitable accompaniment of a reunion; for he who takes part in a revolution does it with a rope about his neck. Only in recent Christian history, even, do we read of a change of government without the slaughter of vanquished leaders. (4) *Popular leaders must bear heavy burdens and take great risks.* (5) *In politics, as everywhere else, it never pays to do evil that good may come.*

**28. The king took counsel.** Not with the Lord, nor with his prophets, but with the worldly irreligious politicians of his own party. **Made two calves of gold.** He was indifferent to religion, except as it served his own selfish purposes; he was familiar with the forms of idolatry in Egypt, where he had lived in exile, and the worship of the golden calves was no new thing in Israel. From the fact of its popularity, we infer that it had been maintained in secret during all the history of the people. **It is too much for you.**

He appeals to their love of ease, as well as to their need of worship. "You must have some religion; take the one which will require the least exertion."

(6) *There are some nowadays who will join the Church which makes the least demand on their conscience, their time, or their money. Behold thy gods.* It is suggestive of a previous acquaintance with this worship on the part of the people, to find that these were the very words spoken by Aaron to the Israelites at Mount Sinai, when he made the golden calf (Exod. 32. 4). **Which brought thee up.** To the intelligent few the image was merely a symbol of the invisible God, but to the ignorant mass of worshippers it was the god, and regarded as divine. (7) *The golden calf, or gold in the place of God, has still many devotees.*

**29. He set the one in Beth-el.** A city ten miles north of Jerusalem, "the house of God," where Jacob saw the heavenly ladder, and where the prophets had a training-school. How the hearts of the faithful few must have sorrowed over its desecration! It was on the road to Jerusalem, thus intercepting the pilgrims on their journey to the temple. **The other put he in Dan.** Far in the north, at the foot of Mount Lebanon and the head of the river Jordan. Here there was already an idol-sanctuary, founded (strange to say) by the grandson of Moses! Its origin is related in *Judg. 17 and 18.* The two calves were thus placed at the northern and southern boundaries of the kingdom, fit guardians for a realm whose aims were all of this world.

**30. This thing became a sin.** It chimed with the idolatrous tendencies of the people, and led them to rush headlong in a career of evil; for the worship of idols was constantly associated with revelry, debauchery, and immorality. See an example of this in the earlier worship of the golden calf in *Exod. 32. 6, 25.* **Before the one, even unto Dan.** So eager were the people for the new worship, that they flocked in throngs even to the more distant shrine at Dan, which was farther from them than Beth-el, or than Jerusalem itself. (8) *So*

*people who live too distant to attend church are near enough to go to the theater or to the ball-room.*

**31. Made a house of high places.** The author of this book will not call the building a "temple," or a "house of God," but gives it a contemptuous name; the term "high places," after the building of the temple, was only used of idol-shrines. They were originally elevated sites chosen for altars, whether to God or idols, but the word became more and more associated with idolatry. This "house of high places" was at Beth-el, and stood as a rival to the temple in Jerusalem. **Priests of the lowest.** Literally, "From the ends of the people;" that is, out of all the tribes, and not from the tribe of Levi, which had been set apart for the priestly office. The reasons for this institution may have been that he wished to organize a priesthood of his own partisans, and allied to his own interests, or that the Levites generally had refused to forsake the service of God for idols.

**32. A feast in the eighth month.** This took the place of the feast of tabernacles, which was held in the seventh month (September or October). The pretext for the change of time was that the harvest was a month later in the northern kingdom. **Like unto the feast that is in Judah.** This was the great autumnal festival, when the people from all parts of the land visited Jerusalem for a week, and slept in booths. **He offered upon the altar.** He did this in person, like the heathen kings, for he desired to be the head of Church as well as State in his dominion. The kings of Judah made their offerings through the priests. **So did he in Beth-el.** This city became a great center of idolatrous worship. See *Amos 7. 13.*

**33. Which he had devised of his own heart.** "He was placed in difficult circumstances, but he met them with the arts of a politician, not with the single-mindedness of a saint."—*Rawlinson.* (9) *See how sin gives birth to sin, and leads to a whole brood of evils.* (10) *How much harm a godless man in high places can work!*

#### CAMBRIDGE NOTES.

The troubles of the house of David, from Solomon to the exile, are a perpetual comment on the sanctity of the first commandment. The gradual decadence of the northern kingdom teaches us that the breach of the second involves more insidious dangers still. To enthroned evil in the place of good is a deed so naked in its wickedness that the tempter can rarely drape it as he did for Solomon, with plausible motives. He shows a deeper cunning when he attains the same end by two steps—persuades men to materialize their conception of God, bring him down from the heaven where he dwells in spiritual omnipresence, near to every one of us, and find some earthly thing which is to rep-

resent him to the eye or the mind of men. It was thus Jeroboam fell, forfeiting a future of unlimited promise, and winning for himself the most fearful epitaph that ever perpetuated in one burning line the memory of a bad man. How strong was his temptation, and how excellent the excuse he could present to the consciences of himself and his people, we shall see as we study this lesson. He stands in the great army of those who have sacrificed to expediency, done evil that good may come, and found that good thus purchased is only evil in disguise.

**Verse 25. Built.** Probably in both cases this means the "fortification" of the very ancient towns named; though the last previous mention of each

records their destruction by Abimelech and Gileon respectively. **Dwelt.** Probably not for long, the fortress residence being soon supplanted by Tirzah and Samaria in the favor of the kings of Israel. The long and varied history of Shechem may be traced in such passages as Gen. 12. 6; Gen. 34 to 37 (frequently); Josh. 8; 20. 7; Judg. 9; John 4. 5; Acts 7. 16. Under the name of *Nablus*—"Napolis," "new town," a curious misnomer due to its Roman re-builders—it still exists, a small village in one of the loveliest situations in Palestine. **Penuel.** "Face of God." See Gen. 32. 81; Judg. 8. 8. It was near the Jabbok stream, and placed well for an outpost among the trans-Jordanic tribes.

**26.** We may suppose that some interval had elapsed, during which devout Israelites went up to worship at Jerusalem as heretofore.

**27.** From a purely human stand-point Jeroboam's forecast was most reasonable. As time dulled the sense of wrong which prompted the revolt, sentiment would revive the ancient loyalty to David. On the religious side also these visits to Jerusalem would tend to relax new political ties. To the older monarchy were attached all the most sacred things of the Hebrew faith. They held the temple, the priesthood, through which throughout Solomon's reign all Israel had been wont to approach God. The priests would use the opportunity to denounce the schismatics and hurl woes against the irregular sanctuaries in which alone the northerners could sacrifice without coming among their political foes. Non-conformists in England can realize very vividly the feelings of a pious Israelite after the disruption. To be assailed for "schism" which we know to be of God's command; to see the prestige of antiquity, the pride of rank, the pomp of splendid ritual, and the grandeur of noble temples thrown entirely into the resources of a system from which we have been forced to separate—all this we know as well as they; and we who can watch the effect of these allurements upon young and unsteady minds to-day do not wonder at Jeroboam's fear. But what was wrong was his forgetfulness of the fact that the schism was divinely ordained, and that God, who promised continuance to his kingdom, would find his own means to obviate the dangers dreaded by the self-reliant king.

**28. Took counsel.** The word (comp. verses 6 and 9) seems to suggest that Rehoboam had no monopoly of evil advisers. It is often, and quite possibly, taken as meaning merely, "he conceived a plan." **Calves.** See Exod. 32, *passim*. It is often supposed that these symbols were copied from the Egyptian Apis and Mnevis, and the coincidence that Aaron and Jeroboam were both fresh from Egypt lends plausibility to the idea, which, however, is sufficiently refuted by the objection that the Egyptians worshiped living beasts and not images.

Instead of this we must connect (a) Deut. 33. 17, making the bull a symbol of Ephraim; (b) Exod. 25. 18-20, explaining the number of the calves in both cases, and, if the cherubim have rightly been conjectured to have been in the shape of young bulls, giving the best reason for the choice of symbol; (c) perhaps also such passages as chap. 7. 25; Ezek. 1. 10 (note 10. 14, where the "cherub" replaces the "ox"), which illustrate the great difference between Eastern and Western associations of this animal. **Ye have gone up long enough.** This marginal rendering seems preferable, on the analogy of Exod. 9. 28; Ezek. 44. 6. **Which brought.** Plural verb, showing that *Elohim* is here "gods," not "God." The exact repetition of Aaron's words was to remind the people that this was no new thing—it had been done before by no less an authority than the first high-priest himself! The appeal to the deliverance from Egypt strongly bears out our supposition that the calves were meant to represent the cherubim, now in the enemy's hands. 1 Sam. 4. 3, 8, shows us how ready the Israelites always were to attribute the marvels of the exodus to the ark's magic power.

**29. Beth-el,** the scene of Jacob's vision, was naturally a holy place, and we find the ark there in the period of the judges (Judg. 20. 26, 29). Its degradation was bitterly scourged by the prophet Hosea, who transferred to it the name of the neighboring Beth-aven, meaning "house of naught;" that is, of idols. **Dan** became the seat of a half-heathen worship of Jehovah at its first settlement by the emigrant Danites from the south, and the descendants of Jonathan, the degenerate grandson of Moses, still ministered as priests there. See Judg. 18. 30.

**30. Sin.** Probably this means that Jeroboam's action produced absolute idolatry, which he had not intended. What the rest of the verse means is very hard to say. The LXX. adds at the end, "and forsook the house of the Lord;" and it seems not improbable that this refers to Beth-el, the omission of which here is most strange. It is, of course, uncertain work at best to restore by conjecture a passage which seems to contain errors of transcription, but the following account (Klostermann's) rests on a few slight and plausible alterations. We suppose that Jeroboam placed both the calves at Beth-el, forming thus as near a substitute as possible for the ark, and did what he could to make Beth-el a copy of Jerusalem. Further, he restored the ephod-worship at Dan with the old line of priests as a subsidiary sanctuary. But when the temple was forbidden the people preferred the older holy place at Dan to Jeroboam's new anti-temple, although the worship there was practically idolatrous. The king's special endeavors, described in the next verses, ultimately secured the popularity of Beth-el.

**31. Houses.** Comp. 2 Kings 17. 23. The

plural is found in the LXX. and Vulgate. It indicates that he erected small temples on the sites of old hill-sanctuaries, which had been mere altars in the open air. Comp. chap. 18. 30. **From among all the people.** Except for the family at Dan, it seems that the Levites generally went to live in Judah; the associations of the ancient worship naturally attracted them. Jeroboam would doubtless remind the people that the priesthood originally belonged to every Israelite, Levi being chosen simply in a representative capacity.

**32. Feast.** To be a feast of dedication, evidently modeled on Solomon's great festival, held at the time of the feast of tabernacles. Jeroboam assumed the leading part, as Solomon had done, and further asserted his prerogative by changing the date from the seventh to the eighth month (Lev. 23 39). **Calves.** This is rather in favor of the conjecture that both calves were at Beth-el; the words are hardly natural if one was at Dan. **Placed.** Perhaps this means that Beth-el was made a priestly city, much like Jericho in our Lord's time; but there is considerable uncertainty about the details here.

**33. Offered upon.** In verse 32 and here the margin seems preferable, but the text ("went up") must be kept at the end of this verse. **Of his own heart.** The LXX. and Vulgate make this reading fairly certain. This verse must be closely connected with the next chapter.

### The Lesson Council.

**Question 2.** *What application has the conduct of Jeroboam to the life of our time?*

There are several applications: 1. We see here the danger of following expediency rather than principle. 2. Expedients and compromises invariably work injury. 3. Any substitute for the ordained and regular worship of God results in evil to all concerned. 4. A false step at the beginning leads to confusion in the end. 5. One sin leads to another, and as each one follows it gets deeper and darker. 6. A splendid opportunity may be utterly wasted through lack of simple dependence on God. — *J. Wesley Johnston, D.D.*

1. He attempted to make religion easy by erecting two golden calves in two convenient places, ostensibly to save the people the long journey to Jerusalem. The Church that can guarantee heaven and eternal life by the easiest methods is the Church that the world will applaud. 2. He was willing to corrupt the morals of the people in order to secure the stability of his own reign. What regard do men of high place have for the morals of the people when their own interest is imperiled? Witness the corruption funds for political campaign purposes. Selfishness is the predominant motive to-day. 3. He offered sacrifice to the golden calves.

So the tendency of this age is strongly in the direction of the worship of mammon. Gold more than God controls the life of to-day. 4. He must have a show of religion—gods, priests, altars, feasts. "Liberalism" is not unknown in the camp of Israel to-day.—*Rev. H. W. Ewing, B.D.*

To the private life of our time and all time it applies as a lesson teaching that the issues of sin are always in the end calamitous. To rulers, statesmen, and politicians it should show that when, under the plea of serving the interests of party, or even of the State, the laws of righteousness as between nations, or between the government and the citizen, are violated, calamity is sure to follow, not as an arbitrary infliction, but as a necessary result under divine law.—*Joel W. Eaton, S. T. P.*

### Analytical and Biblical Outline.

#### The Sins of Jeroboam.

##### I. SELFISH AMBITION.

*Built Shechem... built Peniel.* v. 25.

"Woe unto them... house to house." Isa. 5. 8.

"Who is the greatest?" Matt. 18. 1.

##### II. DISTRUST OF GOD.

*Now shall the kingdom return.* v. 26, 27.

"I will be with thee." 1 Kings 11. 38.

"Doth his promise fail?" Psa. 77. 8.

##### III. WORLDLY POLICY.

*The king took counsel.* v. 28.

"Take counsel, but not of me." Isa. 30. 1.

"Walked in their own counsels." Psa. 81. 12.

##### IV. FALSEHOOD.

*These be thy gods, O Israel.* v. 28.

"Workmen made it... not God." Hos. 8. 4.

"Their idols are silver and gold." Psa. 115. 4.

##### V. IDOLATRY.

*He offered upon the altar.* v. 32.

"No other gods before me." Exod. 20. 3.

"That make them... like unto them." Psa.

115. 8.

##### VI. EVIL INFLUENCE.

*This thing became a sin.* v. 30.

"Drive Israel from... the Lord." 2 Kings 17. 21.

"The way of Jeroboam." 1 Kings 16. 19.

### Thoughts for Young People.

#### Lessons From Jeroboam's Sin.

1. *Every man has to care for both spiritual and secular interests.* Which of the two he cares for first determines his character. If he seek first the kingdom of God, all other things will be added. If he seek first his own welfare, the chances are against his ever seeking the welfare of the kingdom of God. Jeroboam attended to his fortifications first.

2. *There are not wanting plausible reasons to*



justify the worst sins. Jeroboam was correct in his conclusions about the probable effect of the annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem. His error and sin lay in his leaving God out of his calculations. It was God who had placed him on the throne, and if he had waited God would have confirmed him upon it. His eagerness to take affairs into his own hands and discard providential leadership led to the most serious blunder of his reign, and to the eventual alienation of the kingdom from the family.

3. *The most dangerous temptations are the most plausible.* It seemed not very bad to go to Beth-el in place of Jerusalem, providing one worshipped the same God, and not very bad to bow before a golden bull, so long as one kept his mind on the true God that the bull represented. Solomon's temple had more than one such figure, and the people had already looked upon them with reverence. And if one could not get the Levites, whose place it was to help in this worship, what was there left to do but to see those one could get? While we are justly censuring Jeroboam and his followers for their sin, let us make sure we would not have done the same had we been in their places.

4. *At least one good lesson can be learned from Jeroboam.* He did nothing by halves. When he was a young man, Solomon was drawn to him because of his thorough-going energy. He showed it in every act of his subsequent life. He seems to have rebelled as soon as his royal future has been foretold. He fled quickly, returned promptly, and decided with such force and promptitude that the nation sided with him. And he is no sooner on the throne than he begins to strengthen himself.

#### Lesson Word-Picture.

Jeroboam is in deep thought. As he thinks he may contemplate Shechem, that he has built, strong, stubborn, enduring. It may be Penuel that he beholds. "Mine!" is the cry of his soul. It is great Jeroboam, who outlived and outwitted Solomon, and has now conquered Solomon's son without a battle. But what cloud of anxiety darkens his face and wrinkles his brow? There is another city than Shechem or Penuel; it is Jerusalem, where Rehoboam reigns. The temple is there. The holy altars of sacrifice are there. For generations Israel has gone there and worshipped. What if it go now and leave Jeroboam behind? What if it stay there with Rehoboam?

Jeroboam is perplexed. The shadow on his face deepens. The anxiety in his soul is more consuming.

But his brow at last clears. The weight on his soul lightens.

"I will make an attraction for the people to keep them away from Jerusalem," he resolves.

What shall it be? Something great, splendid, magnificent, imposing, monumental?

"A great and sufficient attraction!" he says, smiling, rubbing his hands.

What shall it be? A court of Oriental culture, a brilliant literary center? Not that. A grand army, to march in which shall feed the pride of a lifetime? Not that. A mighty, over-shadowing fortress, to whose shelter a nation will rush? Not that. Shall it be an asylum for the poor, a hospital for the sick, a home for the aged? Not that. Shall it be an earnest life, and shall Jeroboam's purpose be to consecrate wealth, armies, time, powers, all things to the great Jehovah, and to serve best his people by serving the Most High?

We shall see.

There is an order that has gone out which makes the goldsmiths busy. They kindle their furnace fires. They bring out their crucibles. They melt. They shape. They hammer. They polish. And there is the visible manifestation of Jeroboam's purpose; his great, noble, sublime contrivance to keep Israel away from Jerusalem—a couple of calves! Two silly, inane, stupid, beastly calves of gold, one at Dan, and the other at Beth-el!

"Behold thy gods!" cries Jeroboam to Israel.

O, how he insults Jehovah! These are the gods that brought Israel out of Egypt! These leering calves! And Israel is enough like the calves thus set up as gods to run after and worship them. O, shame and foulest sin! Those senseless lumps to fascinate and enchain Israel's affections!

But that is not all.

There is a sound of axes and hammers one day. A house is going up, even of "high places." There is the noise of a profane, ungodly rabble, and here come the priests of Jeroboam's calves! And saddest picture is Jeroboam's posture before the calf in Beth-el, as he brings it offerings, as he bows, as he mocks Jehovah and despises Jerusalem. And that is Jeroboam's great, exalted, glorious device with which to keep the people away from the city of Rehoboam! Alas! it was more than sufficient.

#### By Way of Illustration.

"Now shall the kingdom return." It is difficult to hold an ill-gotten possession. When the materials of a building are solid blocks of stone, very rude architecture will suffice, but a structure of rotten materials needs the most careful adjustment in order to make it stand.

"Then shall the heart of this people turn again." The permanence of his reign depended wholly upon holding the hearts of the people. When a law was made in the reign of Elizabeth that all the people should attend the church, the papists sent to Rome to know what the pope thought of it. He answered: "Tell the Catholics in England to give me their hearts, and the queen may take the rest."

"It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem." Falsehood is never so successful as when she baits her hook with a half-truth. No opinions so fatally mislead us as those that are not wholly wrong, as no watches so effectually deceive the wearer as those that are sometimes right.

"Become a sin." "Sin hath many secret ways of insinuating. It is like a Delilah. It bewitches, then puts out the eyes, then destroys. As Joab came with a kind salute to Abner and thrust him under the fifth rib, while Abner thought of nothing but kindness, so sin comes smiling while it gives a deadly thrust."—*Burgess*.

As a rope is twined from many threads, so is sin very rarely single. Wicked suggestions are the first threads; the cherishing of them with satisfaction the second; the sinful purpose the third; the execution of it twists the cord; and perseverance in it binds the sinner to his ruin. The calves of gold led to their worship, to an house of high places, to priests of the lowest of the people, to feasts and sacrifices.

When the English army under Harold and the Normans under William the Conqueror were in conflict, William saw that he must resort to a false movement to gain the victory. He gave orders that one flank of his army should feign to be flying from the field in disorder. The officers of the English army believed the falsehood, pursued them, and were cut off. The consequence was the partial destruction of their army and the establishment of Norman power. The whole heathen world has believed in and worshiped false gods. The worshiper always becomes like the object worshiped. Consequently all heathendom is full of ignorance, falsehood, and crime.

A man's idol is not necessarily an image of gold. It may be a child of clay or the wife of his bosom. It may be wealth, fame, business, any thing which unduly absorbs the affections or attentions.

The tendency to worship money in this country caused some one to suggest that the motto on our coin be changed to "The god we trust."

### Teachers' Meeting.

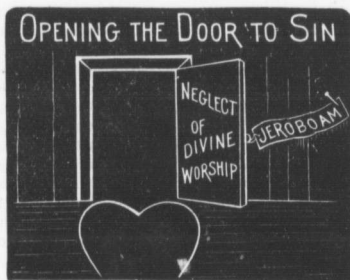
Review rapidly the facts of the last lesson. Show the map, and locate upon it Jerusalem, Beth-el, Shechem, Peniel, Dan.... Word-pictures of 1.) Jeroboam as a builder; 2.) Jeroboam as a political schemer; 3.) Jeroboam as an idol-maker; 4.) Jeroboam as a priest.... The sins of Jeroboam (Draw them out from the class).... Jeroboam, in a very true sense, founded a Church which is in existence to-day. Some classes among its members are, 1.) Those who think only of their own interests, and use the Church and the cry of "reform" to promote their own influence; 2.) Those who

seek to advance their cause by worldly policy—"expediency;" 3. Those who place gold instead of God; 4.) Those who seek ease instead of duty (ver-e 28, "It is too much"); 5.) Those who turn from revealed truth to a man-made religion; 6.) Those who spell the name of their God with the letters S-E-L-F.... Compare Jeroboam forsaking God with Luther, who sang, "A mighty fortress is our God".... It was said, "Napoleon's cocked hat on a stick on the shore of France would start a revolution." Similar was the power of the name of David (ver-e 26).

### References.

FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK. Ver. 25: Fortified cities, 366. Ver. 28: Calf-worship, 138.... FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Prose, 2528, 2529, 9731-9738, 6519, 7097, 9006, 9007, 871, 873. Ver. 27: Prose, 3149-3152, 9385, 3144, 6201-6214, 11633, 9416, 9018. Ver. 28: Poetical, 3474. Ver. 31: Prose, 10554.

### Blackboard.



EXPLANATION.—Jeroboam sinned, and caused others to sin. How? He stopped the people from worshipping God, and caused them to break the second commandment. Just as soon as one neglects divine worship, and stays away from church, and does not go to the prayer-meeting, he opens wide the door of his heart for sin and idol-worship to enter. Jeroboam opened the door, held it open, and invited idolatrous worship to enter and take possession. Every professing Christian should attend the church services; he should worship God in spirit and in truth, avoiding artificial forms and golden calf ceremonies.

### Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *The Growth of Sin.*

Review. Recall the division of the kingdom, and see if children understand clearly what caused it. Who was made king over the ten tribes? Who ruled over Judah, and part of the tribe of Benjamin?



**Lesson Plan.** To show how a great evil began in a selfish thought; how it soon became bold enough to utter itself in words; and how it grew from that into the evil act.

If you are not provided with a map, make an outline on the board, locating Jerusalem, Shechem, Beth-el, and Dan. Show the places where the two kings resided. Ask children if they would be likely to feel friendly toward each other. Does a boy feel kindly toward another who has taken away his ball and kept it? Does a boy like and respect a bigger boy who has kicked and beaten him?

Show that where sin has made a separation between two persons there is lack of love, and therefore of peace.

Jeroboam built up Shechem. Then he went and built Penuel. He had a strong kingdom, but he thought it was his kingdom, and not God's. He made the same mistake a child makes who thinks he does not need to have God take care of him.

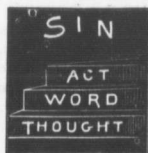
Pin up a picture of the temple at Jerusalem. God's law said that his people must go up there at certain times to offer sacrifices to him. Rehoboam lived there. The beautiful temple Solomon built was there. A thought came into Jeroboam's heart one day that was born of self. He seemed to see the people of his kingdom going to Jerusalem to worship, and turning their hearts again to Rehoboam, and wishing that there might be but one kingdom again! He forgot that God is the great King, and that all kings and kingdoms are in his hand. He thought it was his place, and not God's, to keep his kingdom for him. What a mistake! He would not have been king at all if God had not made him one. God is over all, and Jeroboam forgot it!

When an evil thought—a thought that puts self before God—comes to the mind, what should we do? Turn quickly to God, and say, "Please take it away, and help me to really believe thou art the great God."

Jeroboam did not do this. He let the evil thought stay, and it grew stronger and stronger. The more he thought of it, the more certain it seemed that he must himself prevent the people from leaving him. He said to himself, "If they go back to Rehoboam, they will kill me." He forgot that his life was in God's hands. Poor Jeroboam! he did not know that God was his Father, great enough and good enough to take care of him, if he would only be an obedient child and do his will. Make "Sin" on the board in very large letters. Show how thus far it had been sin in thought. Now he put it into words, by talking to others about it. It was growing stronger. We see what came of the talk about it by what Jeroboam did. He made two idols for the people to worship. They were little golden calves. He told the people that these were their gods which brought them out of the land of Egypt. Jeroboam knew that God brought them out of Egypt, but it was easy to lie with his

lips after he had lied in his heart. We lie in our heart when we deny God.

Tell how the idols were set up, one at Beth-el, and one at Dan, and how priests were made contrary to the law of the Lord, and how the king himself went and worshiped the idols.



Think of it, a whole nation led into the sin of idolatry by one selfish thought! We can never tell to what great size one thought of self may grow, and so we should pray every day that we may be kept from seeing self and the things that self wants.

Teach that children are in danger from self-love as much as Jeroboam was. The child who loves self, and must have his own way, forgets God, and that is the saddest of all things. Show how a child may learn to think of God first, even in so little a thing as sharing an apple with a playmate, in giving up the best place in a game, in the smallest act of life.

#### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

I'm poor and blind,  
Husten, sinner,  
God calling yet.  
I lay my sins on.  
Thine forever.  
Yield not to temptation.  
Lord Jesus, I long.  
Must Jesus bear.  
O God, my youth is thine.  
Take up the cross.  
Stand up, stand up.

#### The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. What did Jeroboam fear if the people continued to go up to sacrifice at Jerusalem? **That they would return to Rehoboam.**
2. What did Jeroboam do to prevent this? **Made two golden calves for worship.**
3. When he had done this, what did he say to the people? **"Behold thy gods, O Israel."**
4. Where did he set these golden calves? **One in Beth-el, and one in Dan.**
5. What did the people do? **They worshiped them.**

#### CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

3. Who is the great Teacher of religion?  
Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Redeemer.
4. What do you call His religion?  
Christianity.

B. C. 910-907.]

## LESSON III. GOD'S CARE OF ELIJAH.

[Jan. 18.]

**GOLDEN TEXT.** They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.

Psa. 34. 10.

## Authorized Version.

**1 Kings 17. 1-16.** [*Commit to memory verses 2-5.*]

1 And E-li'jah the Tish'bite, *who was of the inhabitants of Gil'e-ad*, said unto A'hab, *As the Lord God of Is'ra-el liveth*, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

2 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cher'ith, that is before Jor'dan.

4 And it shall be, *that thou shalt drink of the brook*; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

5 So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cher'ith, that is before Jor'dan.

6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

8 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

9 Arise, get thee to Zar'e-phath, which *belongeth to Zi'don*, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

10 So he arose and went to Zar'e-phath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman *was there gathering of sticks*; and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

11 And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

12 And she said, *As the Lord thy God liveth*, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I *am gathering* two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

13 And E-li'jah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

14 For thus saith the Lord God of Is'ra-el. The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.

15 And she went and did according to the saying of E-li'jah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days.

16 And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by E-li'jah.

## Revised Version.

- 1 And E-li'jah the Tish'bite, who was of the sojourners of Gil'e-ad, said unto A'hab, *As the Lord, the God of Is'ra-el liveth*, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying,
- 2 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cher'ith, that is before Jor'dan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cher'ith, that is before Jor'dan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.
- 3 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.
- 4 And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zar'e-phath, which belongeth to Zi'don, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So he arose and went to Zar'e-phath; and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow woman was there gathering sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in the barrel, and a little oil in the cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And E-li'jah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it forth unto me, and afterward make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the Lord, the God of Is'ra-el, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of E-li'jah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. The barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by E-li'jah.

**TIME.**—B. C. 910-907. **PLACE.**—Samaria; the brook Cherith, probably flowing eastward into the Jordan; Zarephath, a Gentile town near Zidon. **RULERS.**—1. Ahab, son of Omri, King of Israel; 2. Aza, King of Judah; 3. Ethbaal, father of

Jezebel, King of the Zidonians. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The providence of God.

**HOME READINGS.**

M. God's care of Elijah. 1 Kings 17. 1-7.

Th. God's care of Elijah. 1 Kings 17. 8-16.

- W. Cause of the drought. 1 Kings 16. 29-34.  
 T. David's confidence. Psa. 23.  
 F. God's care of his people. Matt. 6. 15-34.  
 S. Secret of power. Jas. 5. 13-20.  
 S. A safe refuge. Psa. 94. 1-10.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 220, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 Try us, O God, and search the ground.  
 No. 210, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah.  
 No. 217, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 What a Friend we have in Jesus.

DOMINION HYMNAL.  
 Hymns, Nos. 123, 119, 133.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

- 1. Before the King, v. 1.**  
 What threat had Elijah made to Ahab?  
 Who was Elijah?  
 Who was Ahab?  
 Of what great sin was Ahab guilty?  
 What had God said about withholding rain?  
 (Deut. 11. 16, 17.)  
 Why was famine more to be dreaded in ancient times than even now?
- 2. By the Brook, v. 2-7.**  
 Whose direction did Elijah constantly follow?  
 How were ravens regarded by the Hebrews?  
 What cause was there for Elijah's hiding?  
 Do birds of prey usually bring more food to their nests than they use?  
 Why should the brook dry up entirely because of want of rain?  
 By whom was Elijah really fed? (See Luke 12. 24.)
- 3. In the City, v. 8-16.**  
 How could Elijah hide from the persecuting servants of Baal by going into the region which was the head-quarters of Baal's worship?  
 Was water probably scarce in this Zidonian realm?  
 Did the widow woman expect any such visitor?  
 Did Elijah probably know that the woman he addressed was the one who was to sustain him?  
 In what sort of a barrel would her handful of meal be kept?  
 What is a cruse?  
 Was Elijah's request selfish?  
 How did the Lord fulfill his promise?  
 What sure promise of supply have we? (See GOLDEN TEXT.)

#### Practical Teachings.

Wherein does this lesson teach—

1. An intimate connection between moral character and temporal prosperity?
2. That man's extremity is God's opportunity?
3. That it is always safe to obey God's commands?
4. That the Lord will provide for his servants?

#### Hints for Home Study.

1. Find two miracles wrought by our Lord which somewhat resemble this of the meal and the oil.
2. Find other cases in the Bible where miraculous help was given to widows.
3. Find other cases in the Bible where hospitality to God's servant brought a rich and immediate reward.

#### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

- 1. Before the King, v. 1.**  
 What king is here referred to?  
 Who appeared before him?  
 To what country did Elijah belong?  
 What message did he bear to the king?  
 On account of what sin had God threatened to withhold rain? (See Deut. 11. 16, 17.)
- 2. By the Brook, v. 2-7.**  
 From whom did Elijah receive a message?  
 Where was he told to go?  
 What was said about his food and drink?  
 What did the prophet do?  
 What service did the ravens render?  
 Who feeds the ravens? (Luke 12. 24.)  
 Who really, then, fed Elijah?  
 What happened after a while to the brook?  
 Why?
- 3. In the City, v. 8-16.**  
 Where next was Elijah told to go?  
 Who would there provide for him?  
 Whom did he meet near the city?  
 What request did he make of her?  
 As she went, what did he further ask?  
 What did the woman say about her supply?  
 What was Elijah's answer?  
 Whose promise did he give her?  
 What, then, did the woman do?  
 When did the meal and oil fail?  
 What sure promise of supply have we? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

#### Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. To fear God?
2. To obey God?
3. To trust God?

#### Home Work for Young Bereans.

Find other cases in the Old Testament where beasts or birds were used by God as a means of blessing to his servants.

Find another case in which a servant of God met a woman near a city gate and asked for a drink of water.

### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Into what great sin did the people of Israel fall?  
**Idolatry.**

Who was the most wicked of all their kings?  
**Ahab.**

What great prophet was sent to warn Ahab?  
**Elijah.**

What did he tell Ahab? **That God would withhold dew and rain.**

What did Elijah know this would cause? **A famine.**

Where was Elijah told to hide himself? **By the brook Cherith.**

Who brought food to him there? **The ravens.**  
Where did the Lord send him after the brook dried up? **To Zarephath.**

Whom did he meet at the gate of the city? **A poor widow.**

What did he ask her to bring him? **Water and bread.**

What did she say? **That she had only a little meal and oil.**

What was she about to do? **Make a little cake for herself and her son.**

What did she think would become of them when that was gone? **She thought they must die.**

What did Elijah tell her to do? **To make a cake first for him.**

What did he promise? **That the meal and oil should not fail.**

Whose promise was this? **The Lord's.**

What did the widow's faith bring to her?  
**Plenty of bread.**

### Words With Little People.

*What faith brought to Elijah:* Knowledge of God's plans. Power to help others. Loving care and protection. Daily bread sent by God.

*What faith brought to the widow:* The company of one of God's prophets. Food for herself and child. Greater knowledge of God. Help in time of trouble.

WHAT WILL FAITH BRING TO ME?

### Whisper Motto.

"The Lord will provide."

### General Statement.

In the hour when the cause of God seemed at its lowest ebb, when the worst of kings was on the throne and the bitterest foe of Jehovah sat as queen beside him, when Baal was in full power and the ministers of God were persecuted to the death—in that hour arose the mightiest of the Old Testament prophets—Elijah the Tishbite. We know nothing of his family, his ancestry, or his training, except that he had grown up in the free air of Gilead, and afar from the corrupting influence of the court. He came to stand as uncompromisingly for Jehovah as Jezebel stood for Baal, to match his force and will against hers, and to answer her persecution of the prophets of Jehovah with his own slaughter of the priests of Baal. Unheralded he bursts upon the scene, and uninvited he stands in presence of the king, his rough mantle and unshorn hair marking a contrast with the jeweled and robed courtiers. His message is brief and terrible; no good tidings of mercy, but the warning of wrath. He does not even call to repentance nor invite to faith. He simply forewarns of coming doom, and then stalks forth from the royal presence as suddenly as he came. It is as if a bolt of lightning had shot forth from the sky, and then folded itself away, so suddenly did the rough prophet drop out of sight. We see him again communing with God by the brook, feeding upon the slender store brought by his winged servitors, bearing comfort and support to the widow of Zarephath, and every-where he appears as the man of fellowship with God, of faith, and of obedience.

### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verse 1. Elijah.** His name means, "Jehovah is my God," and the name expressed his character, which was uncompromising and radical in fidelity to the God of Israel. We know very little of his history and nothing of his ancestry. (1) *Not "who" a man is, but "what" he is, is the important question.* **The Tishbite.** Perhaps indicating that he was a native of a place called Tishbi, or Tishbeh, of which nothing is known. **Gilead.** The country on the east of the Jordan, a lofty tableland stretching to the Syrian desert, the home of a rough, uncultivated people. It is noteworthy that the greatest prophets of the past and the greatest preachers of the present began life in the free life of the country. **Said unto Ahab.** For once the wicked king heard the voice of a man and not of flattering courtiers. **As the Lord God of**

**Israel liveth.** His mission was to proclaim Jehovah as living God against dead idols. **Before whom I stand.** He stood before God as his servant, and in an age of persecution made a bold confession. (2) *Why should any follower of the living God be ashamed to own his service? There shall not be dew nor rain.* Perhaps not absolutely none, for then the country would become a desert, but a drought sufficient to convince king and people that it came from the hand of God. Baal was the god of nature, and such a test would show his utter impotence. **But according to my word.** This would prove that he spoke by a divine authority. "How doth he speak when he speaks in God's name?"—*Bishop Hall.* (3) *See in this the fidelity, courage, faith, and obedience of God's prophet.*

**2. The word of the Lord.** How it came we know not; perhaps by an inward impression which he recognized as divine. **Saying.** The object of the command was to protect him from the rage of Ahab, who would seize him, either to put him to death or to compel him to remove the curse from the land.

**3. Turn thee eastward.** From Samaria, where he had met the king. **Hide thyself.** (4) *There are times when God's servants must stand, and times when they may fly.* **The brook Cherith.** An unknown torrent running into the river Jordan from the mountain region. It has been supposed by some to be the *Wady Kelt*, near Jericho.

**4. Thou shalt drink of the brook.** Perhaps this brook would be kept running longer than others to supply his needs. **I have commanded the ravens.** Foul birds of prey were to be transformed in their nature and bring food to God's servant. Some would change the Hebrew *orebin* into *arabim*, "Arabians," and say that he was fed by wandering Arabs; but if we believe in miracles at all, why not accept the plain statement of Scripture! (5) *See how precisely God directs the ways of the servant who trusts him.*

**5, 6. So he went and did.** Reason would have urged a thousand arguments against obedience, but faith "went and did." **Dwelt by the brook.** A lonely place, but Elijah by the brook, alone with God, was happier than Ahab in his palace with a troubled conscience. (6) *There are times for patient waiting as well as active working.* **The ravens brought him.** Each day some food for the day, but none for to-morrow. (7) *"From hand to mouth" is a comfortable way to live, if it be from the hand of God to the mouth of his child.*

**7. After a while.** The time is indefinite, but some have supposed it to have been about a year. **The brook dried up.** Imagine how Elijah's faith was tested as he saw the rivulet gradually lessening in volume. (8) *May it be ours to dwell by the river of life which never runs dry! Because there had been no rain.* So that the fact which on one hand tried his trust was on the other a proof of his prophetic inspiration.

**8, 9. The word of the Lord.** It came to him from above; it comes to us from the written word; and ours is the more sure word of prophecy. **Get thee to Zarephath.** An ancient city, midway between Tyre and Zidon. Zidon, now called *Sarafend*. **Belongeth to Zidon.** Zidon, on the sea-coast, was the very head-quarters of Baal-worship, and the home of Jezebel. A strange command; "as if one flying from a lion was directed to seek refuge in a lion's den."—*Guthrie*. It was a journey through drought-smitten Israel, fraught with dangers, to a place more dangerous still. (9) *God's commands are not to be measured by worldly standards of expediency.* **Dwell there.** See how right under Baal's shadow God was rais-

ing up and preserving Baal's destroyer! (10) *God loves to show how impotent are human plots against his will.* **A widow woman.** The condition of the widows in the East is helpless in the extreme; so that to receive support from such a source was another trial to Elijah's faith. But then Ahab would never search for the prophet in such quarters. **To sustain thee.** Yet in so doing she was herself sustained and blessed. (11) *They who contribute to God's cause receive more than they give.*

**10. He arose and went.** Notice throughout Elijah's history the promptness with which he obeyed the commands of God's Spirit. **The gate of the city.** An old tradition locates the very spot of this meeting south of the city. **The widow woman was there.** An unpropitious prospect, not encouraging to the fleshly nature, a support from a starving widow! "It was like leaning his whole weight on a support as frail as a spider's web."—*Guthrie*. But Elijah knew that the thread of God's purpose, how frail soever it seems, is a cable that human strength can never break. **A little water.** He was thirsty from his journey; she was famished with hunger; "they shall do each other good, those two,"—*E. P. Hood*. Two atoms with omnipotence behind them are mightier than two kingdoms in Baal's name.

**11. She was going.** In her own need she was mindful of another's need, and was ready to help to the limit of her power. **A morsel of bread.** It was not a selfish request, but was made under divine direction, to show the widow's want and awaken her faith. Perhaps, also, Elijah was not quite sure whether she was the one to whom God had directed him, and spoke to her as a test.

**12. As the Lord thy God liveth.** Her answer showed that she knew Jehovah, the God of Israel, and recognized Elijah as a worshiper, if not already as a prophet. **I have not a cake.** The word indicates "a round cake, baked in the ashes." **A handful of meal.** The meal was probably of barley, the common food of the lower classes. **In a barrel.** Rather, "in a jar," a long vessel of clay, such as is still seen in the East. **A little oil.** Olive-oil in those lands takes the place of butter and lard, and is universally used in cooking. **In a cruse.** Rather, "a bottle;" though the form of the vessel as used in the East varies greatly. **Gathering two sticks.** That is, "a few sticks, a handful." **Dress it.** In the East there is a very little fuel used, and the cooking is exceedingly plain. **Eat it, and die.** The prophet finds need instead of support; and must give before he can receive. Perhaps this was one lesson that he was to learn.

**13. Elijah said.** Elijah knew his God, he remembered Cherith and the ravens; he recalled the manna in the wilderness, and he spoke to strengthen her faith. **Fear not.** How often we find this little sentence of encouragement in the Word! **Make me... first.** This was not from a selfish



desire for his own preservation, for he who had been fed by the ravens knew that God could and would care for him. He spoke by inspiration to test and to strengthen the widow's faith. **Thy son.** There is an ancient tradition that this boy, brought back from death by the prophet's prayer, afterward became his servant, and was the prophet Jonah.

**14. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel.** He was not sleeping, though he seemed to be; he was living, and at hand to verify the word of his messenger. **Meal shall not waste.** There was more than one lesson in this miracle; it showed the reward of faith, the care of God over his own, and it was a living picture of God's cause, slender and

feeble, yet supported by divine power through the days of trial.

**15, 16. She went and did.** Her faith was as mighty as his, and nerved her to surrender her all at the summons of a stranger. Every line of her character as here drawn is fine and noble. (12) *Christ's words to us are, Go and do. May we be ever ready to obey God's call and give to his cause!* **Her house.** Possibly there were others in that household. **Eat many days.** It may have been two years, or even more. What a large reward for one act of faith! **Meal wasted not.** Matthew Henry remarks: "The meal and the oil multiplied, not in the hoarding, but in the spending."

### CAMBRIDGE NOTES.

From a dark and barren period of militarism and revolution the annals of the northern kingdom suddenly came forth into a time of unparalleled grandeur. As ever, it was in the very darkest hour that the reformation dawned. Omri had led the people farther from God than any before him, but his son ousted him far. Himself rather weak and self-indulgent than actively wicked, Ahab supplied all his own deficiencies in evil by his choice of a queen, a woman whose character has been in the imagination of posterity the symbol of absolutely infernal malignity. But strong though Jezebel was she met her match in Elijah, than whom history can present no figure more grand. The splendid simplicity of the Bible narrative will bring home Elijah's greatness more vividly than the most eloquent modern writing could do, but I cannot pass over two master-minds which have worthily treated this great theme. Dean Stanley's chapter on Elijah in the *Lectures on the Jewish Church* may rank with the gems of our literature. Mendelssohn's music is the unapproachable commentary on the sacred text, and those who know it will not wonder at the unique fascination exercised at all times by the great weird prophet, for whom inspired authority is needed to convince us that he was really "a man of like nature with ourselves."

**Verse 1.** The great increase in literary and spiritual power makes it clear that the narrative comes from a new source, very palpably prophetic. The compiler has shown great art in leaving untouched the abrupt opening which so perfectly suits Elijah's character. The lightning might fly figure him—ever flashing suddenly none knew whence, swooping with one dread stroke the appointed victim, and then flashing back none knew whither. **Elijah.** "Jehovah is my God," a name exactly expressing his mission. Comp. chap. 18. 39. **Tishbite.** The only known Tishbite was in Naphtali, but if the LXX. (see margin) is right there must have been another in Gilead. "Tishbite" might also be a family name. Some textual error is not unlikely. **Sojourners.** This reading gives no natural sense,

and the margin is certainly preferable. **As Jehohay liveth.** This appeal to the *living* God is tremendously forceful on the lips of these great reformers, whose mission was to destroy the worship of dead yet deadly idols. The lofty defiance of Elijah's tone reminds us that he stands fearlessly before the first King of Israel who dared to dispute the fact that Jehovah was "the God of Israel." **Before whom.** See note on chap. 12. 6. How constantly Elijah "stood before" the Divine King is strikingly brought out by comparing St. James's statement (5. 17), that this judgment was both brought on and taken away by the prophet's fervent prayer. But neither here nor at chap. 18. 41, is there any mention of prayer—it is only that with such a man all life was prayer. **Dew nor rain.** Comp. chap. 8. 35. This "scourge of God" is terrible indeed in a country annually parched by six months' drought, and only saved from utter barrenness by the "early rains" of autumn.

**2.** Whether from awe or from incredulous contempt, Jezebel seems to have made no effort to detain him.

**3. Brook.** A mountain torrent falling into Jordan on the east, presumably in the wild country of Gilead, whence the prophet came.

**4.** A re-enforcement of the great truth of Deut. 8. 3. It is hardly worth while to mention that some ingenious persons, by reading "Arabs" for "ravens," have triumphantly eliminated the miracle. We may attend to them and their kind as soon as this sort of nibbling criticism can prove that Scripture never meant to describe the supernatural.

**6.** The LXX. reads, "Bread in the morning, and flesh in the evening," which is supported by Exod. 16. 12.

**7.** There is some doubt how long the drought lasted. Chap. 18. 1, says it ended "in the third year" (that is, perhaps, of Elijah's stay at Zarephath); Menander's *History of Ethbaal*, quoted by Josephus, speaks of twelve months; while a tradition preserved in the New Testament (Luke

4. 25; Jas. 5. 17) gives the period as three and a half years.

8. The prophet who, men thought, had caused the drought could not save himself from it; he is safe only because he trusts in God. It needed an Elijah's faith to expect his sustenance from birds of prey and a heathen widow, "will not" and "cannot," being transformed into God's ministering angels.

9. **Zarephath.** Note the emphasis with which this village, on the road between Tyre and Zidon, is connected with the city of Jezebel's father. The deep ravine, unvisited by foot of man, had sheltered him from the hounds of hatred; he was now to escape by seeking the one country where he was most sure of capture. **Commanded.** God's command was simply the unselfish heart with which he had endowed her; the possession of a gift is the command to use it. **Widow.** Throughout the East a very proverb of the extreme want. **There.** Our Lord comments on the privilege withheld from Israel and granted to a country so utterly degraded as Zidon. Scripture twice shows us how, even amid that accursed race, woman could be woman still (Mark 7. 26).

10. **Fetch.** Always a gift of value in such a climate, but costly indeed now. Yet the mere sight of the way-worn traveler dispatched her at once to supply his need.

12. **As Jehovah.** Elijah was marked as a Hebrew by his dialect, intelligible to a Phœnician, but of course distinctive. She appeals to his God, to be more certainly believed. There is as yet no recognition of the prophet, nor of the supremacy of Jehovah. **Cake.** The smallest fragment of baked meal. **Oil.** Used as butter is with us. **Two sticks.** She had to go outside the town to find even one or two castaway bits of wood. **Son.** There is a legend that he became the prophet Jonah; it has small probability.

13. **First.** The practical test of her faith in the prophet's promise, accredited to her, we may suppose, by the convincing force of his voice and bearing. She must, indeed, have been prepared by Jehovah, thus unquestioningly to give up the last morsel at a stranger's word. Man's extremity was God's opportunity here; as the Jewish proverb says: "When the barrel is all but wasted, then comes Elijah."

14. **God of Israel.** Let Baal and Ashtoreth do the same! **Waste.** Apparently, the same "handful" remained in the barrel, never more or less, and each morsel was obtained by an act of faith.

15. **House.** The LXX. encourages us to substitute "son," a small change improving the sense.

16. It is perhaps significant that in this and similar miracles by Elisha and by our Lord there is multiplication but not actual creation. There was a little meal—twenty loaves—five loaves and two

fishes—as though the Creator would not bring something out of absolute nothingness after the primal act of creation was achieved.

### The Lesson Council.

**Question 3.** *What were the leading traits of Elijah?*

1. The most noteworthy trait of this mysterious character was faith in God's word. 2. His obedience to God's command. 3. His fearlessness. He probably knew that a price had been set upon his head, yet he hesitated not to go before Ahab. 4. His boldness in denouncing sin, even though it be found in the king. His searching "Thou and thy father's house" is strikingly similar to Nathan's "Thou art the man." 5. His weakness—such as despondency and impatience—which he exhibited soon after his victory on Mount Carmel.—*Rev. H. W. Ewing, B.D.*

Unbending integrity, sincere piety, unflinching courage, and unailing energy and zeal. These traits are exhibited in his constant and unquestioning obedience to God, not only when obedience seemed to lead in safe paths, but when gravest peril threatened. They are further shown by his God-trusting habit, by his patience under trial, by his uncomplaining submission to solitude and passive waiting when God so ordered it, and by his tireless activity whenever and wherever duty called.—*Joel W. Eaton, S.T.D.*

1. Splendid physical courage. To stand before such a king as Ahab and deliver the awful message which had been intrusted to him required the spirit and daring of a hero. 2. Wonderful patience and self-control. A hero in the presence of a crowd is often a coward in solitude; but Elijah was as mighty in the desert as in the palace. 3. Rare devotion and humility. Though the honored prophet of God, he was willing to share the plain fare and scant comforts of the little home in Zarephath, and wait patiently for years the will and purpose of God. 4. A faith which was the mightiest ever known among men. His faith as an iron hand opened and closed the heavens at will.—*J. Wesley Johnston, D.D.*

### Analytical and Biblical Outline.

#### Elijah's Fidelity Rewarded.

##### I. THE FIDELITY OF ELIJAH.

- 1. Boldness.** "Said unto Ahab," v. 1.  
"Be thou strong.... courageous," Josh. 1. 7.  
"Be strong in the Lord," Eph. 6. 10.
- 2. Faith.** "Thus saith the Lord," v. 1.  
"Evidence of things not seen," Heb. 11. 1.  
"Staggered not at the promise," Rom. 4. 20.
- 3. Obedience.** "Did according," v. 5.  
"By faith Abraham.... obeyed," Heb. 11. 8.  
"Do whatsoever I command you," John 15. 14.
- 4. Trust.** "Dwelt by the brook," v. 5.  
"Trust in the Lord," Ps. 87. 8.  
"Be careful for nothing," Phil. 4. 6.



## II. THE REWARDS OF ELIJAH.

1. **Insight.** "Word of the Lord came." v. 2.  
"Secret of the Lord....with them." Psa. 25. 14.  
"They are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2. 14.
2. **Guidance.** "Turn thee....hide thyself." v. 3.  
"I will guide thee with mine eye." Psa. 32. 8.  
"Thine ears shall hear." Isa. 50. 21.
3. **Care.** "Ravens brought....bread." v. 6.  
"Thou shalt be fed." Psa. 37. 3.  
"God shall supply all your need." Phil. 4. 19.
4. **Blessedness.** "She, and he....house." v. 15.  
"Ye shall be a blessing." Zech. 8. 13.  
"Ye are the salt of the earth." Matt. 5. 13.

## Thoughts for Young People.

## The Honors of God's Follower.

We see in Elijah a man who stood forth openly, avowedly, uncompromisingly, as a follower of G-d. He received for this, great privileges, which we can have on the same terms.

1. *There is the honor of insight into the divine purposes.* He knew what others knew not, because, living in communion with God, the divine secret was with him (verse 1).

2. *There is the honor of divine guidance.* Every step was under God's direction, whether to Samaria, Cherith, or Zarephath (verses 2, 8, 14).

3. *There is the honor of divine care.* God's child is safe, for his Father's arm is around him. While others famish, he has food, even though birds may bring it (verse 6).

4. *There is the honor of becoming a blessing to others.* Not only is his own life preserved, but he becomes the means of preserving other lives (verses 13-16).

## Lesson Word-Picture.

Who is this that steps before the idolatrous Ahab, one day, and announces a solemn purpose by the despised Jehovah? Dressed like a prophet, stern of mien, rugged of feature, with bold front, with commanding voice and gesture, Elijah suddenly confronts Ahab. "Who is it prophesying no dew, no rain?" ask the smooth-voiced courtiers. "Frenetic, fool, madman, liar!" "Whence did he come, this thunderbolt?" wonders the astonished Ahab. "Shall he be suffered to go away?" asks more than one of those about the throne.

Stop him? He has gone like a lightning flash out of the summersky. Look eastward! There is a solitary traveler speeding toward the Jordan. His life is in danger. He turns not to the right nor the left. A brook flashing down through a valley is in his thoughts. A wild ravine in which to hide is somewhere ahead. And there it is shadowy and secluded. In its depths is the brook Cherith, clear,

cool, sweet, a shaft of crystal, a stream of silver, a flow of life toward the Jordan. O, how eagerly the prophet must have stooped, quaffed those waters, and then thanked God for Ch'rih and a hiding-place in this valley of deliverance!

But food—whence will that come? He will need none to-night, and the fulfillment of Jehovah's promise will surely arrive in the morning. The prophet may seek, like Jacob, a stone for a pillow, cushion it with his folded mantle, and then lie down at the foot of Jacob's ladder. Morning has come, morning in the dark valley, driving out the shadows and lighting up Cherith's babbling flow. Will it light up any breakfast for the fugitive? Look up! What is that against the bright blue sky? Those dark objects, afloat in the atmosphere, descending now, swooping down toward Cherith! The hungry prophet sees them. How eagerly he watches them! Are those Jehovah's birds of promise? Yes; and they drop a breakfast out of their beaks. Ah, how good to drink of a brook to which the great Shepherd himself has led this hunted one of his flock, and how sweet the bread the same thoughtful hand has brought! And day after day comes the same unfailling supply. But the brook! It is lessening. There is no rain in the mountains. Cherith is drying up! More and more slender is its stream. It runs slower. It is only a thread of silver. It falters, halts, disappears. Only a dry, hot channel under the parching sun.

Whither now, Elijah?

Ahab will surely have thee.

O, how wrathful he was, his anger hotter than the summer sun! But a stronger keeps thee, Elijah. To Zarephath now! Why, that is in Philistin, not Judea! Never mind, speed away! And who will feed thee, a king, a prince, a rich merchant? A woman, Elijah, a widow; and there shall be a wealth of supply—beyond the ravages of the famine! One that you know? No; a stranger, a Canaanite; but obey! Speed on! Zarephath now.

There is a woman who, looking one morning into her meal barrel, sees a single handful, and in her cuse is a little oil. That is all the chance for food in the house, all there is for her and her darling son. She will cook this little remnant. They will eat. They will die. "I will pick up a stick or two outside the city gate and kindle my fire," she says.

She has gone to the gate. She eyes the ground for a precious bit of wood, like a hound hunting up rare game, like a miner searching for gold.

But somebody is nearing the gate—a traveler, heated, parched, hungry, homeless, a Jew.

There is a whisper in his ear: "Elijah, that is the woman."

Yes; that poor stick-gatherer.

She may give him a drink, but, O, how much

faith it takes in Elijah to request and seek food! And now she makes a solemn oath, and gives an inventory of her resources—a handful of meal, a spoonful of oil! That is all; and must he look to her for food, and does he want it? Yes; and the first cake she cooks!

And if she bring it, that barrel of meal shall not waste, that cruse of oil shall not fail, until rain may come. And somehow the poor Canaanite has faith in this stranger, even as another Canaanite woman shall have faith in One greater, whom Elijah foreshadows. Hark! I hear a crackling fire. I smell the cooking food. I see the woman bringing her little offering of charity and trust, and, lo! the barrel wasting not, the cruse failing not! The Lord provides.

### By Way of Illustration.

*Verses 5, 9, and 15. Obedience saved them.* A teacher was explaining to her class the words concerning God's angels, "ministers of his who do his pleasure," and asked, "How do the angels carry out God's will?" Many answers followed: "They do it well." "They do it with all their heart." And after a pause a quiet little girl added, "They do it without asking any questions."

If a boy at school be bidden to cipher and choose to write a copy instead of the goodness of the copy will not save him from censure. We must obey whether we see the reason or not, for God knows best. A guide through an unknown country must be followed without demur. A captain yields complete authority to the pilot. A soldier in battle must fight when and where he is ordered. Afterward he may or may not be able to see the wisdom of his commander. The farmer must obey God's natural laws of the seasons if he would win a harvest; and we must all obey God's spiritual laws if we would reap happiness here and hereafter.

A Negro preacher once said: "Brethren, whatever the good God tells me to do in his blessed book, dat I'm gwine to do. If I see in it dat I must jump through a stone wall, I'm gwine to jump at it. Going through it belongs to God—jumping at it belongs to me."

"Fear not!" "Fear not!" If there were an ant at the door of thy granary, asking for help, it would not ruin thee to give him a grain of thy wheat; and thou art nothing out a tiny insect at the door of His all-sufficiency."—*Spurgeon*.

Wesley, preaching at Doncaster, told of a Romanist woman who had broken her crucifix and went to her priest crying out, "Now I have broken my crucifix I have nothing to trust in but the great God." Wesley exclaimed, "What a mercy she had a great God to trust in." A Romanist priest who was present was powerfully affected. "The great God to trust in" opened his eyes to the truth, and

he subsequently became an earnest and faithful follower of Christ.

In the days of the Reformation Brentius of Wurtemberg, being pursued by persecuting soldiers, escaped into a hay-loft, and concealed himself under the hay. The soldiers entered the place and ran their bayonets up through the hay without detecting him. Every day for fourteen days a hen laid an egg in the hay, which was his only means of support. Then the supply ceased, which he took as an intimation of Providence that it would now be safe to come out from his concealment. He found that the soldiers had just left the town, and he was able to seek a place of safety.

### The Teachers' Meeting.

Picture the times when Elijah appeared: Baal-worship, Ahab, Jezebel, Hiel (1 Kings 16. 34), persecution (1 Kings 18. 4), few worshippers of God, altars destroyed, etc.... The reformer—his coming, acts, traits, etc.... Draw map, and trace Elijah's journeys: 1. Gilead to Samaria, and the meeting with Ahab. 2. Samaria to Cherith, near Jericho, and the lessons of faith and God's care. 3. Cherith to Zarephath, and the meeting with the widow. .... Two aspects of the lesson are the human and divine; one the traits of character shown by Elijah: 1. Fidelity to God; 2. Faith in his word; 3. Boldness; 4. Communion with God; 5. Obedience; 6. Trust in divine care. The other is the privileges which he enjoyed as a follower of God: 1. Insight; 2. Divine guidance; 3. Providential care; 4. Made a blessing.... The widow of Zarephath shows: 1. Maternal love; 2. Faith in God; 3. Self-denial; 4. Generous giving; 5. Rewards which she enjoyed.

### References.

FREEMAN. Ver. 10: Sticks for fuel, 307. Ver. 12: The meal-jar, 808; bread-making, 11; the expression "two" used to signify a few, 678.... FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Vers. 1-6: Poetical, 1271. Ver. 4: Poetical, 310. Vers. 8-17: Prose, 9632. Ver. 6: Prose, 2062, 2063, 2322, 2323; Poetical, 2373; Prose, 5894, 8774, 8775, 8777, 8778, 9376. Vers. 9-16: Poetical, 1246, 1348. Vers. 9-17: Poetical, 4113. Ver. 14: Prose, 2211, 8932, 11567, 12072, 12073, 12074.

### Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Our Father's Care.*

*Introductory.* Recall the golden calves. Ask who made them, what for, where they were set up, and what commandment was broken by worshipping them. Tell how this sin of idolatry grew among the people, and how at last God said he must punish Israel. Make or pin up a crown on the blackboard.

This may stand for the King of Israel. What was his name? No; it was not Jeroboam. He had been dead a long time, and five kings followed in his evil ways. Now Ahab was king, and he was worse than all who had gone before him. He married a wicked heathen woman named Jezebel, and he built an altar for Baal, and worshiped him.

Show a picture of the prophet Elijah. If one cannot be had make a prophet's staff on the board. Tell that God did not leave Israel in ignorance of their sin. He sent a good man to teach them the worship of the true God. But they would not hear him. Describe the meeting of Elijah and Ahab. It made Ahab angry to be told that God would punish Israel. He was angry enough to kill Elijah, but God would not let him.

Show a picture of the globe. Tell that God made it, and all things upon it. He is the ruler of all. He sends day and night, wind and rain. He keeps us in life; no one can live a moment without him. God said he would not send rain or dew upon Israel. Teach that he wanted to make them see that he was God. Impress the lesson that nothing is so bad for a nation or a person as to forget that God lives and reigns. We forget this when we put any thing before God.

Point out the Jordan on the map. Near this was a brook named Cherith. Here the Lord told Elijah to go and hide. He drank water from the brook, and every day the ravens brought him food to eat. God sent them. Elijah was doing God's work, and God took care of him. God can send birds on his errands. The birds belong to God. Do we think of it when we see them?

A long time passed, and no rain or dew fell. The brooks dried up, and the sheep and cattle died for want of water. The ground was so dry and hard that nothing could grow in it for people to eat. Every body was hungry. People were dying for food. What did Elijah do when the brook Cherith dried up?

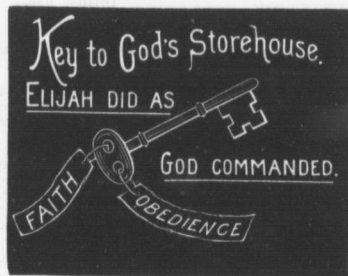
Away over here in Zarephath lived a good woman who believed in God. She was a widow and had one little boy. Elijah did not know her, but God did. He told Elijah to go Zarephath and let this woman care for him. Tell how Elijah met her gathering sticks to cook her last meal. She believed that when this was eaten she and her boy would have no more food, and would soon die of hunger. Tell how Elijah spoke the word of the Lord to her, and how fully she believed it. Help the children to see how her own and her child's lives were saved by her faith in the word of the Lord.

This story teaches us two great lessons. Print in large letters, "Faith," and "Obedience." Teach that faith is just believing. Ask some child if he believes his mother will give him his supper to-night. If he does, he will not ask some stranger to feed him. He has faith in his mother. Let children tell who in this lesson show that they have

faith. Who were obedient? Not only the prophet and the birds also. If a woman can obey God, cannot a child?

What is a path for? Yes; to walk in. There is a path to heaven. We must keep in the path, or we shall not get there. How can we do this? By faith in the Lord and obedience to him. Sing, "The Lord will provide."

### Blackboard.



**EXPLANATION.** Our Father is rich, not only in houses and lands, but in every thing needful for the body and soul. He fed Elijah, and filled the barrel with meal and the cruse with oil, but he first told Elijah what to do, and he did it with unquestioned faith. He places in our possession the key to his granary; it is the key of faith and obedience. Pray for grace to keep it and use it.

THE LORD WILL PROVIDE.

### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

The Lord's my.  
Though troubles assail.  
How firm a foundation.  
Guide me, O thou.  
He lendeth me.  
Never alone.  
In some way or other.  
Lead, kindly Light.  
All my doubts.  
Seeds of promise.  
We plow the fields, and.

### The Lesson Catechism.

(For the entire School.)

1. What did Elijah tell Ahab? That it would not rain for years.
2. What fed Elijah when he hid from Ahab? Ravens.

3. Where did God send him when the brook dried up? **To Zarephath.**

4. Whom had God commanded to sustain him? **A widow woman.**

5. What was her entire wealth? **A handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse.**

6. What wonderful thing did God cause? **The meal wasted not, and the oil did not fail.**

#### CATECHISM QUESTION.

5. Are there any other religions in the world? There is only one Divine Teacher, and only one true religion; but there have been many false teachers, and there are many false religions.

**B. C. 904.] LESSON IV. ELIJAH AND THE PROPHETS OF BAAL. [Jan. 25. GOLDEN TEXT. How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him. 1 Kings 18. 21.**

#### Authorized Version.

**1 Kings 18. 25-39.** [*Commit to memory verses 28, 39.*]

25 And E-li'jah said unto the prophets of Ba'al, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress *it* first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under.

26 And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed *it*, and called on the name of Ba'al from morning even until noon, saying, O Ba'al, hear us. But *there was* no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made.

27 And it came to pass at noon, that E-li'jah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he *is* a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.

28 And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.

29 And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the *time* of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that *there was* neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

30 And E-li'jah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord *that was* broken down.

31 And E-li'jah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Ja'cob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Is'ra-el shall be thy name:

32 And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.

33 And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid *him* on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.

34 And he said, Do *it* the second time. And they did *it* the second time. And he said, Do *it* the third time. And they did *it* the third time.

35 And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

36 And it came to pass at the *time* of the offering

#### Revised Version.

25 And E-li'jah said unto the prophets of Ba'al, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under. And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Ba'al from morning even until noon, saying, O Ba'al, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped about the altar which was made. And it came to pass at noon, that E-li'jah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is musing, or he is gone aside, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.

28 And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lances, till the blood gushed out upon them. And it was so, when midday was past, that they prophesied until the time of the offering of the *evening* oblation; but there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. And E-li'jah said unto all the people, Come near unto me; and all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was thrown down. And E-li'jah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Ja'cob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Is'ra-el shall be thy name.

32 And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord; and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid it on the wood. And he said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt-offering, and on the wood. And he said, Do it the second time; and they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time; and they did it the third time. And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the *evening* oblation, that E-li'jah the prophet came near, and said, O Lord, the God of A'bra-

of the evening sacrifice, that E-li'jah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of A'bra-ham, I'saac, and of Is-ra-el, let it be known this day that thou art God of Is-ra-el, and that I am thy serv- nt, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

38 Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.

ham, of I'saac, and of Is-ra-el, let it be known this day that thou art God in Is-ra-el, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou, LORD, art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God.

**TIME.**—About B. C. 904. Three years after the last lesson. **PLACE.**—The eastern extremity of Mount Carmel. **RULERS.**—1. Ahab, son of Omri, King of Israel; 2. Jehoshaphat, King of Judah. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—True and false religion.

#### HOME READINGS.

M. Elijah and the prophets of Baal. 1 Kings 18. 25-29.

Tu. Elijah and the prophets of Baal. 1 Kings 18. 30-39.

W. The challenge. 1 Kings 18. 17-24.

Th. Answer by fire. 2 Chron. 7. 1-7.

F. Joshua's call to decision. Josh. 24. 14-24.

S. Helplessness of idols. Psa. 135. 13-21.

S. The wisest choice. Deut. 30. 15-20.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

No. 118, New Canadian Hymnal.

Just as I am, without one plea.

No. 86, New Canadian Hymnal.

Come, ye sinners, poor and needy.

No. 96, New Canadian Hymnal.

"Alms: persuaded" now to believe.

#### DOMINION HYMNAL

Hymns, Nos. 79, 78, 81.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

##### 1. The Prophets of Baal, v. 25-29.

Where was this great test of the true religion made?

How did the drought come to an end?

Tell what you know about the worship of Baal.

Why is it that worshippers of false religions so often tend to physical extravagance?

What did Elijah mean when he said, "He is a god?"

Was it right for Elijah to mock these priests?

What was the hour for offering of the evening sacrifice?

Does the popularity of any belief prove that it is right?

Does religious earnestness, of itself, save? Is answer pleasing to God?

##### 2. The Prophet of Jehovah, v. 30-39.

Why did Elijah take twelve stones?

What was the purpose of digging the trench about the altar?

Why did he repeatedly soak the wood and bullock with water?

Is appeal to God ever in vain?

Was God's cause really any stronger because these people now indorsed the true worship?

Were the people any safer and happier after indorsing it?

#### Practical Teachings.

Where do we learn in this lesson—

1. The duty of avoiding the appearance of evil?
2. That God is not moved by the quantity of our prayers?
3. That popularity does not make the cause of God right?
4. That earnestness does not always prevail?
5. That truth always prevails?

#### Hints for Home Study.

1. Read the account of Elijah's meeting with Obadiah.
2. Write down the singular order in which the various articles were consumed.
3. Make a list of as many revelations of God "by fire" as you can recall or find.
4. Ascertain a singular symbolic meaning that the Hebrews attached to numbers such as 3 and 4, and 7 and 12.

#### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

##### 1. The Prophets of Baal, v. 25-29.

What challenge had been given to the priests of Baal? (Verses 22-24.)

What did Elijah command them to do?

How long did they call on their gods?

What answer did they receive?

What, then, did they do?

What did Elijah say in mockery?  
 What did the prophets then do?  
 How long did they continue their efforts?  
 What response did they receive?  
 What says God's word of those who call on  
 idols? (Heb. 2. 19.)

**2. The Prophet of Jehovah, v. 30-39.**

What did Elijah bid the people do?  
 What did he rebuild?  
 How many stones did he rebuild into the altar?  
 Why did he take this number?  
 What did he make about the altar?  
 What did he lay upon the altar?  
 What, then, did he bid the people do?  
 How many times was this done?  
 At what time did Elijah offer his prayer?  
 Upon whom did he call?  
 What was his prayer?  
 What answer came from the Lord?  
 What did the people do?  
 What did they say?  
 What challenge does this story give to us?  
 (GOLDEN TEXT.)

**Teachings of the Lesson.**

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. The folly of worshiping false gods?
2. The duty of worshiping the true God?
3. That God honors his true worshippers?

**Home Work for Young Brethren.**

Find the story of God revealing himself from a  
 flaming bush.

Find the account of a prophet who was taken to  
 heaven in a chariot of fire.

Tell the name of a people who were directed in  
 their travels by a pillar of fire.

Find an account in the life of Christ when he  
 was enveloped in a flame and light.

Recall a strange scene where on the head of each  
 member of a company of earnest worshippers there  
 sat a tongue of fire.

Tell how you think flame is typical of God.

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER  
 SCHOLARS.**

What was the name of Ahab's wicked wife? **Jezebel.**

What did she teach the people? **The worship of Baal.**

What did Elijah want to do? **To destroy idolatry.**

What did he get Ahab to do? **To call all Israel to Mount Carmel.**

How many prophets of Baal came? **Four hundred and fifty.**

What did Elijah say to the people? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

What did he tell the prophets of Baal to do? **To offer a bullock upon an altar.**

What did he say he would do? **Offer a bullock upon another altar.**

Whose God did he say would be the true God? **The one that answered by fire.**

How long did the prophets of Baal pray to their god? **All day.**

Did they get an answer? **No; an idol cannot hear.**

What did Elijah then do? **He built an altar to the true God.**

What did he offer upon it? **A bullock.**  
 To whom did he pray? **To the God of heaven.**

How did the Lord answer? **He sent fire to burn the sacrifice.**

What did the people say when they saw this? **"The Lord, he is the God."**

**Words with Little People.**

CHOOSE—REFUSE.

We all do one or the other. Every day—many times a day—we choose to do right or refuse to do right! When we choose the right, we choose God; when we refuse the right, we refuse God.

**Whisper Motto.**

We will choose God this day.

**General Statement.**

Let us try to picture the scene of that day. The bold mountain summit rising between Esdraelon and Sharon is covered with the watching hosts of Israel. On the west gleams the blue sea, flashing back the rays of the sun. Above arches the deep blue of an Oriental sky, toward which anxious faces have for three years vainly looked for signs of rain. Yonder are assembled nearly a thousand idol-priests, rallying around the banners of Baal and Ashtoreth, confident of their power and expectant of an easy victory, for against them stands but one man, of wild, shaggy form, bronzed from exposure to the elements, and having a scornful, somber look, as he surveys the throng. In his chariot sits King Ahab, uneasily gazing upon the scene, but his queen is not by his side. Two altars are seen standing: one, the altar of Baal, garlanded with emblems of his worship, and surrounded by his priests, but watched warily by the sharp eyes of Elijah; the other, the altar of Jehovah, once built of twelve unhewn stones, but now in ruins, destroyed in the recent persecution. The test is proposed—an offering upon which fire shall be invoked—"and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." We see the altar of Baal piled with the useless sacrifice; we behold the barbaric rites, the priests leaping, dancing, crying around their altar; we hear the solemn sarcasm of the prophet, casting their shame in their teeth. At last there is silence. The exhausted priests cense from their efforts, and the altar stands alone. There has been no voice, nor



any that regarded—Baal is a one dead. And now comes Elijah's hour. He steps forth, and every eye is riveted upon him. Yonder upon the mountain-side stands a ruined altar to the God of Israel, once fragrant with incense, now desolate from the hands of persecutors. The man of God gathers its scattered stones and heaps up twelve into a mass, forming a rude altar, representative of the unity of Israel amid all its separations. Upon it he lays the wood for the burnt-offering, and above it the four quarters of a slain bullock. Then he pours over all jar after jar of water, until altar and offering are soaked through and through. There can now be no deception, and Elijah sends upward his brief, calm petition, while the thousands of Israel stand breathless. A moment, and a blinding light is seen descending from the skies. It falls upon the offering; it consumes the wood; it crumbles the stone; it licks up the water. Jehovah is vindicated. "The Lord, he is God!"

### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verse 25. Elijah said.** What had gone before is briefly told in our Lesson Statement. Read the context closely. **The prophets of Baal.** Many of whom, like the queen their mistress, were foreigners. **Dress it first; for ye are many.** A vein of irony may be seen running through all of Elijah's dialogue. "You are the majority, and shall have the first place." **Your gods.** Idols which were no gods, but which to many of the people seemed to be real personalities. **Put no fire under.** The people watched them closely to see that no fraud was perpetrated.

**26. Dressed it.** Cut it in pieces and laid it on the altar. **Called on the name of Baal.** Just as in India devotees will repeat for a thousand times an inscription to their divinity, and as Mussulmans will cry "Allah! Allah!" for an entire day. **No voice.** The god failed them in their hour of need, just as Satan ever deludes his victims. **Leaped upon the altar.** The marginal translation is better, "leaped up and down at the altar;" that is, around it; just as the excited dervishes will perform wild antics at the Mohammedan worship.

**27. Elijah mocked them.** This was in no playful mood, but in the deepest earnestness; and it showed the absolute confidence of the prophet in his own cause, and his courage in the face of his exasperated enemies. (1) *There are forms of unbelief for which ridicule and contempt are the only fitting answer.* **He is a god.** "Surely he must be a god, so cry louder; for perhaps he doesn't hear!"

**He is talking.** He is preoccupied in conversation with someone else, and cannot hear your cries. **He is pursuing.** Literally, "He has withdrawn himself;" has sought retirement from which you must call him out. **In a journey.** All of these actions, absurd as they seem in a divine being, are spoken of the gods in ancient literature. One writer, in the decay of the Greek religion, wrote, "If the gods should come down to earth now, and act as they did once, they would be put in jail!"

**28. Cut themselves.** Even now, in certain Mohammedan services, dervishes will chew and swallow glass, pierce their cheeks with knives, and insert needles into their arms and breasts in the frenzy of their worship.

**29. They prophesied.** In Scripture the word "prophecy" is used of any case where there was an

utterance of words by persons in a state of religious ecstasy.—*Rawlinson.* See 1 Sam. 18, 10, and 1 Kings 22, 12. **The time of the offering of the evening sacrifice.** Supposed to have been three o'clock.

**30. Unto all the people.** He leaves the priests to their frenzied prayers, and turns to the people, whose return to God is the object of his endeavor. **Come near.** He called them that they might observe his acts, be assured of the thoroughness of his test, and listen to his prayer. **Repaired the altar.** Thereby showing that it was no new worship which he was about to introduce, but a restoration of the old one. **That was broken down.** This verse, together with chap. 19, 10, shows that under the influence of the prophets altars to God had been erected in the ten tribes, probably to counteract the influence of the calf-worship; in the letter, but not in the spirit, a violation of the Mosaic law requiring but one altar. These had been destroyed under Jezebel's persecution, and now Elijah rebuilds one of them.

**31. Twelve stones.** Thus showing that though the unity of "the twelve tribes" was broken outwardly, yet in heart all Israel was one. **Unto whom the word of the Lord came.** Perhaps the prophet repeated this ancient declaration while erecting the altar. **Israel shall be thy name.** This name was given to Jacob twice; first at his wrestle with the angel (Gen. 32, 28), and afterward when he put away the "strange gods" among his family (Gen. 35, 9-10). Perhaps the latter naming is the one here referred to. (2) *God's Church is one, notwithstanding its various organizations.* (3) *Those only who follow their spiritual ancestor are worthy of his name.*

**32. And with the stones.** They were rough, unhewn stones, loosely piled together, with earth in the center. **In the name of the Lord.** Dedicating it, when erected, to the name of the Lord God of Israel. **A trench about the altar.** So that the altar might be soaked with water and at the same time surrounded by it. **As great as.** Deep enough to contain twelve quarts of water, which was amply sufficient to show that no deception was practiced. (4) *God's work seeks no concealment, but is open.*

**33. Put the wood in order.** Upon the altar wood was piled up, and upon the wood the

sacrifice was laid, after being cut into quarters. **Fill four barrels.** This should be "water-jars," or pitchers, such as are carried on the head. **With water.** Some have thought that this came from a covered and unfailling spring near by, which may still be seen. But it was more likely salt water from the Mediterranean Sea, provided in advance by the prophet's order.

**34, 35. The third time.** Thus making twelve jars in all, perhaps one for each tribe. **Ran round about.** It drenched the offering, penetrated every chink and crevice between the stones, and formed a little rivulet around the altar.

**36. Time of offering.** If the work was begun at this hour, as might be inferred from the closing verse of the last lesson, the final act must have been later than three o'clock. But Elijah may have begun his work while the idol-priests were still praying, and have completed it just at this time, when they gave up their vain attempt. **Elijah the prophet.** In this hour, the crisis of his life and the turning-point of the history, he receives his proper title. **Came near, and said.** Contrast the directness, the calmness, and the confidence of his prayer with the frenzied orgies of the Baal priests! **Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel.** The very formula which had been proclaimed at the burning bush of Horeb (Exod. 3. 15), and a suggestion that He who had once before been revealed in fire would in like manner appear again. **Let it be known.** He did not specify the form of the manifestation, though he knew that it would be by descending flame. **That thou art God.** Elijah's great desire was for the glory of God. **I am thy servant.** This was no selfish ambition, but a humble desire that his mission might be recognized as from God.

**These things at thy word.** Not only the shutting up of the heavens for three years, but the slaughter of the priests of Baal, which was soon to be wrought; acts which would expose him to great reproach, and for which a vindication from God was needed. (5) *Happy is that man who acts consciously under a divine direction.* (6) *He who lives for God is sure of God's care.*

**37. Hear me.** The destiny of the nation was at stake. If Elijah's prayer had failed of answer, his whole life would have been in vain, and his people might never have been redeemed. **Turned their heart back.** They had forsaken their fathers' God, and Elijah's highest desire is that they may be brought back to his service. See in Elijah's yearning a foretaste of Paul's self-denying zeal (Rom. 9. 1-18).

**38. Fire of the Lord.** Not a stroke of lightning. The sky was clear. An electrical discharge could not produce the effect. How it was done we need not know. It was as if one intensely brilliant flame came from the sky, consuming every thing. It was a great miracle, but what was it compared with the miracle of the incarnation of the Son of God, and his suffering, death, and resurrection, that our hearts might be turned unto him? **The stones, and the dust.** The intense heat crumbled the stones and reduced the earth to a fine powder and dried up the water in the trench.

**39.** They fell on their faces. Overwhelmed by the glory of the divine manifestation. **The Lord, he is the God.** Perhaps it would be better to read, "Jehovah, he is the God," the only God, for Baal was "no god." Thus in a day the nation professed itself God's people; but the popular faith soon passed away, and on the morrow Elijah found himself alone once more.

#### CAMBRIDGE NOTES.

The magnificent scene on which we now enter is the crisis of the reformation in Israel. No event in all history shows so mightily what God can do through one man. As the scene opens we see an apostate nation ruled by a heathenized king and a heathen queen, the worshipers of Jehovah hiding in caves and holes from triumphant persecution, and Baal's kingship undisputed as that of the sun in heaven. The shades of night descend on the glades of Carmel when that momentous day is past, and lo! Israel has made the heavens ring with the shout of allegiance to Jehovah. The priests of Baal lie in their blood by the Kishon's turbid stream, and the king himself obeys the word of the awful prophet, who has stood alone with the banner of the Lord of hosts, and carried it to victory. It was a "decisive battle," though the sword of Jehu had yet its crowning mercy to fulfill—just as Marathon was no less the decisive triumph of Greece because Salamis and Plataea were needed to whip Xerxes back to Persia.

The kings who rose on the ruins of Ahab's accursed house "did evil," it is true, "in the sight of Jehovah," but the state religion was always the worship of Jehovah, though debased by the symbols introduced by Jeroboam. Alone, like Luther at Worms, the great reformer accomplished his life's task, and through the breach he made there poured the host of his successors to restore righteousness and peace in the desolation of the idol-blasted land.

**Verse 25.** Tradition has marked a spot near the highest eastern point of Carmel, commanding views of Jezreel, and a glimpse of the sea, whose name, El Maharrakah, "the sacrifice," very plausibly commemorates the event. **Prophets.** The word denotes all who are believed to be the exponents of a deity's will. It therefore is used for false and venal prophets, self-appointed, of Jehovah, and for prophets of false gods, as well as for Jehovah's chosen messengers. **Baal.** "Lord," the same as the Babylonian Bel was the most universal deity

of the Shemites. He represented especially the sun as the productive power of nature. The numerous local cults of Baal account for the frequency of the plural Baalim. Strictly speaking, the Phenicians were not polytheists, for Melkarte, Moloch, etc., were only manifesta-tions of Baal, and Ashtoreth was his female counterpart. Hence, "g-d," not "gods," in this verse. **Many.** And of course the majority must triumph! **Put no fire.** Legend adds that their attempt at fraud was miraculously defeated. Their evident awe of Elijah supplies a better explanation.

**26.** Mendelssohn depicts with matchless power the progress of this prolonged invocation, the standing type of the "vain repetitions" by which heathens in name and in fact have always sought to win their idol's ear. The quiet melody, rising through more and more hurried movement to frenzied passion, and ever quickened by the prophet's ringing scorn, represents perfectly to the mind—it is of course far too beautiful to represent to the ear—that harsh and formless chant, the swelling eagerness of the apostate Israelites as they agonize to wring an answer out of that mocking silence. **Limped** (margin). Go, perhaps, more probably. It is a stronger form of the word by which Elijah describes (verse 21) the halting gait of the people as they stumbled uncertainly after Jehovah or Baal. The "limp" will denote their dance round the altar.

**27.** Bitter sarcasm like this does not often invade the profound seriousness of Scripture. It is thoroughly in character on Elijah's lips, and addressed not to ignorant heathen worshipping according to their light, but to Israelites who had deliberately exchanged light for darkness. **A god.** And therefore can answer. Elijah's keen satire fastens on the necessary corollaries of making gods in the likeness of men; the dignity of Zeus or Apollo could not have stood such an exposure. **Musing.** In telling contrast with Him whose eternal counsels need no present maturing. **Journey.** While Jehovah is ever in every place. An excellent parallel appears in the Homeric journey of Zeus to banquet with the Ethiopians, which delays the fulfillment of Aelilles's prayer. **Sleepeth.** "He that keepeth Israel slumbers not nor sleeps."

**28.** They take him seriously, without a suspicion that his godship is being made a fool of! Faster flies the awkward dance, while swords (margin) and lances are thrown from one to the other, the wounds unheeded as the frenzy grows more wild.

**29. Prophesied.** Such a word to describe these ravings finely brings out the fact that they stood in the same relation to their god as Elijah did to Jehovah. **Oblation.** Offered in the temple during the late afternoon. The twice repeated note of time strikingly points the religious solidarity of Judah and repentant Israel. **Neither voice.**

How vividly this splendid clause portrays the awful despair of that silence when the listening people had caught the last exhausted whisper of the baffled prophets! Well may we try to realize it, for do not men still turn in their trouble to the dumb idols they have made in their prosperity, only to be mocked in like manner!

**30.** A plausible addition of the LXX. tells us that Elijah bade the Baal-prophets depart. **Altar of Jehovah.** Evidently one of the "high places" regarded with such stern condemnation in later days when the law was no longer the property of the few. In Israel, cut off from the temple worship, the prophets probably tried to control and not abolish these irregular shrines. This altar had been destroyed apparently in Jezebel's persecution.

**31. Stones.** Perhaps the "repairing" is now described. He was following Moses (Exod. 24. 4), and would ignore the unhappy schism which had torn asunder what had been founded as one nation when Jehovah gave the title of honor to their great ancestor.

**32. A two-seah measure** (margin). This measure was less than six gallons, and the sense seems clearly that the trench was deep enough to hold this upright.

**33. Water.** A perennial spring has been discovered near the traditional site of the sacrifice, never known to fail in the worst drought. Hence came the water which was at once to evidence and magnify the sign Elijah called for.

**36. Jehovah.** It is more than usually important to keep the personal name which Elijah repeats with such fervent emphasis. Mendelssohn exquisitely points the contrast between the frenzy of the false prophets and the calm assurance of the true. **The God of.** To the name which describes God as he is, Elijah adds that which commemorates the covenant with his people. **That I.** The prophet has been so prominent in the whole scene that he fears they will give him the glory. But like his successor, the Baptist, Elijah will be only "a voice;" the deed is God's. **These things.** The drought, and the challenge which he had given to Baal.

**37. This people.** A phrase very often used by the prophets to describe unfaithful Israel (Isa. 6. 9; Matt. 15. 8, etc.). **Thou hast.** He speaks of the coming sign and its result as already past. God had revealed his purpose to his prophet—faith, not as usual presumption, "asked for a sign." There is strong emphasis on "Thou."

**38.** The burnt-offering, consumed whole, typified entire consecration to Jehovah. And so as the fire of God consumed the altar which symbolized the people, we read the sign that Jehovah took them once more to his own.

**39. Jehovah, he is God.** Almost identical with the name of the prophet whose mission was thus fulfilled. (See last lesson).

## The Lesson Council.

**Question 4.** *Was it right for Elijah to build an altar and offer sacrifices?*

Yes! He was evidently acting by divine direction, with the purpose of overthrowing the worship of Baal and demonstrating the validity of God's claim upon Israel for service. Elijah's altar, moreover, was not a new one, but a restoration upon the ruins of a former altar of God, which fact was significant of the restored worship of Jehovah; and besides, Elijah built the altar "in the name of the Lord," which implies that all he did in connection therewith was under divine supervision and for the authentication of God's claim upon Israel for worship.—*Joel W. Eaton, S.T.D.*

Yes! And for these reasons among others: 1. The office of the prophet was higher than that of the priest, and when necessary carried with it the priestly functions. 2. He had the example of Samuel for doing a like service, for though Samuel sacrificed unto the Lord, yet he was not of the regular priesthood. 3. At this time the office of the priest was little thought of by the people, for the altars of God were overthrown; and perhaps many of even the chosen priesthood had gone over to the general idolatry. 4. Elijah in this whole transaction was undoubtedly inspired of God. The fire descending upon his sacrifice sealed the honor of Elijah's priesthood.—*J. Wesley Johnston, D.D.*

Why not? He certainly had good precedent. Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice; so, also, did Noah, Isaac, and Jacob. He had a desire to deal openly and fairly with these priests of Baal. Since they must sacrifice to secure the favor of their god, he would place the test on that ground and conform to it. They could have no ground to charge him with jugglery. Besides, it was not a new thing to have altars erected unto the Lord. One was already on Carmel, and he only repaired it. That he did no harm may be legitimately inferred from the result. Since Jewish sacrifices were typical of the great Sacrifice, what harm for this prophet of God to offer a sacrifice?—*Rev. H. W. Ewing, B.D.*

## Analytical and Biblical Outline.

## Elijah on Mount Carmel.

- I. HIS DECISION.
  - How long halt ye?* v. 21.
  - "Cannot serve God....mammon." Matt. 6. 24.
  - "Choose you this day?" Josh. 24. 15.
- II. HIS CONFIDENCE.
  - Choose you....call.* v. 25.
  - "Be not dismayed." Isa. 41. 10.
  - "Be strong....good courage." Deut. 31. 6.
- III. HIS COURAGE.
  - Elijah mocked them.* v. 27.
  - "Speak boldly, as I ought," Eph. 6. 20.

"Thy face strong against their faces." Ezek. 3. 8, 9.

## IV. HIS RELIGIOUSNESS.

*Twelve stones....built an altar.* v. 31, 32.

"Thou shalt worship the Lord." Matt. 4. 10.

"Fear the Lord, and serve him." Josh. 24. 14.

## V. HIS PRAYER.

*Came near and said, Lord God.* v. 36.

"Call....I will deliver." Psa. 50. 15.

"Pray....I will hearken." Jer. 29. 12.

## VI. HIS FAITH.

*Let it be known this day.* v. 36.

"Through faith subdued kingdoms." Heb. 11. 33, 34.

"Have faith in God." Mark 11. 22, 23.

## Thoughts for Young People.

## Truth and Error.

1. *Those who will not believe in God are often more credulous and superstitious than those who worship him.* Witness the follies of spiritualism (verses 26-38).

2. *The difference between truth and error is shown in the fact that one has divine power, and the other is powerless* (verse 29).

## Requisites for Successful Prayer.

3. *A soul in fellowship with God.* As was Elijah (verses 30-37).

4. *A covenant of God with his people upon which the supplication rests.* This is suggested by the "twelve tribes" constituting the covenant people, and by the names of the three patriarchs (verse 36).

4. *An act of sacrifice.* Elijah looked to the virtue of a coming sacrifice; we to one rendered centuries ago.

5. *An earnest desire, which, expressed or unexpressed, forms the burden of the petition.*

6. *Strong faith in God's power and willingness.* Had we Elijah's faith we should see answers to prayer no less wonderful than his.

## Lesson Word-Picture.

"Have you heard what is going on?" says one prophet of Baal to another.

"No; what is it?"

"They are planning for a trial of power, a trial by fire between our Baal and that strange God of Elijah."

"Ha-ha!" is the sneering reply; "may I be there to see Elijah's smoke? It will never become flame."

All the prophets of Baal are there, and with them what a sympathetic swarm of Israelites, crowds upon crowds! But who is it standing opposite to Baal's rabble? How many prophets of the Lord? Only one! How pitifully solitary he seems! That

unit? Behind the unit is the universe. Back of Elijah is Elijah's God!

But where is the god of the false prophets? Before Baal's altar they begin to shout, "O Baal, hear us!"

They dance, they jump, they implore, they gesticulate. Hour after hour they sweep round in a howling, frenzied circle. Over against them is Elijah, calmly looking on and fearing naught. At noon he taunts them:

"Ha-ha! Baal is a god. He is talking. Shout louder! He is on a journey. Call him home! Baal is asleep. Wake him up!"

How they feel the thrust of his words, like the prick of an ox-goad. They shriek, they yell, they are crazy with fear and anxiety. It is noon when Elijah mocks them. They rave and dance and jump more furiously. They draw their knives. They pull out their lancets. They hack breast and arms and legs. Such a devil-possessed troupe; their faces, hands, and bodies besmeared with blood; their features distorted with rage; their voices hoarse; their souls drunk with fury and hate and the devil's inspiration. O, why cannot the noonday sun shoot a kindling beam down upon their altar? That sun is Jehovah's. It shoots out no arrow for Baal. Still the pandemonium goes on. More and more frenzied, more and more devilish are these mad, cutting, leaping, howling, whirling circles of hell.

At last the transient sun says it is time for the evening sacrifice, the old Hebrew evening prayer. Hallowed commemoration! It goes back to the days of Solomon, of David, of Samuel, of Joshua, of Moses in the pilgrim-way—back to the rites of the tabernacle. Consecrated time! Beautiful hush of evening prayer, when, in the stillness of devotion, God draws nigh to the praying soul and makes it the holy place of the Shechinah. Will he come now? Elijah believes so. There is an old broken-down altar. With twelve stones for the twelve tribes, as if all of Israel were pleading in Elijah, he mends the ruptured relic. When all things are ready, does he stop there? No; but floods it with water—altar and wood and sacrifice. Wet and drench and saturate it, once, twice, thrice.

"What a crazy man!" say Baal's bleeding, befouled demons.

But hush that vain babble! Be still, be still, every body, every-where!

Beside that altar, against the dense background of curious worshipers, stands out the form of the prophet. He kneels. He lifts his hands, his face, his voice, his heart to Jehovah. He solemnly invokes the descent of Israel's God in fire. His soul agonizes in that supplication. He has finished. You hear the splash, splash, splash of the dripping water one moment. The next? Look, O Israel! Look, O men of Baal! Fire is shooting down! It dazzles, bewilders, awes. It seizes upon that wait-

ing sacrifice, and then bears it away, carries it up in one great, triumphant, consuming sweep of flame!

With a whirl and a crackle and a roar it is all gone, the very water, all borne away to heaven.

But look again! There is another sight, there is another sound! Israel is bowing down, one prostrate mass of worshipers all over the plain; while, like the sea roaring, swells that great shout, "The Lord, he is the God!"

### By Way of Illustration.

"Elijah said unto all the people, come near." "The priests of Baal went up alone. They were afraid to have their people witness. Now I understand why on the Baal side the doors are covered with green baize and the windows with crimson. Elijah was not afraid of his tests. He prayed, 'Jehovah, God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel!' That is the reverent but straightforward address to his God of a man who spoke to a person just as I would address you, looking straight into your eye. The priests of Baal went about their praying as did a modern infidel, who in great trouble offered this prayer: 'O God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul!' Elijah does not talk in that style."—*Dr. C. F. Deems.*

"I am thy servant." "We see Luther going solitary out of convent gates and attacking, single-handed, the colossus of Roman Catholicism. Against Romish artifices, poison, ambush, assassination, inquisition, God was his security. When one day he was in front of the Augustine cloister, a stranger who held a pistol concealed under his coat accosted him: 'Why do you go thus alone?' 'I am in God's hands: he is my strength and shield. What can man do unto me?' Upon this the stranger turned pale and fled away trembling."—*Dr. A. T. Pierson.*

"John Knox, the leader of the Scottish reformation, adopted as his maxim: 'One with God is a majority.' No wonder that Queen Mary said of his prayers, that she feared them more than a Scandinavian army!"—*Dr. A. T. Pierson.*

"When I was a student at Princeton Professor Henry had so constructed a huge bar of iron, bent into horseshoe form, that it used to hang suspended from another iron bar above it. Not only did it hang there, but it upheld four thousand pounds weight attached to it. That horseshoe magnet was not welded or glued to the metal above it, but through the iron wire coiled around it there ran a subtle current of electricity. Stop the flow of the current one instant, and the huge horseshoe dropped. So does all the lifting power of a Christian come from the currents of spiritual influence which flow into his heart from a living God. The strength of the Almighty One enters into the believer. If his



connection is out off, in an instant he becomes weak as any other man."—*Dr. T. L. Cuyler.*

*Golden Text.* "The way that you behave makes you plead on both sides of the case. For which are you retained? It is ineffably mean for a lawyer to take retaining fees from a plaintiff and work for the defendant. And that is the intense demoralization which your manhood is suffering. You treat clergymen handsomely, take them to your homes, and behave toward them as if you were on that side of the case. And yet when you go down to your business and hear our Christ blasphemed you never defend him. You come to church publicly and then go and worship Baal secretly. If the Lord be God, follow him."—*Dr. C. F. Deems.*

### Teachers' Meeting.

Briefly review events directly connected with this lesson....1. *A mountain*—where? appearance? 2. *An assembly*—who summoned it? who composed it? why had the people come together? 3. *A rebuke*—who gave it? to whom? for what? do any of us need it? 4. *A proposition*—who made it? what was it? how received? 5. *An altar*—to what God? for what special test? with what result? 6. *A mockery*—by whom? of whom?... Notice the time—three years and a half after the drought began; hour of evening sacrifice, just when the offering was laid on the altar in Jerusalem....*The place*—Carmel; the sea; brook Kishon; plain of Esdraelon; Jezreel in the distance; a word-picture....*The persons*—people; priests; king; Elijah; were these all? One more—God was there! What divine attributes were manifested on that occasion?...*The events*—altar; wood; offering; water; prayer; fire; adoration....*The teachings*: How should we pray as shown in this lesson? What traits of character are we here recommended to seek? On which side should we be?

### References.

FREEMAN. Ver. 26: Repetitions in prayer, 645. Ver. 26-28: The worship of Baal, 184. Ver. 27: The habits of a heathen god, 309. Ver. 28: Lacerations in idol-worship, 310; "lanquets," 555. Ver. 33: "Barrels," 308. Ver. 36: The hour of evening sacrifice, 311....FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Prose, 9842, 1620-1622, 3243, 3731-3736, 4235, 4237, 4239, 4243-4248, 5003, 7145, 7146, 7109, 7264, 7265, 7910, 7913, 7920, 8141. Poetical, 766. Ver. 26: Prose, 4550. Ver. 27: Prose, 3877. Ver. 33: Prose, 6299, 11383.

### Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT.—*The Living God.*

Print "Elijah." Who was he? What great trouble came upon Israel? How was Elijah fed

during the famine, etc. Tell that the famine lasted three years and a half. Ask if God loves to keep good gifts from his children. Read from the Bible Matt. 7. 11.

Tell the story given in the first twenty-four verses of the eighteenth chapter of 1 Kings, briefly and pointedly. To do this, careful study will be necessary. It is a mistake that one does not need so accurate and complete knowledge of a lesson in teaching a class of little children as in teaching adults. One needs to be fully furnished to deal with fresh young minds whose very simplicity is often confounding!

*Lesson Plan.* To describe the great meeting. To show that God is not on the side of falsehood. To teach that faith can afford to be bold.

1. Make an outline of a mountain. Name it Carmel. Here Elijah called the great meeting. What is school for? Yes; to teach lessons. God was going to teach his people Israel the greatest of all lessons on Carmel that day! Let us see if we can learn the lesson.

How long had the famine lasted? Why did God send it? Once a naughty, stubborn little boy had to be shut into his own room two whole days before he would listen to his parents and promise to obey. They loved him all the time, and punished him because they loved him. God loved the Israelites, though he had to punish them so long.

There was one man at this meeting on Carmel who believed in God. I will make a long mark to stand for him. What was his name? See, he stands alone on this side. We will call this "The Lord's side." Over here, on "Baal's side," are a great many prophets. I will make marks, and you may count. Who can count a hundred? There were four hundred and fifty of Baal's prophets at this meeting.

Off here stand the Israelites. There are a great many of them. They see Elijah alone on the Lord's side. Then they see all these prophets on Baal's side, and they say, "That must be the right side. See how many are Baal's friends!"



What are they going to do? Read slowly, calling back by questions as you read the instructions given in verses 23 and 24.

2. Make an altar on the board. If possible, procure a picture of Baal to pin to the board. Now they have killed the bullock and laid it on the altar. They are praying now to this ugly image to send fire to burn the sacrifice on the altar. Can an image hear? No, Tell how the prophets of Baal pray louder and louder; how they run around the altar and jump upon it and cut themselves with knives until the blood runs down upon the ground. Still the idol does not answer. He is not alive; he cannot hear.



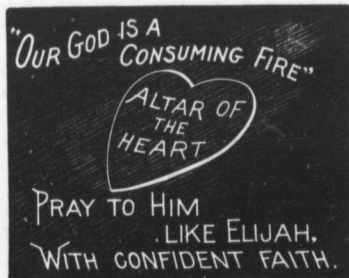
This ugly image is set up there in the place of God. We do not worship an image like this, but if there be any thing we put in God's place, that is our idol. May be it is money, nice clothes, good times, our friends; whatever it is that takes God's place, it cannot hear and help us if we are in trouble. Tell how long the prophets of Baal prayed to him, and how, at last, they had to give up.

3. Now it was Elijah's turn. See how these wild and wicked men have torn down the altar. Elijah has to build it up again. He uses twelve stones—one for each of the tribes. He does not hurry. He lets the people see all that he does. How still it is! All are watching to see what will be done. Now the bullock is laid on the altar. Elijah sends men down to the sea to bring a great deal of water to pour over the sacrifice and the wood. There was so much of it that it ran down and filled a little ditch that he had made around the altar.

Hark! Elijah is praying. Do you want to know what he said? [Read the prayer very reverently from the Bible.] To whom did he pray? Did God hear? Yes; for he is a living God. See! the fire falls right from the sky upon the altar! It burns every thing, even the stones of the altar!

Tell how the people fall upon their faces and own that God is great. Now they have learned the lesson that God wanted to teach them. Have we learned it? Do we know that God is alive to-day? that he is the God of truth? that all which is false must perish? that we need not be afraid to stand alone with God?

### Blackboard.



EXPLANATION.—After reviewing the lesson, the superintendent calls attention to the blackboard, and makes the following application. No Christian now offers burnt-offerings on an altar of wood and stone. With the coming of Christ that kind of sacrifice passed away. Neither is there such worship as that of the priests of Baal. In place of such offerings to God we now offer our hearts; and

if we do it in sincerity, God will by his grace kindle a living flame therein that will burn up all the bad, and remain a holy fire all our lives through. Let us pray, like Elijah, unto him—with confident faith—that the fire may come.

“Come Holy Spirit heavenly Dove,  
With all thy quickening powers;  
Kindle a flame of sacred love  
In these cold hearts of ours.”

### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

Dare to do right.  
Keep to the right.  
Blow the trumpet.  
Jesus shall reign.  
Arise, go forth to conquer.  
Stand up for Jesus.  
Tell it out.  
Father, lead thy little.  
No compromise.  
We'll help the cause.  
God speed the right.

### The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. What question did Elijah ask the Israelites? **How long halt ye between two opinions?**
2. What challenge did Elijah make to the false prophets? **To have Baal light his own sacrifice.**
3. How did the prophets of Baal spend this weary day? **In fruitless prayer.**
4. What did Elijah do? **He erected an altar to the true God.**
5. What did he pour over the sacrifice? **Four barrels of water.**
6. What then happened? **The fire of the Lord came down.**
7. What did the people say? **The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.**

### CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

6. How did Jesus Christ show that He was a Teacher sent from God?  
By performing signs and wonders such as could be performed only by the power of God.
7. In what other ways did He show this?  
By the heavenly wisdom, the authority, and the graciousness of His teaching.

### Topics for the Young People's Prayer-Meeting of the Epworth League.

- Jan. 4. Pressing Forward.** Phil. 3. 13, 14; Heb. 12. 1, 2; 1 Cor. 9. 24.  
**Jan. 11. On Whom Shall we Trust?** Psa. 115. 9-11; 37. 3, 5; Psa. 118. 8, 9.  
**Jan. 17. The Trust Committed to Us.** 2 Tim. 1. 14; 1. Tim. 1. 11; Ezra 8. 28, 29.  
**Jan. 25. Believing without Seeing.** John 20. 29; 1 Pet. 1. 8; Heb. 11. 1.

## Book Notices.

*Illustrated Notes, a Guide to the Study of the Sunday-school Lessons for 1891.* By JESSE L. HURLBURT, D.D., and ROBERT R. DOHERTY, Ph.D. 8vo. Pp. 395. New York: Hunt & Eaton. Price \$1.25.

*Select Notes, a Commentary on the International Lessons for 1891.* By F. N. PELOUBET and M. A. PELOUBET. Octavo. Pp. 389. Boston, Mass. W. A. Wilde & Co. Price \$1.25.

These books both cover very largely the same ground and are both the result of several years of experience in the production of similar volumes; each we think is an improvement on any of the former volumes of the series. They are both well illustrated and have maps and diagrams explaining the lessons, suggestions for teachers, library references and the like.

A specialty in the volume by Drs. Hurlburt and Doherty is the large number of quotations from distinguished writers and commentaries, over 350 in number. It gives also original and selected exposition, plans of instruction, illustrative anecdotes, practical applications, archaeological notes, etc.

Dr. Peloubet's volume has an excellent chronology of the Old Testament. Either of these books or both of them together are about all the critical apparatus that the teacher needs for the study of the lessons for 1891. They are remarkably cheap, only \$1.25 each.

W. A. Wilde & Co. also publish three grades of a Scholars' International Question Book, primary, intermediate and senior. Price 12 cents.

All the above may be procured at the Methodist Book Rooms, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax.

*Aunt Chloe and Her Young Friends.* By MRS. E. J. RICHMOND. Pp. 253. New York: Hunt & Eaton. Toronto: William Briggs.

This is a pathetic story of the moral trials and triumphs of the son of an infidel father and a pious mother. The book has a distinctly religious purpose, and will be greatly helpful to young people.

*Geraldine, a Tale from Real Life.* By NORA BUTLER. Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier. Pp. 192. Toronto: William Briggs. Price 70 cents.

This is a rather sombre and pathetic story. The story of a girl orphaned of her mother, whose father, a Church of England rector, marries a woman of fashion, who betrays her high trust. Sorrow upon sorrow refine and purify the noble girl, and after long years of trial and probation, her High Church prejudices are broken down, and she finds her life's consummation in a marriage with a Presbyterian Minister.

*Maidie's Problem, and One of Themselves.* Two stories by MARGARET SANGSTER. Pp. 148. New York: Hunt & Eaton. Toronto: William Briggs.

This is a book about and for King's Daughters. We especially commend it to young Epworth Leaguers, and indeed to all who seek to the most of life by making it helpful to others. Mrs. Sangster is one of the sweetest Christian singers of the day. In this volume she shows herself as successful in prose as in verse. The cover bears a silver cross, with the touching device. "In His name," and the book is an appeal to live noble Christian life and *in hoc signo vinces*.

*Won by Love: The Story of Irene Kendall.* Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier. Toronto: William Briggs. Pp. 255. Price 70 cents.

We had the pleasure of reviewing a few months ago the strongly written story of the "Old Distillery." The present volume is by the same author, and she sustains her reputation as a vivid and dramatic writer. It is in the familiar and attractive form of a girl's diary, and gives glimpses of the innermost thoughts of a girl's heart. After much hard discipline, "at eventide there is light." The young soul walks in Beulah land, and exclaims, "Mother, mother, in all that blessed heavenly land, there will not be one ransomed soul so blessed as I, in the two precious souls to whom, next to my Saviour, I shall owe my being there."

*The Dominic; or, Reminiscences of a Girl's Life.* By SARAH H. BRADFORD. Pp. 265. New York: Hunt & Eaton. Toronto: William Briggs.

Mrs. Bradford is the authoress of a number of very successful Young People's books. This will be found, we think, one of the most interesting and instructive of the series. A considerable part of the volume describes the adventures of an American family in Europe. It has its amusing aspects, as also the difficulties of the honest Scotch housewife with the French language. She got great comfort in attending religious services one day by understanding three words of the sermon, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego." Our authoress has little sympathy with the Russian women studying at the University at Zurich, whom she describes as "boisterous, beer-drinking, cigar-smoking creatures," who were constantly seen about the streets with tarpaulin sailor hats, hair cut like men, long ulsters, and cigars in their mouths—the disgust of men, as they were, the detestation of the women. The sketches of life in Heidelberg, Dresden, etc., are very instructive as well as very interesting.

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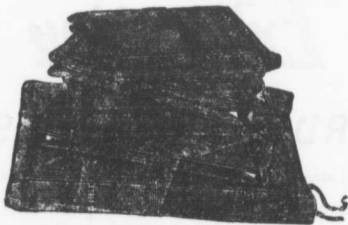
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