

SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

VOL. 8.]

APRIL, 1875.

[No. 4.

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THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL BANNER

IS designed to afford aid to Sunday-School Teachers and Heads of Families in the religious training of the young, and to excite throughout the country a deeper interest in Sunday-School work.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

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VOLUME VIII.]

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Sweeping through the Gates.

BY THE REV. ALFRED J. HOUGH.

"I am sweeping through the gates, washed in the blood of the Lamb."—*Last words of the late REV. ALFRED COOKMAN.*

ONE more has swept through the portals of light,

All the crimson-like wool, all the scarlet washed white,

Hallelujah! they crown him! Hallelujah! they sing,

Grave, where is thy victory! death, where is thy sting!

They hail him! they greet him! the glorified throng!

As he comes home to meet them, and join in their song.

One more has gone from the reapers below,
Bearing rich sheaves for the Master, we know.
Who'll stand in his place, his sickle to wield,
Who'll bind up the sheaves unbound in the field?

An entrance abundant he won while he toil'd,
For he "swept through the gates" with garments unsold.

Oh, glorious hour! the brightest, the last,
Sweeping through portals where Jesus had pass'd,

Wash'd in his blood, and lost in his love,
Made ready to meet him, and praise him above.
Oh, world! what are worth all thy kingdoms and States,

To a soul as it sweeps, blood-wash'd, through the gates?

The gates of the city are shut night nor day,
For the ranks of the blood-wash'd are sweeping that way;

They leave us at daybreak, they leave us at noon,

And we, too, shall tread in their footsteps full soon.

Midst the world's chilling frowns, its falsehoods, its hates,

Let us keep our skirts clean, and our front to the gates.

Oh, sin-cleansing blood! Oh, wondrous cross!
Changing to pure gold our natures of dross,

Making life's desert to blossom and bloom,
Filling with glory the shades of the tomb,

Teaching the soul while she patiently waits
To spread out her wings and sweep through the gates.

Let the story go round in the track of the sun,
What the blood of a crucified Saviour hath done.

Shout it north, shout it south, ring it east, ring it west,

That Jesus still gives in this life perfect rest,
The love which casts out every shadow of fear,
A garment pure white, with the saints to appear.

Shall we mourn as for one who shall meet us no more?

Nay! he cannot be dead, but has gone on before.

Shall we offer but tears as we pass to his tomb?
Nay! strew it with flowers, the blossom and bloom,

For he dwells where the willow and grave are
unknown,
And is fed by the Lamb in the midst of the
throne.

Windsor Mills, P. Q.

—○—

Novel-Reading.

I CHARGE YOU, in the first place, to stand aloof from all books that give false pictures of human life. Life is neither a tragedy nor a farce. Men are not all either knaves or heroes. Women are neither angels nor furies. And yet, if you depended upon much of the literature of the day, you would get the idea that life, instead of being something earnest, something practical, is a fitful and fantastic and extravagant thing. How poorly prepared are that young man and woman for the duties of to-day who spent last night wading through brilliant passages descriptive of magnificent knavery and wickedness. The man will be looking all day long for his heroine in the tin shop, by the forge, in the factory, in the counting-room, and he will not find her, and he will be dissatisfied. A man who gives himself up to the indiscriminate reading of novels, will be nerveless, inane, and a nuisance. He will be fit neither for the store, for the shop, nor the field. A woman who gives herself up to the indiscriminate reading of novels will be unfitted for the duties of wife, mother, sister, daughter. There she is, hair dishevelled, countenance vacant, cheeks pale, hands trembling, bursting into tears at midnight over the fate of some unfortunate lover; in the day-time, when she ought to be busy, staring by the half-hour at nothing; biting her finger-nails into the quick. The carpet that was plain before, will be plainer, after, through a romance, all night long having wandered in tessellated halls of castles. And your industrious companion will be more unattractive than ever, now that you have walked in the romance through parks with plumed princesses, or lounged in the arbor with the polished desperado. Oh, these confirmed novel-readers! They are unfitted for this life, which is a tremendous discipline. They know not how to go through the furnaces

of trial through which they must pass, and they are unfitted for a world where everything we gain we achieve by hard, long-continuing and exhaustive work.

Again: abstain from all those books which, while they have some good things about them, have also *an admixture of evil*. You have read books that had the two elements in them, the good and the bad. Which stuck to you? The bad! The heart of most people is like a sieve, which lets the small particles of gold fall through, but keeps the great cinders. Once in a while there is a mind like a loadstone, which, plunged amid steel and brass filings, gathers up the steel and repels the brass. But it is generally just the opposite. If you attempt to plunge through a hedge of burrs to get one blackberry, you will get more burrs than blackberries. You cannot afford to read a bad book, however good you are. You say, "The influence is insignificant." I tell you that the scratch of a pin has sometimes produced the lockjaw. Alas, if through curiosity, as many do, you pry into an evil book, your curiosity is as dangerous as that of the man who should take a torch into a gun-powder mill merely to see whether it really would blow up or not. Only this last week, in a menagerie in New York, a man put his hand through the bars of a black leopard's cage. The animal's hide looked so sleek and bright and beautiful. He just stroked it once. The monster seized him, and he drew forth a hand torn and mangled and bleeding. Oh, touch not evil, even with the faintest stroke. Though it may be glossy and beautiful, touch it not, lest you pull forth your soul torn and bleeding under the clutch of the black leopard.—*Talmage*.

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Childless Churches.

THERE is a great difference between the churches into which one looks now-a-days in respect to the number of children and young people who are seen in the pews at preaching and prayer-meeting services. In some congregations the absence of the young is so marked that a visitor would naturally say, on looking around at a

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regular service, "This is a childless church." There are plenty of children in the families which belong to it, and hosts of young persons in the community around it; but scarcely any are found in attendance upon its services. These things ought not so to be.

God has been pleased to make the preaching of the Word an effectual means of converting sinners and edifying saints; and it cannot fail to be a serious loss to any class, and especially to the young, to neglect these public services in which the gospel is preached. No training of a Christian home or instruction of a Sabbath-school can take the place of God's divinely appointed means of grace in the "public preaching of the word." We venture the assertion that no community has ever been found in which godliness held sway over the people, old and young, unless they were a "church-going people." Teachers in Sunday-schools should therefore labor earnestly, constantly and judiciously to carry every one of his class into the pews for the regular church service. The young will thus be early trained in a good habit, and will find it easier, in after life, to follow the call of duty, because habit has become helpful to them.

How cheerless the house of God if the children are not there. Can he who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me," when he was here in the flesh, be pleased if, when he comes into his Father's house now, he finds the children absent? Nothing will do more to strengthen the bonds of sympathy between the teachers and the pastor, than an earnest effort on their part to bring the children to the church. Pastors would do well to think of the children in their direction of the services, and do as a distinguished minister, who said that he always "took care to put some fodder low down in the rack, so that the lambs could reach it."—*S. S. Times.*

FICTION may be more instructive than real history; but the vast rout of romances and novels, as they are, do incalculable mischief. I wish we could collect all together, and make one vast fire of them. I should exult to see the smoke of

them ascend, like that of Sodom and Gomorrah; the judgment would be as just.—*John Foster.*

Preaching to the Feelings.

THE great apostle declared that his aim was to commend the truth to every man's conscience. All experience from his day down to our own shows that this is the only way of accomplishing the great end of preaching. Yet how many aim only at enlisting the feelings, as if this were enough.

An authentic incident, related by the Rev. Mr. S—, of W—, well illustrates the folly of such a course. A clergyman in — once preached on the death and sufferings of Christ. He was a man of lively fancy and deep sensibility, and he depicted so vividly the sufferings of Christ, that the Saviour was almost visibly crucified before that people. His own heart was moved—he wept—and, in sympathy with him, the audience wept also. He thanked God that he had been able to plead so for his Master. He believed that great good would result from that sermon. As he left his pulpit, and was passing out of his church, a young lady met him, and, with tears in her eyes, taking him by the hand, she said: "Oh, I was never more delighted in my life!—not even in a theatre!" The minister had been preaching to the imagination—had aroused the tender sympathies of the lady; she preached to his heart and conscience.

What does this fact teach? Portray to those unconscious of their guilt and peril the love of Christ in dying for their salvation, and the more faithfully you portray it, the more, indeed, you may arouse their sensibilities, but the whole may only be to them a thing of tragic interest. They will listen and be moved, and they will come again to hear similar exhibitions of the truth, that they may be "delighted, even while they weep." The truth is, if we would have a man appreciate the love of Jesus, and feel its power in his heart, we must first convince him that he is a sinner, in danger of perdition—that Jesus must save him, or he is lost.—*Selected.*

A Liberal Spirit.

RICHARD BAXTER has given this striking personal testimony to the blessing of a liberal spirit:

I never prospered more in my small estate than when I gave most and needed least. My own rule hath been—First, to contrive to need myself as little as may be, and lay out none on need-nots, but to live frugally on a little. Second, to serve God in my place upon the competency which he allowed me to myself; that what I had myself might be as good work for common good as that which I gave to others; and third, to do all the good I could with all the rest preferring the most public and the nearest. And the more I have practised this the more I have had to do it with; and when I gave almost all, more came in (without any's gift), I scarce knew how, at least unexpected; but when by improvidence I have cast myself into necessities of using more upon myself, or upon things in themselves of less importance, I have prospered much less than when I did otherwise. And when I had contented myself to devote that stock which I had gotten to charitable uses after my death, instead of laying out at present that so I might secure somewhat for myself while I lived, in all probability all that is like to be lost; whereas when I took that present opportunity, and trusted God for the time to come, I wanted nothing, and lost nothing.—*Selected.*

A Word at the Door.

THE minister was the last person to go out of the church. As he stood in the porch a young man passed, walking slowly down the street. He looked sick, his face was pale and his whole appearance desponding. The minister spoke a few kind words of greeting, then went his way, hardly stopping to notice the bright and grateful expression that lit up the stranger's face.

A few weeks after, the minister was called to visit a sick chamber outside his parish.

"I dare say you do not know me," said the sick man, stretching out his hand to

the minister, as the latter entered the room. "But I remember you. You once spoke a few kind words to me at your church door."

The minister hardly remembered it, but he sat down beside the sick man with a heart full of sympathy.

"You see, sir, a dying man; at least I feel this is my last sickness," said the young man; "but I cannot die so."

Life was almost over—a short, fast life, abruptly closing without any preparation for life's great end; no present comfort, no future hope—the light of earth fading into blackness. Oh, for some friend to help him in these dark hours! Who? He had no pastor, no Christian friend, no helper in his sore need. His boon companions could do little for him now; their laughter and gaiety were a loathing to his poor, weary heart. But the kind words of the minister had been remembered, and he sent for him to point him the way to heaven.

One may preach by the wayside as well as from the pulpit, and more souls might be won to Christ were kind words oftener spoken at the door.—*Youth's Companion.*

How to Become Happy.

MANY young persons are ever thinking over new ways of adding to their pleasures. They always look for chances for more "fun," more joy. Once there was a wealthy and powerful king, full of care and very unhappy. He heard of a man famed for his wisdom and piety, and found him in a cave on the borders of the wilderness.

"Holy man," said the king, "I come to learn how I may be happy."

Without making a reply, the wise man led the king over a rough path, till he brought him in front of a high rock, on the top of which an eagle had built her nest.

"Why has the eagle built her nest yonder?"

"Doubtless," answered the king, "that it may be out of danger."

"Then imitate the bird," said the wise man; "build thy home in heaven, and thou shalt then have peace and happiness."—*Selected.*

Be Ye Holy. Lord Help Me.

BY JAMES LAWSON.

1 Peter i. 15; Matt. xv. 25.

Lord, help me to be Thine.
 Help me to give myself to thee,
 From sin may I be now made free
 Entirely Thine henceforth to be,—
 Bought with thy blood divine.

Help me to come to Thee !
 Burdened and weak, for he p I cry,
 Behold me now with pitying eye,
 On Thee alone, I now rely—
 Lord, strengthen me.

Help me to trust in Thee !
 To me the power in mercy give
 That I may not alone believe
 Thy word, but now by faith RECEIVE
 The gift of PURITY.

Low at Thy feet I lie—
 O may I now from Thee receive
 That which shall fit me here to live
 Obedient to thy will and give
 A passport to the sky.

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Religious Rights of Children.

CHRIST in consecrating children, consecrated childhood; which is a state not to be lost in general christian sentiment, but having a peculiar place and individual rights. If we believe that Christ redeemed man's whole nature, if we really think baptism to be anything else than a social ceremony we ought to recognise that the admission of the little one by it into the visible church entails on both parents and pastors certain responsibilities, gives the child certain capabilities for improving those rights.

Yet how seldom is this position used in the religious training of a child; for the incentives generally used to induce it to do well are a sweetmeat, a toy, a book, etc., instead of the love of God, the pleasing of the Saviour, the higher moral principles susceptible of cultivation in the youngest child. And yet we say that children are Christ's, bought by his blood, graciously gathered to his arms, heirs by right and favor of that kingdom we are to win through much tribulation. Is it not reasonable and natural that this state of grace

ought to be more distinctly evident, and more sensitive to cultivation in early years than the state of nature?

While I am far from disparaging the frequency and the genuineness of childhood conversions, still ought there to be such a marked necessity for them? Surely they ought from babyhood to be taught to consider themselves as lambs of Christ's fold, from which they never need wander, their privilege being to follow the Good Shepherd from strength to strength, without knowing any of that bitter experience—

“—That dreary space
 Between their present self and past;
 But the full graces of their prime
 May, in their weak beginnings be
 Lost in an unremembered time
 Of holy infancy.”

Yet it is evident, that if children are not brought up in this way, but allowed to cultivate every evil desire and passionate temper, there must be penitential sorrow before radical reform.

The great axiom in bringing up children is, that they should “learn to do right before they learn to do good.” Consider, how the child called “Wonderful” grew up for thirty years in absolute domestic seclusion, learning in silence and obedience the great lessons which he afterward taught for all ages!

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Purity of Character.

Over the beauty of plum and apricot there grows a bloom and a beauty more exquisite than the fruit itself—a soft delicate flush that overspreads its blushing cheek. Now if you strike your hand over that, and it is once gone, it is gone for ever, for it never grows but once. The flower that hangs in the morning empearled with dew—arrayed with jewels, once shake it, so that the beads roll off, and you may sprinkle water over it as you please, yet it can never be made again what it was when the dew fell slightly on it from heaven. On a frosty morning you may see the panes of glass covered with landscapes, mountains lakes, and trees, blended with a beautiful fantastic picture. Now lay your hand upon the glass, and by the scotch of your finger, or by the warmth of the palm, all the delicate tracery will

be obliterated. So there is in youth a beauty and purity of character, which when once touched and defiled, can never be restored—a fringe more delicate than frost-work, and which, when torn and broken, will never be re-embroidered. When a young lad or girl leaves the parents' house, with the blessings of a mother's tears still wet upon the cheek, if that early purity of character be once lost, it is a loss that can never be made up again. Such is the consequence of crime. Its effect cannot be eradicated: it can only be got over.



The Prayer of the Ice-bound.

BY THE REV. W. W. ROSS.

HAIL! thou longed for king of day,
Kindle new thy slumbering ray;
Emblem of the Lord our God,
Break the stern oppressor's rod,
Freeing, in thy daily round,
Winter's captives, long ice-bound;
Quell the tempests madly raging;
Chain the snows from further drifting;
Oppress the doors to stabled kine
That for thee do wait and pine;
Speeding upward to deliver,
Break the bands that bind the river;
Fill the streamlets running low
With the floods of melting snow.
From the mountains to the main
Swelling waters bless thy reign,
List'ning to thy high behest,
Throbbing warm her frozen breast,
Loosed from every burial band
By thy wonder-working hand;
To new life, O let the Earth
At Thy word again come forth!

Wellington Square, Ont.



The Best Way of Learning.

THE method of mental culture to which John Stuart Mill was, as a child, subjected by his father, is deserving of note; for, sadly as that father neglected the spiritual training of his precocious son, he was untiring in his efforts to develop and discipline his intellectual powers. How such a mind was trained is worthy of attention.

The father did not *lecture* his son, but set him early at reading, and then made him tell the substance of what he had read. The son says, that while he was from four to seven years old, his father took daily walks before breakfast, for exercise; and, he adds:—

"In these walks I always accompanied him; and with my earliest recollections of green fields and wild flowers, is mingled that of the account I gave him daily of what I had read the day before. To the best of my remembrance this was a voluntary rather than a prescribed exercise. I made notes on slips of paper while reading, and from these in the morning walks, I told the story to him; for the books were chiefly histories of which I read in this manner a great number."

The true test of a scholar's knowledge, is what he can state of it in his own language to another. And a scholar's knowledge of what he has learned is clearer and more firmly in his mind through his telling of it. James Mill knew the better what his son had acquired, and John Stuart Mill had a new understanding of it and a firmer hold on it, because of these morning way-side walks. What a scholar can tell his teacher of his lessons, proves the attainment thus far made by that scholar.



SURGEON says it always seemed a strange conceit of Coleridge, in his *Ancient Mariner*, when he represents dead men as managing the ship. "But," he adds, "I have seen its parallel: I have seen a Church carried off by dead men—a dead man in the pulpit, dead men in the Sabbath-school, and dead men in the prayer-meeting." So it sometimes happens that our Christian work goes on after Christian faith and earnestness have lost their force.

MISS GRANT, the teacher of a school for Chinese girls at Singapore, one day asked her scholars this question,—“Were you sure of dying to-morrow, what would you do to day?” One said, “she would be getting her grave ready,” which is a very important business among the Chinese; but another with a resolute countenance, said, “I would believe *strongly* in Jesus,”

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A Good Suggestion.

MR. T. A. BANCROFT, Superintendent of the First Presbyterian Sunday School of Bay city Mich., has departed from the usual methods, and runs his school entirely by committees, varying in number from three to seven. The experiment appears to be successful and satisfactory. The list of committees is as follows, a copy of which is furnished to all parties interested:

On Finance.—To provide funds necessary for the maintenance of the School. Expenditures to be made only by their consent, and through their supervision.

For the Care of Poor Children of the School.—To see that none are kept away from the school for the want of suitable clothing, and who are otherwise unable to procure it.

On Entertainments.—To decide if festivals, pic-nics, or other entertainments are desirable, if so, the proper time for the same, and what they shall consist of.

On Sabbath-school Hospitality.—To extend a cordial hand to all new comers and visitors in the school, striving to make all welcome who may meet with us.

On Spiritual Growth.—To consult with our pastor, and to suggest such measures (and assist in the promotion of the same) as will tend to the spiritual growth of our school.

On Special and Concert exercises.—To prepare topics, suggest times, and assist in conducting concerts and special exercises.

On Library.—To see that the library is kept supplied with books, and to make selection of same, when necessary. To report from time to time the amount of funds needed for the library.


On Attendance.—To see that the attendance of the school is kept up, and the number increased by personal efforts, by endeavouring to make our Sabbath-school attractive and of benefit to all that attend; also to proffer suggestions that will tend to the above object.

On Music.—To see that the school is improved in singing, to select new songs for the school to learn, and to attend to other matters pertaining to the service of song.

The librarian and assistant librarians are members, ex-officio, of the library committee. The secretary and treasurer and assistant secretary and treasurer are members of committee on finance. Committees are expected to report on due notice, or whenever, in their judgment, it may be necessary.—*National S. S. Teacher.*

The Sunday School Banner.

TORONTO, APRIL, 1875.

 *Communications on Sunday School Topics invited. Address all communications, Editor S. S. BANNER, Toronto.*

We regret, that in the making up of the Lessons of this number, the Topic and Golden Text are omitted from their proper place. They will be found, however, in the "General Statement." The Catechism Questions and Answers are inserted by mistake at the end of the Primary Lessons.



Temperance in the Sunday School.

THERE is a story told of a little boy who was terribly persecuted by a pugnacious old gander, which he frequently encountered on his way to school. One day, coming upon a flock of goslings, he began mercilessly to stone them to death. Upon remonstrance, he replied, "If I kill them now, they will never grow up to trouble me when they are geese."

The principle that prevention is better than cure, is applicable to more things than the belligerent propensities of geese. It is especially applicable to the manufacture of drunkards. We would not recommend the Herod-like slaughter of the Innocents in order to prevent their growing up to be pests to society; but we would strongly recommend their inoculation with Temperance principles in early youth as a preventive of that terrible result.

And nowhere, we think, can those principles be so well inculcated as in the Sunday School. It is one of our Rules of Society, that no member of the Church "shall buy or sell spirituous liquors, nor

drink them, unless in cases of extreme necessity." Much more should it be a rule, that no child in our Schools should touch, taste, or handle the unclean thing. The children should early be imbued with an intense conviction of the enormous evil of Intemperance.

It is said that Hamilcar, the father of Hannibal, led his son, in the ninth year of his age, to the altar of his country's gods, and made him swear eternal enmity to Rome, the implacable foe of his native land. And bitterly on many a bloody field in after years did he fulfil that youthful vow.

Now we have in our land a more deadly foe than even Rome proved to Carthage—a foe that not merely enslaves the body, but also binds the spirit in chains, and makes it the servant of Satan and sin. We would like to see every child in the land take a vow of eternal enmity to all that can intoxicate, and then fight manfully against it all his life long, till it was at length banished from the earth. By precept and example, and by constant inculcation, this antipathy to an appalling evil may be so entwined in the child's nature, that it will, in after years, give a power of moral resistance in hours of temptation, that may save the man from a drunkard's grave, and from a drunkard's everlasting doom.

In many places Bands of Hope and Temperance Societies are organized in connection with the Sunday School. We have no objection to this, but we think that the School itself should become a Band of Hope and a Temperance Society. We would suggest that each teacher keep a pledge book, and that every scholar be invited to sign a pledge, not only against intoxicating liquors, but against tobacco as well. Many a boy, by the use of tobacco, has been led to the use of liquors, and to all the evil associations of drinking saloons.

Once a month, or perhaps more frequently, a Temperance Meeting might be held, temperance addresses and recitations given, and temperance songs sung. The rising generation would thus grow up with a zeal and enthusiasm in this cause very different from the apathy manifested by an older generation that was cradled in its youth in drinking usages, and grew up with a familiarity with intoxicating liquors that has begotten an indifference to their appalling consequences.

Many of the prisoners in our jails and penitentiaries, and some even of the felons who have paid the penalty of their crimes upon the gallows, have been Sunday School scholars. And almost without exception they trace the beginning of their fall to indulgence in those fiery drinks, that sear the conscience and blast every moral instinct of the soul. If every boy in our school were firmly established in the resolve never to taste a glass of liquor, never to enter a drinking saloon or tavern, never to pollute his mouth with a filthy cigar, would it not be a moral safeguard thrown around them for all their after lives!—a sacred spell in many a trial hour? Would it not help the development of a nobler type of manhood than much that now unworthily claims that name? If every girl had such an intense aversion to intoxicating drink, such a deep conviction of its deadly evil, that she would resolve never to offer it to a guest, never to throw around the wine cup the witchery of her smiles, never to become the temptress, it may be to perdition, of one she loved, never, as a wife or mother, to permit the admission of strong drink in any form into her house, or among her children, ever to use all her influence to dissuade men from this evil and discourage its use, would we not soon have a different state of moral sentiment upon the subject, a different tone of society, and a different

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usage and etiquette with reference to these pernicious beverages?

Teacher, can you urge upon your scholars the evil of intemperance, and encourage them in the principles of total abstinence? or would your own example nullify the influence of your teachings on this subject? See that ye be not yourselves contaminated with the unclean thing, but that with respect to this and all other moral duties, ye be enabled to say to those committed to your charge, "Be ye followers of us, even as we also are of Christ."

Our Progress.

We are glad to inform our readers that the increase in circulation of the BANNER, since its enlargement, is very marked and gratifying. We hope all its patrons will endeavour still further to increase that circulation, and thus greatly extend its usefulness. We hope to make each number an improvement on its predecessor. No pains will be spared to make it in every way worthy of the support of every Sunday-school teacher in the land. In its enlarged form it will contain a large amount of valuable reading matter, which will not be of transient but of permanent value. The Lesson Notes for the year will form an admirable commentary on some of the most important portions of Holy Scripture. While many places in the Connexion show a commendable zeal in using the BANNER, greatly, we are persuaded, to the advantage and increased efficiency of the Sunday-schools in those localities, others, equally able, exhibit a remarkable apathy on the subject.

The following list of the towns and cities taking the largest number of BANNERS is instructive and suggestive, both by its omissions and by the names it contains: Belleville takes 25 copies; Peterboro, 25; St. Johns, N.B., 25; Strathroy,

26; Cobourg, 28; Port Hope, 35; Charlottetown, P. E. I., 52; Kingston, 60; London, 70; Hamilton, 140; Montreal about 200; and Toronto about 300. The School taking the largest number is Great St. James Street, Montreal. To it, therefore, the prize offered to such school by the present writer is awarded, viz, a copy of his "Catacombs of Rome, and their Testimony Relative to Primitive Christianity."

The Sunday-school Advocate.

THE Editor of the Sunday-school periodicals is endeavouring to make them, as far as lies in his power, worthy of the Church for whose benefit they are published. He has therefore introduced a condensed Berean Bulletin into each number of the *Advocate*, and intends to introduce also short comments on the lesson, adapted to the use of the scholars. He will give also in each number a short Biblical study, entitled "Mental Pictures from the Bible." It will be a description of some scene or event of Bible story, painted as vividly as is in his power, yet without the mention of the time, place, or names of the actors, which our young friends must find out for themselves.

It is hoped that this will stimulate them to the study of the Book of books, and prove both interesting and instructive. We want to circulate at least 50,000 copies of the *Advocate* throughout the country, from Newfoundland and the Bermudas to Vancouver's Island; and if our Sunday-schools will only loyally support their Connexional paper, they will enable the publisher to make it thoroughly deserving of their patronage. It will, as soon as arrangements can be made, be printed from new plates on improved paper. A new volume begins with April. This, therefore, is the best time to subscribe.

Death of John Ashworth.

THOUSANDS of our readers will learn with a feeling of sorrow as that for the loss of a personal friend, of the death of John Ashworth, the distinguished Christian philanthropist of Rochdale. The charm of his books brought his readers into loving sympathy with the man, and many of us listened with delight to his words of wit and wisdom during his recent visit to our shores. He was a great lay preacher, who reached the hearts of thousands inaccessible by others. His "Strange Tales" was one of the most marvellous successes of modern times. No less than 10,000 copies were issued from our own connexional press,—a circumstance unprecedented in the annals of Canadian publishing, and in England they sold by the hundreds of thousands. Many through their instrumentality will in eternity rise up and call him blessed.

Book Notices.

We purpose in this department to give Notices of Books suitable for Sunday School Libraries, or Teachers' Libraries. We will be glad if any Superintendent or Minister will send, over their own name, a brief account of any book that they can cordially recommend for insertion in our list of "Winnowed Sunday School Books."

THE LIFE OF CHRIST. By Frederic W. Farrar, D.D., F. R. S., Master of Marlborough College, and Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. Toronto: S. Rose. 8vo. pp., xxix., 472, \$2 50. Large edition, 2 vols., with footnotes and appendix, \$6 00.

More and more, as the ages glide by, do the character and person and work of Christ become the object of keenest interest. He is felt to be the centre of the moral universe. Around Him the great controversy of the times rages. In these latter days, that conflict thickens. All men are taking sides in this controversy. The keenest scrutiny of infidels and

wicked men is concentrated on the life of Christ, to see if they can detect errors or faults in that matchless character; but they "can find no fault in Him." Christian scholars are bringing all their lore to illustrate this holy life. The quickened intellect of the world is more and more directed to the transcendent importance of this subject, and thus is being fulfilled that saying, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

The present Life of Christ is unquestionably the best that has ever been written in the English language. Dr. Farrar has peculiar qualifications for his task. His scholarship is at once varied and profound. For years he has had this subject in contemplation, and bent all his studies to its elucidation. He went to Palestine especially to become so saturated with the spirit of Oriental life, and so thoroughly to examine for himself the secret of the Life of our Lord, that he might vividly reproduce it for English readers. He is thoroughly orthodox and evangelical in doctrine, and shrinks not from confronting the infidel in maintaining the supernatural, the Divine element in the Wonderful Life. To Methodists, the book will have an additional interest, as the work of the son of a distinguished Wesleyan minister. The estimation in which the book is held in England is evidenced by the fact, that no less than ten editions have been called for, at the high price of \$7 50. It is, in fact, one of the most remarkable books of the day.

This work is especially adapted for the use of Sunday School teachers and families, as well as for the study of the minister. Dr. C. S. Robinson remarks in the *Sunday School Times*:—"I have never met any help for a teacher or parent in Bible acquisition, which can compare with it." It is better than any commentary for giving a vivid and graphic conception of the human life of our Lord, and is the best possible help for the study of the Gospels. One of its chief charms is the judicious exercise of the imagination, which makes the dead past live again. It reminds us strikingly in this respect of the brilliant Life of Christ by the infidel Renan, but it is as thoroughly orthodox as that was heretical in its teachings. The following extract, descriptive of the boyhood of Jesus, will give some idea of the beauty of style and manner of treatment: "His outward life was the life of all those of his age and station, and place of birth. He lived as lived the other

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children of peasant parents in that quiet town, and in a great measure as they live now. He who has seen the children of Nazareth in their red caftans and bright tunics of silk or cloth, girded with a many-colored sash, and sometimes covered with a loose outer jacket of white or blue—he who has watched their games, and heard their ringing laughter as they wander about the hills of their little native vale, or play in bands on the hillside beside their sweet and abundant fountains—may perhaps form some conception of how Jesus looked and played when he too was a child. And the traveller who has followed any of those children—as I have done—to their simple homes, and seen the scanty furniture, the plain, but sweet and wholesome food, the uneventful, happy, patriarchal life, may form a vivid conception of the manner in which Jesus lived. Nothing can be plainer than those houses, with the doves sunning themselves on the white roofs, and the vines wreathing about them. The mats, or carpets, are laid loose along the walls; shoes and sandals are taken off at the threshold; from the centre hangs a lamp which forms the only ornament of the room; in some recess in the wall is placed the wooden chest, painted with bright colors, which contains the books or other possessions of the family; on a ledge that runs around the wall, within easy reach, are neatly rolled up the gay-colored quilts which serve as beds, and on the same ledge are ranged the earthen vessels for daily use; near the door stand the large common water-jars of red clay, with a few twigs and green leaves—often of aromatic shrubs—thrust into their orifices to keep the water cool. At meal-time a painted wooden stool is placed in the centre of the apartment, a large tray is put upon it, and in the middle of the tray stands the dish of rice or meat, or *libban*, or stewed fruits, from which all help themselves in common. Both before and after the meal the servant, or the youngest member of the family, pours water over the hands from a brazen ewer into a brazen bowl. So quiet, so simple, so humble, so uneventful, was the outward life of the family of Nazareth."

THE FULL ENVELOPE; OR, GLENNINGS FOR YOUTHFUL READERS. By Rev. Richard Donkersley. New York: Nelson & Phillips. Price \$1 00.

This is just the sort of book that we would like to see supplant many of the weak and

watery tales in our Sunday School libraries. It contains two hundred and fifty pages of racy sketches, gleanings, and anecdotes, all calculated to point some moral or impress some important truth.

THE SQUIRE OF WALTON HALL. By Daniel Wise, D.D. New York: Nelson & Phillips. Price \$1 25.

This is a still better work than the last. The name of Dr. Wise on its title-page is a guarantee as to its fascinations of style. Our highest praise is given when we say that the subject is worthy of the treatment. The story illustrates the infinite superiority of fact to fiction for the purpose of rational instruction and entertainment. It is the record of the wonderful adventures in many lands of a wealthy Yorkshire Squire, who devoted the whole of a long life to a passionate pursuit of natural history. It will gratify even a boy's love for striking incident, and can hardly fail to inspire an enthusiasm for the same fascinating pursuits which so captivated Squire Walkerton.

HELENA'S CLOUD WITH THE SILVER LINING. New York: Nelson & Phillips. Price 90 cents.

This book is less to our fancy than either of those last mentioned. It is one of the story sort, though probably less objectionable than many of the kind. The scene is, in part, laid in Paris. Some useful information may be gleaned from its pages. The moral teaching of the book, so far as we can judge from a brief examination, seems unexceptionable.

A LIFE THAT SPEAKETH: A Biography of Rev. George P. Wilson. By Daniel Clark Knowles. New York: Nelson & Phillips. 12mo., pp. 229.

Christian Biography will ever be one of the most profitable kinds of reading, especially for the young. It is religion teaching by example; and many who would turn from dry didactic discourse, will be charmed into the imitation of a lovely Christian life; and such a life that recorded in these pages conspicuously. The book consists of graphic pictures of his all too short and useful career—his youth in New England, his Californian experience, and his mission work at Lawrence and in Boston. His life was one of unusual consecration to God, and of successful service in his cause. Its very record is an inspiration to duty. Being dead he yet speaketh. The book will be found admirably

adapted for Sunday Schools. We think, however, that it might with advantage have been compressed into fewer pages.

We have also received from Nelson and Phillips several interesting books for the young. **CAMP TABOR** gives a graphic account of the impressions a camp-meeting would naturally make upon youthful minds. **SCHOOL-LIFE** is an instructive and interesting account of the adventures at school of the same young persons introduced in **CAMP TABOR**. They will be especially interesting to those who are now passing through the ordeal of school-life. **QUEEN LOUISA OF PRUSSIA**. This is one of the kind of books we are always glad to welcome. It is both instructive and entertaining. Human history is made up of the acts of individual life. Here we have a picture of a generous and kind-hearted queen, showing that the virtues which constitute a character may exist in all spheres of life. Well-written biographies constitute the most suggestive and profitable reading for the young.

THE CATACOMBS OF ROME. By Rev. W. H. Withrow, M.A. New York: Nelson & Phillips. Toronto: S. Rose.

"Is a most valuable contribution to Christian archaeology. In three books and thirteen chapters, with a wealth of pictorial illustration, it carries us back into the times of the Catacombs. It is as enchanting as a novel, and full of Christian instruction."—*New York Sunday School Journal*.

"Will be found valuable in Sunday School Libraries, as its style is so simple, and its subject matter so interesting that it will be read with avidity by the elder scholars."—*Montreal Witness*.

560 pages, and 134 engravings. Price \$2 50, with usual discount to Sunday Schools.

THE LESSON COMPEND FOR 1875. This little manual is one of the Eclectic Sunday School Library, issued to assist Sunday School Teachers in preparing the lessons of the International series.

It contains notes on each lesson, selected from one hundred and sixty different Commentators, among whom we might mention Alford, Barnes, Bengel, Clarke, Guthrie, Kitto, Lange, Schaff, Spurgeon, Whedon, Wesley, and many others. It is an invaluable aid, and every teacher should possess one. It sells at 60 cents; by mail, 65 cents. On sale at the Methodist Book Room.

THE BEREAN QUESTION BOOK FOR 1875 has

been received. It is so generally known that it scarcely needs any recommendation from us. It contains an outline, with questions on all the lessons for the year. Connecting links, connecting the trains of thought in the different lessons, forms an important feature. We cordially recommend it to the use of Sunday School scholars. Price 20 cents.

CHURCH'S MUSICAL VISITOR: a journal devoted to Music and the Fine Arts. John Church & Co., Cincinnati.

This is a 28 page 4to Monthly Magazine, devoted chiefly to musical matters. The present number has a full page engraving, and eleven pages of music, for the sum of 15 cents, or twelve such numbers for \$1 50.

THE BEREAN LEAVES. These leaflets are now being extensively used by various denominations in Canada, and are found to be a valuable assistance to the Sunday School scholar in preparing the lessons of the International series.

This series is now popular both in England and America, and adopted by nearly all Sunday Schools.

We are printing some 30,000 copies each month of the leaves, and yet we find a great many who have not heard of nor seen them; for their benefit, we append a short description. Some have heard of them, but only have a vague idea of what they are called; for instance, we have had letters of enquiry about the "Bury in Leaves;" another asks for the "Bearing leaves," and others get it "Befrin," etc.

Each leaf contains the verses of the lesson in full, for every Sunday during a month, together with **GOLDEN TEXT, TOPIC OF SUBJECT, OUTLINE OF LESSON, REFERENCES and PARALLEL PASSAGES QUESTIONS and ANSWERS, NOTES to the MORE DIFFICULT PASSAGES, HOME READINGS** for each day in the week, pertaining to the Lesson for the coming Sunday, and **REVIEWS** are given every quarter.

They are very cheap, costing only half a cent each, or even less in large quantities—this enables Sunday Schools to give one to each scholar. Some places are showing their appreciation of them by ordering largely, and others only need to try them to learn their value.

Kingston takes 500; St. John, N.B., 250; Almonte, 150; Brantford, 300; Charlotte Town, P.E.I., 400; Dundas, 225; Goderich, 350; Guelph, 500; London, 500; Oshawa, 200; Port Hope, 250; Toronto, 5,000; and many others places large quantities.

SECOND

LESSON

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INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

THIRD YEAR—1875—APRIL.

SECOND QUARTER: LESSONS IN OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.

SUNDAY, APRIL 4, 1875.

LESSON I.—ISRAEL'S PROMISE. Joshua 24.
14-18.

Berean Notes.

Leader. 14 Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord.

School. 15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell:

L. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

s. 16 And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forget the Lord, to serve other gods:

L. 17 For the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed.

s. 18 And the Lord drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwell in the land: therefore will we also serve the Lord; for he is our God.

HOME READINGS.

Mon. 1 Kings 3. 1-15. Th. Luke 8. 13-21.
Tu. 1 Kings 11. 1-14. Fr. John 13. 21-28.
Wed. 1 Kings 18. 20-39. Sat. John 18. 15-27.
Sabbath. 1 John 5.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

This lesson continues the final address of Joshua before "all the tribes of Israel" at Shechem. In the last review-lesson (March 28) we reviewed with Joshua "God's Mercies to Israel." We now come to the practical ap-

plication of his review in this appeal to Israel. We find as our TITIC states it: *A promise of service promptly made*, and the very language of that promise condensed in the GOLDEN TEXT: "*The Lord our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey.*" The light now shines in Israel. The leader leaves them in a state of prosperity and peace. He had made (see OUTLINE) 1. THE APPEAL, v. 14, 15, and they had made. 2. THE PLEDGE, v. 16-18—of service to Him who is set forth in the DOCTRINE SUGGESTED: *The One God.*

LESSON HYMN.—Tune "Harwell."—9th P. M.

Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow thee;
Destitute, despised, forsaken,
Thou, from hence, my All shalt be;
Perish every fond ambition,
All I've sought, or hoped, or known;
Yet how rich is my condition!
God and heaven are still my own!

Let the world despise and leave me;
They have left my Saviour too,
Human hearts and looks deceive me;
Thou art not, like them, untrue;
And while thou shalt smile upon me,
God of wisdom, love and might;
Foes may hate and friends may shun me,
Show thy face, and all is bright:

QUESTIONS, etc.

Recite TITLE, TOPIC, GOLDEN TEXT and OUTLINE.

1. *The Appeal*, v. 14, 15.

By whom, and to whom, was this appeal made?

What fact stated in v. 29 makes it specially solemn?

What are they asked to do unto the Lord? v. 14.

What are they asked to put away?

What were "the gods" which their fathers served?

What great choice are they asked to make?
v. 15.

What choice like this are we asked to make?
Why should "this day" be the time to settle
the choice?

Recite the good resolution made by Joshua.

2. *The Pledge*, v. 16-18.

What answer to this appeal is made in v. 16?
Four things which God had done are named
by the people in v. 17, 18. What are they?

What pledge did they make at last, and for
what reason?

What reasons are there why we should pledge
ourselves to the Lord?

Why should we do it "this day"?

What lesson may we learn here—

1. Upon whom to serve?
2. Upon how to start?
3. Upon when to begin?

OUTLINES, NOTES, AND LESSONS.

Instead of the OUTLINE given above, one of the following may be used: 1. THE TWO LIVES; 2. THE TRUE LIFE. Or, 1. A CONCLUSION REACHED, ver. 14; 2. A CHOICE DEMANDED, ver. 15. 3. A CHOICE MADE, vers. 16-18. Or, 1. A FERVENT EXHORTATION, vers. 14, 15; 2. A FAITHFUL EXAMPLE, ver. 15; 3. A FRANK EXPRESSION, vers. 16-18. Or, 1. *The service*; 2. *The quality of service*; 3. *The reasons for service*; 4. *The example of service*; 5. *The avowal of service*; 6. *The reasonableness of the service*.

THEREFORE in view of all that God has done:

(1) FEAR—love and reverence and stand in holy awe of Him. And SERVE—let the seeds of holy fear bring forth the fruit of holy service. IN SINCERITY, with no admixture of wrong or hypocrisy and IN TRUTH—knowing and pondering and living up to the truth. These the interior and personal elements. (2) Then renounce—PUT AWAY—all false gods. First the Christian experience, and then it is easy to put away sin. "The expulsive power of a new affection." (3) Then SERVE YE THE LORD. Obeying his commands: a. Ceremonial; b. Intellectual; c. Spiritual; d. Patriotic.

IF IT SEEM EVIL, ver. 15. This service

must be voluntary. It is a reasonable service. You may repudiate it if conscience and reason and true interest do not combine to commend it. God not a "hard master." The GODS—ancestral gods of "OTHER SIDE" of Euphrates in Mesopotamia, whence Abram came. And GODS OF THE AMORITES. Present and dangerous. The hereditary taint increases the power of the present temptation. Guard carefully against both. AS FOR ME, etc. Joshua's words weighed a good deal, for he had spent scores of years in the line of his present resolve. MY HOUSE. He held himself responsible for his own family.

THE PEOPLE. A popular voice, which is often as weak in its will as it is strong in its demonstration. GOD FORBID. A prayer, an invocation—or an expression of surprise that they should even be suspected of forsaking the Lord. Young converts in times of general religious interest make loud promises.

HE IT IS, vers. 17, 18. See the five things they recall by which they feel bound to serve the Lord.

HE IS OUR GOD. So he is, 1. Creator; 2. Preserver; 3. Redeemer; 4. He chose us; 5. We have chosen him; 6. He is our Hope for the future. How true of the Christian to-day!Learn; 1. *The nature, spirit and practical results of true religion are taught here in the words of Joshua*. 2. *The nature, spirit, and practical results of true religion are illustrated here in the character of Joshua*. 3. *The necessity of some religion. Man must have a God. It is not a question of religion or non-religion. It was then and is now a question between a true and a false religion*. 4. *The reasonableness of the religion of the Bible which sets forth the character and claims of the ONE TRUE GOD*. 5. *The impossibility of compromising between the gods of this world and the Lord God of heaven and earth. Our lusts, ambitions, etc., MUST BE PUT AWAY*. 6. *Decision for God is necessary to a Christian character. The will is an important element in the religion of man*. 7. *Decision for God easy to an old man like Joshua, whose life has been a sacrifice to God*. 8. *Decision should be made by each individual without reference to other people. Joshua decided for himself before asking Israel what they would do*. 9. *Decision for God should embrace all who are under our influence and control, so far as we can decide for them or lead them to decide for themselves*. 10. *The double power of inherited tendencies ("your fathers worshipped") and present temptations. What a warfare!*

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An English Teacher's Notes on the Lessons.

BY EUGENE STOCK, ESQ.

It is generally supposed that "Joshua's Warning," which was the subject of the preceding lesson, was delivered at Shiloh where the ark was. But his second address, recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter, was spoken at Shechem. Why two assemblies were called we cannot certainly say; but we can see why a gathering at Shechem would be peculiarly solemn and impressive. First, because of the ancient sanctity of the place. Here God appeared to Abraham for the first time in Canaan, and here Abraham built his first altar to Jehovah. (Gen. 12. 6. 7.) Here Jacob also built an altar, and called it El-Elohe-Israel, (Gen. 33. 20;) here God appeared to him and commanded him to renew the covenant, and here he buried the "strange gods of his family," (Gen. 35. 1-4.) Secondly, because of the memorable scene twenty-five years before, when Israel, led by Joshua for the first time to the Vale of Shechem, and crowding the slopes of Ebal and Gerizim, solemnly rehearsed God's law. (See the seventh lesson of this series.)

Accordingly, at a spot hallowed by such associations, Joshua repeats his warnings and entreaties. But he now does more than this; he calls on the people to do their part; not merely to listen to him, but to speak for themselves, and publicly decide whom they would serve.

Why should such an appeal be necessary? We saw some reasons in our note on chap. 23, but here we see another. Not only was Israel in *danger* of backsliding, but some were actually then living in the very sin warned against. See ver. 22—"Put away the strange gods which are among you." There was, apparently, no open rebellion against Jehovah. As we saw last time, all seemed fair enough. But the evil effects of leaving some of the Canaanites to dwell in their midst were already visible; the victors were already learning the ways of the vanquished; "strange gods" were already privately set up in the houses of the Israelites. Therefore, says Joshua—as Elijah said five hundred years later—"Make up your minds; how long halt ye between two opinions? choose ye this day whom ye will serve." And, acting on the principle that example is better than precept, he adds, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Now notice four things about the answer of the people—"Israel's Promise!":—

1. Observe how ready they are to profess devotion to God. They even resent the imputation that they are halting between two opinions—"God forbid that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods!" (ver. 16.) It is like Hael, (2 Kings 8. 3.) "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?" Or like Peter—"Though all men should deny thee, yet will I never deny thee." Many of those whom we call *good boys* and *girl* are just like this. "Do they love Jesus?" Of course they do. "Are they going to be faithless backsliders, or open sinners?" O dear no—not they! The histories of Hael and Peter and multitudes in all ages, say to us, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

2. See how Joshua meets this self-confidence. Ver. 19—"Ye cannot!" What! cannot do the very thing he has been entreating them to do? No; and he gives the reason. It is no light thing to serve Jehovah. He is "hol'y," and must have pure service. Deeds, not words; the heart, not the mouth; these are God's requirements. And it is true now, as it was then, we cannot give this whole-hearted, single-eyed service, that is, we cannot of ourselves. "Without me ye can do nothing." No, but "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Let us solemnly assure our scholars that religion is no child's play—except, indeed, in this sense, that, like a child's innocent play, it is the happiest thing in the world.

3. Mark the persistence of the people. "Nay, but we will serve the Lord." And again in v. 22, 24. This is a good sign. It is true that "hell is paved with good resolutions," but a downright good resolve is better than nothing, and if it is a resolve to do what we are convinced can only be done *one way*, (that is, in this case, by reliance on God's strength,) it implies an intention to have recourse to that way, and therefore is the first step to success.

4. See the seal and token of the renewed covenant. Vers. 26, 27. It is like giving a copy of an agreement to each party. The promise is "written in the book of the law of God"—here is the handing a copy to Jehovah. A memorial stone is set up which all can see—here is the handing a copy to Israel. And this stone is under *the oak* (not "*an oak*") in Shechem—the very oak under which Jacob buried the

"strange gods," (Gen. 35. 4) as though to remind the people that this covenant is to be the burial of all their sinfulness.

Let our scholars be urged to pray for grace, (1) to *make* the promise of adherence to God their Saviour, (2) to *keep* it.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.

A FAITHFUL PROMISE:		
<i>"We will serve the Lord."</i>		
ISRAEL IN THE RIGHT.	THE LOVE OF GOD OWNS MY SOUL.	"HE IS OUR GOD."
Fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and truth.		

In the blackboard lessons for April we endeavour to make, in connection with the lessons, a personal application of the effect of faithfulness or unfaithfulness toward God.

In *Lesson 1, The Faithful Promise* draws us near to God and encircles us, so that we are held in close communion with him and his Love.

In *Lesson 2, The Broken Promise* changes love to wrath, and the break in the circle lets us fall from him.

In *Lesson 3*, in order that we may be brought back to God, a Saviour is needed to close the broken circle. That Saviour is *Jesus, his Son*.

In *Lesson 4*, where the multitudes of Israel were saved by a faithful few, we wish to show that the multitudes of the world are saved by **ONE:—JESUS ONLY.**

For Senior Scholars.

I.—THEMES FOR BIBLE READINGS.

1. THE FEAR OF THE LORD. Job 28. 28; Prov. 1. 7; 14. 27; Acts 9. 31; Psa. 19. 9.
2. SERVING THE LORD. Exod. 7. 16; 1 Chron. 29. 9; Dan. 3. 17; Matt. 6. 24; Heb. 9. 14.
3. DECISION FOR THE LORD. Josh. 24. 14, 15; Exod. 32. 26; Ruth 1. 16; Psa. 17. 3; John 6. 68.
4. GRATITUDE TO THE LORD. Psa. 105. 1; 18. 49; Col. 3. 15; Eph. 5. 20; 2 Cor. 9. 15.
5. VICTORY THROUGH THE LORD. 1 Sam. 17. 47; Exod. 15. 1, 2; 1 Cor. 15. 57.

6. JOY IN THE LORD. Psa. 5. 11; 21. 6; Isa. 35. 10; Rom. 15. 13; Gal. 5. 22.

7. FOREVER WITH THE LORD. John 14. 1-3; 1 Thess. 4. 17; 1 John 3. 2; Rev. 7. 15; Psa. 73. 26.

2.—SEED-THOUGHTS.

BY L. D. BARROWS, D.D.

1. Why were the Canaanites not driven out, but left as horns in the sides of Israel?
2. What was the influence of Joshua on his generation?
3. Why was the next generation of an entirely different character?
4. What is the great practical lesson taught in that fact?
5. Why was the crime of Israel's apostasy augmented by the fact that God brought them out of the land of Egypt?
6. Why could the Israelites no longer stand before their enemies?
7. What means, *And sold them into the hands of their enemies?*

3. DOCTRINE.

"The One God." Deut. 4. 35; 6. 4; 32. 39; 2. Sam. 7. 22; 2 Kings 19. 15; Isa. 44. 6. 8; 45. 5; John 17. 3; 1 Cor. 8. 4-6; Eph. 4. 6; 1 Tim. 1. 17; James 2. 19.

The Primary Class.

BY LUCY J. RIDER.

For a review exercise to-day it may be well to speak of *time* and *place*. Definiteness in these particulars goes far toward making events seem real to a child.

For example: "How long ago did Christ come into the world? Did Joshua live before or after Christ? How long before? then how long from now? Nineteen and fourteen are—? Yes, about thirty-three hundred years ago.

Sometimes a man lives to be a hundred years old. How many such men would reach back to Joshua's time? Where is the land of Canaan? Point it out on map. Do you know any one who has gone to Europe? He has gone toward Canaan. Israelites still there? No, but the land is the same—river Jordan—Jericho—Jerusalem. Vary to suit the age of your class. Use blackboard, if children understand addition.

Teach the *advance* lesson in connection with "Joshua's warning," which will be readily recalled. "In that, Joshua urged the people not to—? forget God, warned them of—? punishment if they did, promised—? blessings if they

did not. read out therefor ity and in Get the having: "

But t What do Brown's something to get tim 'And if Lord'—if you this d me and m the Lord, an then l nother w sometimes won't go n tion, and I sure about very old a people to that he n But was th the heathr imag-8, et the absur (or the st Could it h people for could be so real, good wood! He the GOLDE for the Isa Show that God's gifts the same as the differ living righ by actual v illustration child may, playmate, Sabbath-sch

qu 29. Well, as a helpless obtain the regenerated

did not. In this lesson he does more, let me read out of the—? Bible, what he said, 'Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth.' What does sincerity mean?" Get the ideas of the children—they are worth having: then, if needful, add your own.

"But they must serve the Lord in truth too. What does that mean? If a boy is sent to Brown's store (one in your vicinity) to buy something, and he buys it at a nearer one, so as to get time for play, does he obey in truth? ... 'And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord—if you don't want to serve him—'choose you this day whom ye will serve; ... but as for me and my house,' my people, 'we will serve the Lord.' Joshua tells what he will do, and another then he asks them to decide. (11.) When mother warns you not to go on thin ice, she says sometimes, 'The pond isn't safe to-day; you won't go near it, will you?'—asks you the question, and makes you reply, so as to feel perfectly sure about it. Just so Joshua, who was growing very old and felt that he must die soon, told the people to choose—wanted to hear their answer that he might feel certain about the future. But was there any other God?" Explain how the heathens around worshipped the sun, stars, images, etc. Show the cases an image—teach the absurdity of praying to it. "Could this (or the stars) hear or see? or answer prayer? Could it help anybody in trouble? Surely, the people for whom God had done so much, never could be so silly and wicked as to turn from the real, good, living God, and pray to a bit of wood! Hear what they said." Read and teach the GOLDEN TEXT. . . . "What had God done for the Israelites? What has he done for us?" Show that health, home, friends, etc., are all God's gifts—that we are bound to serve God, the same as God's people in old times. Mention the different ways children can serve God—by living right, being kind, patient, gentle—and by actual work for Jesus. Remind them (with illustrations, which are abundant,) that even a child may, by prayer and loving words, bring a playmate, a brother, or even a parent, to the Sabbath-school, perhaps to the Saviour.

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

29. *Well, then, trusting in the merits of Christ as a helpless, guilty, and undone sinner, you will obtain the remission of your sins: and being regenerated by the Holy Spirit, will you be enabled,*

by his help, thenceforth to please God and keep his commandments?

Trusting in the merits of Christ, as a helpless, guilty, and undone sinner, I shall obtain the remission of my sins. And being regenerated by the Holy Spirit, I shall be enabled, by his help, thenceforward to please God and keep his commandments: "for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8. 3, 4.)

1 John 3. 9. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.

WHISPER-SONG.

We will serve the Lord,
We will keep his word,
All his ways afford
Sure reward.

SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 1875.

LESSON II.—THE PROMISE BROKEN. Judges
2. 11-16.

Berean Notes.

Reader. 11 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim.

School. 12 And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger.

L. 13 And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.

S. 14 And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.

L. 15 Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed.

S. 16 Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.

HOME READINGS.

Mon. Josh. 24. 19-33. Th. Judges 2. 1-10.
 Tu. Judges 1. 1-21. Fr. Judges 2. 11-23.
 Wed. Judges 1. 22-35. Sat. Isa. 1. 1-20.
 Sabbath. Psalm 2.

I. GENERAL STATEMENT.

After the events of the last lesson, when Joshua had spoken his farewell words, had written in "the book of the law of God, and took a great stone and set it up there under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord," it came to pass that Joshua "died, being an hundred and ten years old." He was buried in *Tinath-serah*, in Mount Ephraim, probably the modern *Tibneh*; not far from Bethel—eight or ten miles. The great deliverer dies. The book that records his life and its achievements is closed. We turn a leaf and find THE BOOK OF JUDGES. It contains twenty-one chapters; gives an account of the three centuries following Joshua, during which time the government of Israel was "a democratic theocracy, a commonwealth in which ordinary government was carried on by local governors, and of which God alone was the Supreme Head." There were during this time *twelve* "military governors who exercised a more or less general authority, and were called by the name of 'Deliverers,' or 'Judges.' These began about fifteen or twenty years after the death of Joshua, and ended about ten years before the election of King Saul—lasting for 310 or 320 years." If we include *Abimelech*, (which some do not,) *Eli*, and *Samuel*, there were FIFTEEN JUDGES, which some one has put into mnemonic order in the following rhyme:

We name the ancient Judges
 Who governed Israel's race,
 When they to Canaan coming
 Received their promised place:
 With *Othniel* beginning,
 Who smote the eastern king;
Ehud who banished Moab,
 And *Shasgar* next we sing.
 Next *Deborah* and *Barak*,
 Who Sisera withstood,
 And smote the hosts of Jabin
 By Kishon's ancient flood;
 Then *Gid'on* of Ophra,
 Whom God to victory led,
Abimelech, and *Tola*,
 And *Jair* of Gilead.
Jephthah the "man of valour,"
Ibzan, and *Elon* write;
Abdon and *Sarason* follow,
 The man of lordly might;

Old *Eli* next recording,
 By noble *Samuel* place:
 These are the ancient Judges
 Who governed Israel's race.

Read the first chapter of Judges to find the doings of the tribes of Judah and Simeon after Joshua's death, with an account in brief of the other tribes. With the second chapter of Judges, vers. 11-18, we hear God's message of rebuke to Israel, for they had broken the vows made by them but twenty years before. Their light had gone out. The favour of God had been withdrawn. The whole story is told in the TOPIC: *A promise of service soon forgotten*. It is reiterated in the GOLDEN TEXT: *They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel*. Psalm 106. 13. It is fully stated in the OUTLINE:

1. THE PEOPLE DOING EVIL.
 2. THE PEOPLE IMPRESSED.
 3. THE PEOPLE DELIVERED.

LESSON HYMN—Tune "Dennis."—S.M.

Is this the kind return,
 And these the thanks we owe,
 Thus to abuse Eternal Love,
 Whence all our blessings flow?

To what a stubborn frame
 Has sin reduced our mind!
 What strange rebellious wretches we,
 And God as strangely kind!

Turn, turn us, mighty God,
 And mould our souls afresh:
 Break, Sov'reign Grace, these hearts of stone,
 And give us hearts of flesh.

QUESTIONS, etc.

Recite TITLE, TOPIC, GOLDEN TEXT, and OUTLINE.

To what promise do our TITLE and TOPIC refer?

Look carefully over Psalm 116, and tell to what people our GOLDEN TEXT there refers.

1. *The people doing evil*, v. 11-13.

Who are here meant by "the people?"

What "evil" were they "doing?" [Seek out from v. 11-13 each evil thing, and write it down for your teacher.]

Of what were "Baalim," "Baal," and "Ash-taroth" the names? [ANS. "Baal" meant lord, or possessor. It was the name of the chief male deity of the land. "Baalim" was the plural form, meaning lords, or gods. "Ash-taroth" was the chief female

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deity. How sad that the people of God, who had been witnesses of so great grace, should have fallen into idolatry !]

What two things named in v. 12 should have kept them faithful to God ?

2. *The people distressed*, v. 14, 15.

Recite the last statement in v. 15.

What cause for this distress is stated at the opening of v. 14 ?

Why was the Lord's anger hot against them ?

Into whose hands did he deliver them ?

Into whose hands did he sell them ?

In what position was the Lord's hand ?

Against whom is the Lord's hand now ?

Into what distress are they brought ?

3. *The people delivered*, v. 16.

From whom did the Lord deliver the people ?

By whom did the Lord do this ?

From a whom do people now need to be delivered ?

By whom does God now do this ?

Where in this subject do we find a lesson—

1. Upon man's weakness ?
2. Upon man's sinfulness ?
3. Upon God's truthfulness ?
4. Upon God's goodness ?

NOTES AND LESSONS.

ISRAEL DID EVIL, ver. 11. An old story. So did Israel himself. So did his sons. So did the generation in Moses' time. Again in Joshua's time. And now the new generation is true to its ancestral weakness. The corrupt blood came from Israel, but also from Adam. And it flows to-day in the veins of both Jew and Gentile. I. D. E. Israel Did Evil. Each reader may say: "I Do Evil." IN THE SIGHT, ver. 11. We know that he sees us and yet sin on. He sees and will not forget. SERVED BAALIM. Plural for Baal. Not one God but many. Chief god among many of the ancient oriental nations. He assumed different forms, performed various offices, and his images were multiplied ASHTAROTH, ver. 13. Plural for ASTARTE. A goddess. Baal attractive because a god visible. Astarte attractive because her worship permitted licentious indulgences. The love of idol-worship involved all baseness and sensuality. It warmed and satisfied the bad blood of a bad race. FORSOOK THE LORD, of course. Cannot serve God and Baal. FATHERS. Forgot Joshua and Moses and Joseph and

Jacob and Abraham. Forgot the Lord's deliverance. Sin stupefies the memory. PROVOKED THE LORD TO ANGER, ver. 12. HOT anger, ver. 14 AGAINST THEM FOR EVIL, ver. 15. GREATLY DISTRESSED, ver. 15. God is just. He is holy. He really HATES sin.

.....Learn: 1. The depravity of our race. 2. The unreliability of human vows. 3. The holy wrath of God. 4. The certain and terrible punishment of sin. 5. The very sins we cherish are the spoilers of our souls. 6. *The great mercy of God.* Read verse 16.

English Teacher's Notes.

In describing the character of those who shall "dwell in God's holy hill," (Psa. 15), David includes "him that sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not." A reference to this will serve well to open the lesson before us. It shows what God thinks of breaking one's word, even under circumstances which most people would regard as releasing them from the obligation. And a promise to serve God, like Israel's—is that "to our own hurt?" Why it is the most directly profitable thing we can do. Then another *a fortiori* argument may be introduced. Is it right to break a promise made to one's enemy, or to a wicked person? If not, what if it be made to a friend, or a good man? Ah, but a promise made to God—what a solemn thing that is.

God is the truth himself. "Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" He is the faithful promiser. 1 Thes. 5. 24; 2 Thes. 3. 3; 2 Cor. 1. 20; Heb. 6. 13-18; 10. 23. And he bids us be like himself, "followers of God, as dear children."

Yet this chapter shows Israel as promise-breakers in that very *Land of Promise* which their promise-keeping God had given them. Strange ingratitude! but not so strange as ours if, now that we have seen the fulfilment of that greatest of God's promises, the promise of a Saviour, we either hang back from promising him our hearts and lives, or, having done so, break the promise given to such a God.

A very interesting lesson, and one not likely to be forgotten, may be made by dwelling on a remarkable feature of the Book of Judges which is first seen in the passage before us. It is this: The whole history of the period is a continual repetition of four successive phases of life, which may be thus designated: Sin, suffer-

ing, supplication, succor. Or thus: Provocation, punishment, penitence, preservation. Or thus: Rebellion, rejection, repentance, restoration. Or thus: Forsaking God, forsaken by God, flying to God, forgiven by God. We have not to force the narratives into these divisions; the divisions do actually express the course of the history again and again.

See it in the third chapter: Ver. 7—sin; ver. 8—suffering; ver. 9—supplication and succor. And again: ver. 12—sin; ver. 12-14—suffering; ver. 15—supplication and succor.

See it in the fourth chapter: Ver. 1—sin; ver. 2—suffering; ver. 3—supplication; ver. 4, etc.—succor.

See it in the sixth chapter: Ver. 1—sin; vers. 1, 2—suffering; ver. 6—supplication; ver. 7, etc.—succor.

See it in the tenth chapter: Ver. 6—sin; ver. 7—suffering; vers. 10, 15—supplication; chap. 11—succor.

See it in the thirteenth chapter: Ver. 1—sin and suffering; ver. 5—succor. Here the third division is only implied.

And so in the summary of the whole history contained in our passage we see it just as clearly marked: Vers. 11-13—sin; vers. 14, 15—suffering; ver. 16—succor; and supplication implied in ver. 18. Also in the historical Psalms: see Psa. 78. 32-34, 38; 106. 34-45.

The same fourfold experience may be observed in some of the biographies of Scripture, particularly those of Jacob, David, Hezekiah, Manasseh, and Peter.

By taking occasion from this lesson to follow with the scholars the foregoing line of thought, the teacher will effect three objects. He will certainly interest them; he will provide them with a key to the whole Book of Judges which they will not easily forget, and which will be available in future lessons; and he will pave the way to an application of unusual impressiveness.

The application suggested is this: There is a certain and inseparable connection between No. 1 and No. 2, and again between No. 3 and No. 4; but there is no necessary connection between 2 and 3. You *sin*—you will *suffer*: that is absolutely certain. (Gal. 6. 7.) You *repent*—you will be *restored*: that is absolutely certain. (Isa. 55. 7.) But you *sin*, you *suffer*—is it certain you will *repent* and be *restored*? Ah no! there is no text to assure us of that, but many instances to the contrary—remember

Cain, Balaam, Achan, Absalom, Ananias. And even when No. 3 does follow No. 2, we have to ask, Is the repentance *genuine*? E-sau and Pharaoh, and King Saul, and Judas, and Simon Magus, repented after a fashion; but no forgiveness followed.

Then a reference to the prodigal son will be a touching close to the lesson. No. 1—"took his journey into a far country." No. 2—"I perish with hunger." No. 3—"I will arise and go to my father." No. 4—"His father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Part of this parable applies to us all. May the *remainder* apply to us likewise!

For Senior Scholars.

1. THEMES FOR BIBLE READINGS.

1. IDOLS CONDEMNED. Exod. 20. 3-5; 23. 13; 1 John 5. 21.

2. IDOLS ARE VANITY. Acts 17. 29; Isa. 41. 29; Psa. 115. 4-8.

3. POWER OF IDOLATRY. Psa. 106. 19, 20, 35, 36; 1 Kings 12. 28-32; Jer. 2. 11.

4. FOLLY OF IDOLATRY. Isa. 40. 18-20; 46. 6; 44. 9, 10; Hosea 13. 2; Rom. 1. 21-23.

5. WARNINGS AGAINST IDOLATRY. Hosea 10. 5; 1 Cor. 10. 7; Ezek. 20. 7.

6. IDOLATRY TO-DAY. 2 Cor. 6. 14-18; 1 John 2. 15-17; Rom. 12. 2; Matt. 6. 24.

7. APPEALS. Matt. 5. 29, 30; Luke 9. 23; John 17. 15; Col. 3. 2; 1 Cor. 16. 13.

2. DOCTRINE.

"*Salvation by grace.*" Rom. 3. 24; 5. 15; Eph. 2. 8; 2 Tim. 1. 9; Titus 2. 11; 3. 5-7.

Blackboard.

A BROKEN PROMISE.

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THE WRATH OF
GOD REJECTS
BY SOUL

"DEPART
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The Primary Class.

Do you know what a promise is? Tell me one. [*Wait a moment until you get several illustrations from the class.*] What did God's people promise Joshua: in the last lesson? [*This question will test the recollection of last week's lesson.*] It is well frequently to refer to previous lessons; it may show whether your plan of teaching is successful or otherwise. Did they keep this promise? [*Repeat verse 11 and the Golden Text.*] It is a very wicked thing to break a promise. Did you ever know any one to break a promise? Any little boy or girl that promised father or mother to be good and then became naughty? To break a promise is sinful, and this is what these people did. They stopped worshipping God and worshipped idols. They prayed to the sun and the moon, and made images of cows and worshipped them. Would you pray to a cow? or to a wooden, or stone, or brazen image of a cow? or to the sun or the moon? This seems to us very foolish, yet this is what the Israelites did. They knew better; they had been taught better; they had promised better. But the trouble was they had fallen into bad company. They lived among a people who did these wicked things, and they became like them. Do you know how much easier it is to learn to do wicked things than to learn to do good things? [*Illustrate by going down hill and climbing up hill.*] And you see the danger of getting into bad company. A little boy, whose father and mother were good people and taught him to be good, went with two or three bad boys whenever he had a chance, although his parents told him not to do so. By and by he became like these bad boys and did the wicked things they did and when one day they were taken up by the police officer for stealing he was taken too. So with these Israelites. God had taught them every good thing, and yet they went with the wicked people around them until they became as bad as they were. Then God punished them, [*Read verses 14 and 15, and let the class repeat it.*] Remember these three things: 1. KEEP YOUR PROMISES. 2. KEEP OUT OF BAD COMPANY. 3. SERVE GOD.

CATECHISM.

OF THE SACRAMENTS.

1. How many sacraments hath Christ ordained in his Church?

Christ hath ordained two sacraments in his Church; baptism and the supper of the Lord.

2. What mean you by the word sacrament?

I mean by the word sacrament an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.

WHISPER-SONG.

Lord, to thee we pray,
Keep us day by day;
May we never stray
From thy way.

SUNDAY, APRIL 18, 1875.

LESSON III.—THE CALL OF GIDEON. Judges
6. 11-18.

Berean Notes.

Lender. 11 And there came an angel of the Lord, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite; and his son Gideon thrashed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.

School. 12 And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

L. 13 And Gideon said unto him, O my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? but now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.

S. 14 And the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?

L. 15 And he said unto him, O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manassch, and I am the least in my father's house.

S. 16 And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

L. 17 And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then show me a sign that thou talkest with me.

S. 18 Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present,

and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again.

HOME READINGS.

Mon. Judges 4. *Th.* Exod. 3. 1-12.
Tu. Judges 5. *Fr.* Zech. 4.
Wed. Judges 6. 1-18. *Sat.* Acts 10. 1-20.
Sabbath. 2 Cor. 12. 1-10.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

Man forgets. God *never* forgets. His promises are "sure." The candle of the Israelites went out in darkness. Oppressed, enslaved, degraded, idolatrous, cowardly—they were as bad off as their forefathers in Egypt. But behold light springs up. God again appears as the Deliverer of his people. We find as the TOPIC says: "A promise to save from a faithful God." And by God's words of encouragement to Gideon, we are reminded of Jesus' pledge to his apostles in the GOLDEN TEXT: "Lo, I am with you *alway*, even to the end of the world." The OUTLINE presents the whole story of "The Call of Gideon" as follows: 1. THE MIGHTY MAN OF VALOUR; 2. THE ANGELIC VISITATION; 3. THE PROMISE OF VICTORY. The DOCTRINE: *The pre-existence of Christ* is intimated in the revelation of the angel to Gideon. Was he not the Angel of the Covenant?

LESSON HYMN.—Tune "Stockwell."—8s & 7s.

Always with us, always with us,
 Words of cheer and words of love;
 Thus the risen Saviour whispers
 From his dwelling-place above.

With us when we toil in sowing,
 Sowing much and reaping none;
 Telling us that in the future
 Golden harvests shall be won.

With us in the lonely valley,
 When we cross the chilling stream:
 Lighting up the steps to glory
 With salvation's radiant beam.

QUESTIONS, etc.

Recite TITLE, TOPIC, GOLDEN TEXT, and OUTLINE.

1. *The mighty man of valour*, v. 11-13. Who is this "mighty man of valour?" v. 11, 12. Who gave him this title? Look carefully at v. 11, and get from it all the facts you can about Gideon.

What is it to be a "mighty man of valour?"

[ANS.—To be a strong, brave man.]

Look carefully at v. 11, 13, 15, and tell whether Gideon was such a man.

Who is said in v. 12 to be with Gideon?

Who in v. 14 to have sent him?

Who in v. 16 promises to be with him?

What in v. 14 is meant by "this thy might?"

[Read Matt. 28. 18-20.]

2. *The angelic visitation*, v. 11-13.

What is an *angel*?

What is an *angelic visitation*?

What facts are told about the angel in v. 11, 12?

What is the angel called in v. 11, and what in v. 12?

By what name did Gideon call him? v. 13, 15.

By what name is he spoken of in v. 14, 16?

Who then was this angel? [ANS. It was he who, as captain of the Lord's host, appeared to Joshua, (Lesson IV, First Quarter,) and who speaks in our GOLDEN TEXT.]

[Read Heb. 1. 14.]

3. *The promise of victory*, v. 14-18.

In whose hands were the children of Israel when the Lord called Gideon? v. 1, 13.

What promise of victory did the Lord make to him? v. 14, 16.

How did the Lord assure Gideon that the victory should be gained? v. 17, 18.

[Recite TOPIC.]

Where does this lesson show—

1. How one may become a mighty man of valour?
2. How the weakest may become the strongest?
3. That God may see great possibilities, where men see nothing but weakness?
4. That humble daily toil does not cut us off from the visits of our Lord?

NOTES, ILLUSTRATIONS, AND LESSONS.

The Story of Gideon.

1. SEVEN YEARS OF SORE DISTRESS BECAUSE OF ISRAEL'S SIN. Judges 6. 1-6. B. C. 1256 to B. C. 1249. [According to other authorities: 1210-1204.] (1) They did EVIL; (2) IN SIGHT of the Lord (knowing him and his law and his providence); (3) Were DELIVERED—(the Lord simply withdrawing his preserving hand) into the power of *near, innumerable, powerful and merciless* enemies. MIDIANITES—remote relation. See Gen. 25. 1, 2. AMALEKITES. Gen. 36. 12. CHILDREN

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OF THE EAST—other of the numerous tribes east of Jordan. When God lets us drop into the old bondages on account of our sins, what hordes of foes, visible and invisible, crowd upon us! The elements that bring ruin are all about us. It is an easy thing for God to visit our sins upon us. (4) DENS, CAVES, etc. What *cowards* sinners against God are! What *earth-worms*! There will be another hiding in the caves. See Rev. 6. 15-17. (5) The enemies of Israel come to ENCAMP, ver. 4. Cattle, tents, camels, came to *stay* until the land was thoroughly "used up." (6) IMPOVERISHED, ver. 6. Like prodigal son, Luke 15. 14-16. What poverty sin brings now!

2. THE CRY OF ISRAEL UNTO THE LORD, ver. 6. Comp. Psa. 107. 13; Hosea 5. 15. Prodigal son's resolve; Luke 15. 17, 18. In our poverty we remember whom in our prosperity we forget.

3. THE ANSWER OF THE LORD TO ISRAEL'S CRY, vers. 7-10. Sent a PROPHET. Some unknown human teacher. But what a message! Reminders of former mercies and former sins. Law before Gospel. The "prophet," ver. 8, before the "angel," ver. 11.

4. THE MAN GIDEON. (1) *Name*. Called Gideon in Heb. 11. 32. In HEB. means "ree-feller"—"warrior." Afterward called JERUBBAAL, Judges 6. 32. HEB. *Contender with Baal*. (2) *Father*. His father JOASH—contracted form of *Jehoash*. He was an ABIEZRITE; that is, a descendant of Abi-ezer, the great grandson of Manasseh. He is called Jeezer and his descendants Jeezerites in Num. 26. 30. (3) *Home*. OPHRAH. Somewhere in the tribe of Manasseh west of the Jordan. Not identified unless very recently. Events in connection with Ophrah and Gideon in Judges 6. 11, 24; 8. 27, 32; 9. 5; (4) Gideon's *work and character*. Laboured on his father's farm, ver. 11; was lowly and humble in his social position, ver. 15; was a brave-hearted man and of large faith, ver. 12. Perhaps he had already performed valiant feats which rendered his influence greater among his people. He was a princely-looking man. Judges 8. 18. He was sagacious and adroit. Judges 8. 1-3. He had seventy-one sons. He is frequently referred to in the Bible.

5. THE CALL OF GIDEON. (1) By an ANGEL OF THE LORD, (ver. 11.) called the LORD in ver. 14. (2) While Gideon was threshing WHEAT BY THE WINE-PRESS, ver.

11. Not on the high open rock floor, where the sweeping winds could bear away the chaff and where he could be in sight of the enemy, but "BY THE WINE-PRESS," behind it, under its shadow and protection. (3) *The angel's salutation*. See ver. 12. So to Manoah's wife. Judges 13. So to Mary. Luke 1. 28. So to Joshua. Josh. 1. 5.

6. THE QUESTION AND COMPLAINT OF GIDEON, ver. 13. Doubt and distress combined. A glance at the historic past and a dismal survey of the melancholy present. So in Psa. 89. 49; 13. 1. Sin throws a thick veil over the best things of the past and of the present. ALL THIS, ver. 13. Gideon pointing to the hidden wheat and the wine-press protection. FORSAKEN US. Many a soul feels its worst just before God pours out his treasures of good things at his feet.

7. THE LORD'S ANSWER. (1) With a *look*, ver. 14. The face of the Lord once seen gives courage and hope and strength. (2) With a *word of command*, "Go." (3) With an assurance of strength—"THIS THY MIGHT." The look, which was one of approval, love, and assurance, would give confidence and might. Or the commission being from God would give might. (4) With a *word of promise*—"THOU SHALT SAVE ISRAEL." (5) With a *question*. HAVE NOT I SENT THEE?

8. GIDEON'S SELF-DISTRUST, ver. 15. (1) His family clan or "thousand" but a "poor" one, and that in a half-tribe, (Manasseh); (2) He was himself the *least* in influence in his father's house. So said *Moses*. Exod. 3. 11. So said *Saul*. 1 Sam. 9. 21. Whom God uses he causes to feel their own insufficiency.

9. THE LORD'S ASSURANCE TO GIDEON. (1) Of his presence and co-operation with Gideon, ver. 16; (2) Of Gideon's success. Read Exod. 3. 12; Josh. 1. 5.

10. GIDEON'S REQUEST FOR A SIGN, vers. 17, 18. How weak the faith of poor humanity! Or may it not have been a proper caution on Gideon's part? He did not wish to be deceived. And he wished to show hospitality. See Psa. 86. 11; and to Ahaz, Isa. 7. 11. Remember Abraham, Gen. 18. 3-5. "I WILL TARRY." How patient with our faithlessness and feebleness is the dear Lord. He waits for us and helps our faith.

11. THE MEAL PROFFERED BY GIDEON TO THE ANGEL. A KID. Tender

and delicate. EPHAH of flour. Probably a little more than three pecks. BROTH or soup. The kid was cooked so that a part would make a stew, and the rest of the meat would be put into a BASKET for the stranger to carry with him on his journey. This is in accordance with oriental custom.

12. THE FIRE OUT OF THE ROCK. The angel gave a command to Gideon which he obeyed, ver. 20. Whereupon a miracle was wrought by the touch of the angel's staff—fire came out of rock and consumed what had thus become a sacrifice unto the Lord. Our hospitality to God's servants often becomes an acceptable sacrifice to God.

13. GIDEON'S ALTAR AT OPHRAH. The discovery of the angelic nature of his guest terrified Gideon, ver. 22. But the Lord comforted him with a word of peace, ver. 23. And Gideon built an altar, JEHOVAH-SHALOM—"The Lord send peace." Compare Dan. 10. 19; John 20. 21; Luke 2. 14; John 14. 27.

14. A NIGHT OF DESTRUCTION, vers. 25-32. (1) Destruction of Baa's altar; (2) At God's command; (3) By Gideon; (4) Assisted by ten servants; (5) Offered a bullock to the true God; (6) In the morning the ruins of the altar and grove observed by the men of Ophrah; (7) Indignation and purpose to kill Gideon, ver. 30; (8) His father's plea, ver. 31.

[For continuation of this story and additional practical teaching see under next lesson.]

English Teacher's Notes.

Modern Palestine is still subject to the incursions of the "children of the East." Every summer numerous hordes of Bedouins come from the Arabian Desert, cross the Jordan, pitch their tents all over the Plain of Esdraelon, and then swarm into the hills and valleys north and south, plundering the defenceless "fellahin," (tillers of the ground), and spreading terror in all directions. Vers. 2-6 of this chapter are true of the Holy Land to-day.

But consider who these invaders were that so "impoverished Israel." They were the people who, in Balak's time, were terrified lest Israel should lick them up "as the ox licketh up the grass of the field." (Num. 22. 4.) And yet we now find the Israelites hiding in dens and caves from these very Midianites. How was this?

The simple answer is that Israel had no power at all apart from God, and God was with

not with them. Why not? Was his arm shortened? Was his ear heavy? No; the true reason was that given long after by Isaiah, (59. 1, 2): "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God." We may talk of strong and brave men, of weak and timid men, but does the difference lie in their natural constitution only? No, it is the man with a clear conscience who is strong and brave; it is the guilty man who is weak and timid. See Prov. 28. 1.

The teacher can illustrate this by the case of two boys: the one, conscious of disobedience, avoiding his father's eye; the other, strong in his obedience, meeting him with bright and open face. Or thus: Is it the honest man or the thief that seeks the cover of the night for his deeds?

We have, in fact, in this chapter one of the illustrations of sin bringing suffering, dwelt upon in our last note. The following references will assist the teacher in further study of this subject: Gen. 3. 16-19; Num. 32. 23; Job 20. 11; Psa. 38. 3; 66. 18; Jer. 5. 25; Rom. 6. 21-23; Gal. 5. 21; Eph. 5. 5; James 1. 15.

The passage appointed for reading, however, brings us at once to the Divine "succor" that followed Israel's penitent "supplication." And it is noteworthy that as the immediate cause of the people's misery was God's withdrawal from them, so the relief is announced to Gideon in the words, "The Lord is with thee."

"God with us." The whole scheme of redemption is wrapped up in these words. Sin put a great gulf between us and God. Christ came and bridged it over by the union in his person of the divine and human natures—on which account his name is Immanuel, "God with us," and by his death on the cross. And as these words embody the work of the Son, so they do the work of the Spirit, for he comes into our hearts, and is "God with us."

The Golden Text, too, concentrates our attention on this subject. "Surely I will be with thee," says Jehovah to Gideon. "Lo, I am with you always," says Jesus to his servants.

There are three points in this narrative which will help the application.

1. Observe Gideon's humility. The greeting is, "The Lord is with thee;" but Gideon replies, "If the Lord be with us," etc. He never thinks of himself as an individual at all.

Instead of great deeds done on our behalf at once. And the repeated worthless lowly man works, justice in God all his

2. Observe the communion upon his That look It was the Israel in look which tians " at that look 61. It that look life: thou us."

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Instead of indulging in ambitious dreams of a great destiny before him—which he might well do on receipt of such a message—his thoughts at once go to the misery of his countrymen. And then, when the personal commission is repeated in clearer language, he pleads his unworthiness for the post assigned him. It is the lowly man whom God employs to do his great works, just because the lowly man puts no confidence in himself, but is content to derive from God all his strength and power.

2. Observe how the Divine strength was communicated to Gideon. "The Lord looked upon him and said, Go in *this* thy might." That *look* of Jehovah—how all-powerful it is! It was that *look* which brought deliverance to Israel in Egypt. Exod. 2. 25. It was that *look* which "troubled the host of the Egyptians" at the Red Sea. Exod. 14. 24. It was that *look* which broke Peter's heart. Luke 22. 61. It all depends on *what we are* whether that *look* is to us a terror or a joy. "Lord, lift thou up the *light* of thou countenance upon us."

3. Observe that Gideon's work began at home. Before he could save Israel he must break down the idols in his father's house. *That* is the first thing God requires of all of us. See Isa. 1. 16-18; 55. 7; Matt. 3. 8.

For Senior Scholars.

1. THEMES FOR BIBLE READINGS.

1. THE ANGELS OF GOD. Gen. 28. 12 John 1. 51; Psa. 103. 20; 104. 4; Matt. 22. 30.
2. THEIR NUMBER. Psa. 68. 17; Matt. 26. 53; Heb. 12. 22.
3. THEIR SERVICE IN HEAVEN. Matt. 18. 10; Luke 15. 10; 11. 22; Rev. 7. 11; 21. 12.
4. THEIR SERVICE ON EARTH. Gen. 19. 15; Psa. 34. 7; 91. 11; Matt. 4. 11; 13. 49.
5. ANGELS' VISITS. Gen. 19. 1; 32. 1; Num. 20. 16; 1 Kings 19. 5; Dan. 3. 28.
6. ANGELS' VISITS. Luke 1. 13; 2. 9; 22. 43; John 20. 12; Acts 12. 7-10.
7. TEACHINGS OF ANGELS. Luke 2. 10-12; Acts 10. 3-6; Rev. 1. 1; Gal. 1. 8; Heb. 2. 2, 3.

2. SEED-THOUGHTS.

1. Why did the Midianites prevail against Israel?
2. What message and reproof did God send to them before he sent a deliverer? vers. 8-10.
3. In the Divine economy what precedes pardon and deliverance?

4. What power of his was that called, *This thy might?*

5. On what ground or for what reason could Gideon deliver the people?

6. Why did Gideon think the Lord was not with them?

7. Was Gideon sensible *who* talked with him, or why did he require a sign?

3. DOCTRINE.

"Pre-existence of Christ." Isa. 9. 6; Micah 5. 2; John 1. 1-10; 8. 58; 1 Cor. 8. 6; Col. 1. 16, 17; 2 Tim. 1. 9; Heb. 1. 2.

Blackboard.

A DIVINE PROMISE.

A Saviour NEEDED for Israel.
PROMISED

THE MERCY OF
GOD REDEEMS
MY SOUL.

HIS SON

HE THAT HUMBLETH HIMSELF
SHALL BE EXALTED.

The Primary Class.

BY L. J. R.

NOTE In this lesson and several following lessons we have an excellent opportunity for word pictures. Be careful to have blackboard assist, not interrupt the story. At the proper time map out wine-press and vineyard, with wheat-field separate, to show the "hiding." Talk while you sketch. Move before the class. Do not be afraid of even a little dramatizing. Throw yourself into the lesson, and you cannot fail of success.

REVIEW. The spoilers—people distressed—why? The gods (?) they served—the God they had forsaken.

ADVANCE. Picture the distress of the people, raids of the enemy, many people killed, others made slaves, harvests taken, famine, etc. How it would fit in our country if . . . ? Gideon, a farmer, threshing wheat (explain if needed) by the wine-press in the vineyard, to hide it from enemies—the angel of the Lord appearing to him.

"Mighty" strong man; "of va'our," bravery; "all this"—trouble and distress; "be'all'n"—come upon us: "miracle," wonderful works, (name some) Midianites—the wicked people who distressed the israelites. Make real before the class the Lord's wonderful command. "Go—save;" the modest reply, "Where-with?" and the promise, "I will be with thee." Family poor, Gid on least in that family, but because God was with him he was a "mighty man;" in "this, his might," he could save Israel. Who had been encouraged by this same promise before? Teach here the Golden Text. Who said it? Meant for the "least"—smallest in the house, as well as for larger people. Jesus wants every one, even the "least in the house," to work for him, and give to every one this promise. Did Joshua succeed when the Lord was with him? Will Gideon? Shall we?

CATECHISM.

3. *What is the outward and visible sign or form in baptism?*

The outward and visible sign or form in baptism is, the application of water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. (Matthew 28. 19)

4. *What is the inward and spiritual grace signified by this?*

The inward and spiritual grace signified by baptism is, our being cleansed from sin, and becoming new creatures in Christ Jesus.

Acts 22. 16. Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

WHISPER-SONG.

I will never fear,
For the Lord is near;
All my feeble prayer
He will hear.

SUNDAY, APRIL 25, 1875.

LESSON IV.—GIDEON'S ARMY. Judges vii. 1-8.

Berean Notes.

Lender. 1 Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so

that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

School. 2 And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands: lest Israel should vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.

L. 3 Now therefore go thou, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

S. 4 And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.

L. 5 So he brought down the people unto the water; and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappedeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

S. 6 And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.

L. 7 And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place.

S. 8 So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was bunched in the valley.

HOME READINGS.

Mon. Judges 7. 1-23. Th. 1 Samuel 14. 1-23.
Tue. Judges 6. 16-40. Fr. 1 Samuel 17. 32-54.
Wed. Joshua 6. 12-20. Sat. Rev. 1. 10-20.
Sabbath. John 19. 19-30.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

Brightly the light shines again. God is with his people, with them in skill and spirit and strength—with them by day and by night. Three hundred lights flash out over the valley

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of Jezreel, and the foe is scattered. Before this God chooses his own few faithful braves, and we have in our TOPIC: *A promise to save by a faithful few*; illustrating the GOLDEN TEXT: "There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." 1 Sam. 14. 6. The story is all told in the OUTLINE: The 22,000 dismissed; 2. The 10,000 tested; 3. The 300 retained. And here we find an illustration of the true DOCTRINE: *The sovereignty of God.*

LESSON HYMN—Tune "Admah."—L. M. 6 L.

Why should I fear the darkest hour,
Or tremble at the tempter's power?
Jesus vouchsafes to be my tower.
Though hot the fight, why quit the field?
Why should I either flee or yield,
Since Jesus is my mighty shield?

Though sin would fill me with distress,
The throne of grace I dare address,
For Jesus is my righteousness.
Against me earth and hell combine,
But on my side is power divine:
Jesus is all, and he is mine.

QUESTIONS, etc.

What was the TITLE of our last lesson?
What of this?

Recite the TOPIC, OUTLINE, and GOLDEN TEXT.

1. *The twenty-two thousand dismissed*, v. 1-3.

What two things are told in v. 1 of Gideon and his army?

What "host" was before them? [See chap. 6. 33, and v. 1.]

What enemies are before God's people now?
What objection did God make to Gideon's army, and why?

How did he reduce the army, and to what extent? v. 3.

[Recite GOLDEN TEXT.]

2. *The ten thousand tested*, v. 4-6.

What objection does God still make to the army? v. 4.

What do you think of this objection?
How did God test this company? v. 4, 5.
What was the result of this test? v. 6.

What was there in this test which showed the character of the men?

3. *The three hundred retained*, v. 7, 8.

What are the three hundred called in the TOPIC?

Why are they called *faithful*?

What promise to save by them is made in v. 7?

Look carefully through the remaining verses of this chapter and tell how God did save by the few.

By which one person is the greatest salvation made?

By whom is salvation sent to the whole world?
Mark 16. 15.

Where in this lesson may we learn—

1. For whose honour to work?
2. Who make the best soldiers?
3. From whom all victory comes?
4. When we may be really bold?

NOTES, ILLUSTRATIONS, AND LESSONS.

The Story of Gideon—[Continued.]

15. THE CONCENTRATION OF THE ENEMY, ver. 33. VALLEY OF JEZREEL. Between Mt. Gilboa and Little Hermon, or *March*—a rich, beautiful valley shooting out from the lovely plain of Esdrelon toward the Jordan. See Josh. 17. 16; 19. 17, 18; 1 Sam. 29. 1, 11; 2 Sam. 4. 4; 1 Kings 21. 1. The valley is a little less than three miles wide.

16. THE ARMY OF THE LORD SUMMONED, vers. 34, 35. (1) By Gideon, the servant of the Lord; (2) Under the inspiration of the spirit of the Lord; (3) By the trumpet; (4) By other messengers. This army was made up from four tribes—Manasseh, Asher, Naphtali, and Zebulun. [When God's ministers sound the Gospel trumpet under the Divine inspiration and send out messengers to summon the people, you may expect a great work in Israel.]

17. THE SIGN OF THE FLEECE, vers. 36-40. (1) Asked for by Gideon; (2) To confirm his faith; (3) Graciously granted by the Lord; (4) There were *two* signs. (a) The dew on the fleece when all the earth was dry. (b) The fleece dry when all the earth was covered with dew.

..... At first the dew of God's Spirit in his holy Word fell on the fleece of the Hebrew people, and all nations around it were dry; but now all nations have the heavenly dew of the Spirit shed upon them, and the fleece of the Hebrew people is parched and dry. —*Wordsworth.*

18. THE TWO ARMIES, Judges 7. 1. Gideon rose up EARLY. See Joshua 6. 12. WELL OF HAROD. The well or fountain

Ain Jabud. Harod means *palpitation* or *trembling*. The trembling people came to do wonders through the Almighty God.

..... "The well is about a mile east of Jezreel, and hence it was called the fountain of Jezreel. The water bursts out from a rude grotto in a wall of conglomerate rock, which here forms the base of Gilboa. It first falls into a large but shallow pond, and then winds away through the rich green vale past the ruins of Bethshean to the Jordan."

HILL OF MOREH—Little Hermon—north of Gilboa and separated from it by the VALLEY of Jezreel, a little over two and half miles wide.

19. THOUSANDS "TOO MANY" IN THE ARMY OF ISRAEL. There were 32,000, ver. 3. (1) Too many to make the victory appear to be a *gift*, ver. 2. (2) Too many to keep them from vaunting themselves against God. (3) Too many to teach Israel the nothingness of man and the Almightyness of God. See Deut. 8. 12, 17; Isa. 10. 12, 13; Zech. 4. 6; 1 Cor. 29; 2 Cor. 4. 7; Isa. 40. 29; 2 Cor. 12. 10.

20. THE TIMID "TWENTY-TWO THOUSAND." It was indeed a place of trembling. More than two-thirds of the army "fearful and afraid," ver. 3. What a humiliating condition had the people lapsed into! These 22,000 made for their dens and caves when relieved by Gideon. FROM MOUNT GILEAD, ver. 3. Possibly a mistake for GILBOA. Or "Mount Gilead" may have been the military synonym for the armies of Manasseh. It may have been a watch-word or war cry.

21. THE TESTING OF THE TEN THOUSAND, vers. 4-7. (1) Still "too many." (2) Timidity not the only disqualification for service. (3) The victory to be manifestly the Lord's. (4) Tried by "THE WATER" of Harod probably. (5) Gideon did not know the criterion until the people came to the water. (6) The Lord wished to *choose* his own army—OF WHOM I SAY, etc., ver. 4. (7) LAPPETH. The Hebrew word is *yalok*, and imitates the very act it describes. (8) There was something in the character and spirit of the two classes of people indicated by their mode of drinking. What was it? Those who used the hand indicated haste, personal dignity, carefulness of their personal appearance, etc., but we incline to the opinion that those who involuntarily prostrated themselves to the earth showed by the act a facility which proved them to be worshippers of Baal—"bowing the knee to Baal." Trifling things indicate the character and habits

of a man. Coarseness cannot be concealed by broadcloth. Even in God's army are men who accidentally betray their spirit and tastes as those belonging to the enemy.

22 THE THREE HUNDRED PREPARED.

(1) By God's appointment, ver. 7; (2) By separation, ver. 7; (3) By food provided—(the word *victuals* is better translated *victicum*—"food for the journey.") (4) Trumpets. Each man represented a host; (5) Empty pitchers, ver. 16; (6) Lamps within pitchers, ver. 16.

..... Preaching to the intellect, to the intelligence, is as a lamp—it sheds light over truths, over processes of argument, over means of conviction. Preaching to the conscience is as a trumpet—it calls up the soul from slumber, it makes it restless and unquiet. Preaching to the experience is as a pitcher—it bears refreshment, it cools and it calms the fever of the spirit, and it consoles and comforts the heart.

23. A NIGHT-VISIT BY GIDEON AND PHURAH, vers. 9-12.

24. A SOLDIER'S DREAM AND ITS INTERPRETATION, vers. 13, 14.

25. GIDEON'S STRATAGEM, vers. 15-18.

26. THE GLORIOUS VICTORY, vers. 19-22.

27. TROUBLE FROM EPHRAIM, Judges 7. 24; 8. 3. [B. C. 1249.]—(1) The summons, 7. 24. (2) The slaughter of the princes, 7. 25. (3) The sharp question, 8. 1. (4) The soft answer, 8. 2, 3. Learn—1. Soft words prevent strife. 2. Modesty and unselfishness."

28. ZEBAH AND ZALMUNNA, Judges 8. 4-21. [B. C. 1248.]—(1) Unkindness to the pursuers, 8. 4-9. (2) The refuge of the defeated, 8. 10. (3) The conquest and capture, 8. 11, 12. (4) The punishment of unkindness, 8. 13-17. (5) The requital of cruelty, 8. 18-21. [Sooner or later sin finds out men"]

29. THE REST OF GIDEON'S HISTORY, Judges 8. 22-35. [B. C. 1249-1269.]—(1) The rejection of royalty, 8. 22, 23. (2) The chief's request, 8. 24, 25. (3) The spoils of Midian, 8. 25, 26. (4) The error of Gideon, 8. 27. [The mistake of a great man leads a whole nation astray] (5) The land at rest, 8. 28. (6) The hero at home, 8. 29-31. (7) Death and burial of Gideon, 8. 32. (8) The forgetful people, 8. 33-35. [The evil wrought by men often outlives their good deeds.]

Additional Lessons about Gideon.

1. What a picture of human nature in its low and lost estate is the condition of Israel just before Gideon's call.

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2. The deliverance of Israel by Gideon is an epitome of God's purpose and plan of grace by which lost human nature is saved.

Observe: (1) The *Fact* of God's interposition as a proof of his great mercy and faithfulness.

(2) The *Time* of God's interposition—at man's last extremity. When the cry of despair rises to heaven the voice of deliverance calls from heaven.

3. The *order* of God's interposition:

(1) A prophet to *revoke*—v. 8-10. First comes the Law in God's economy.

(2) An angel to *comfort*—v. 11-14. The *Jehovah* angel. After the Law comes the Gospel by Jesus Christ.

(3) This Gospel comes first to *one man*. God works through *individuals*.

(4) The man called is at his plain every-day work. Like David and Peter and Matthew, etc., etc. God chooses *industrious* men.

(5) The man called is a humble man, v. 15. "God chooses the weak things," etc.

(6) From *one*—MANY. Gideon first—then his own family, or "thousand," v. 34—then Manasseh and Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali. From one to 32,000 in a short time.

4. The *Method* of God's interposition:

(1) Fully *convincing* and *satisfying* his servant.

(2) Summoning *all* to unite in his work of grace.

(3) Selecting the *fittest*. 32,000—22,000—21,700—300—fit though few.

..... I would rather have three hundred lamps and pitchers of Christian stratagem than one hundred thousand drawn swords of lit rary and ecclesiastical combat.—*Talmage*.

..... I think of the ten millions in the Christian Church to-day, if five millions of the names were off the books the Church would be stronger.—*Talmage*.

(4) Using the *lowliest* instruments. [Lamps, pitchers, trumpets, and the dream of a *barley* *cake*.]

(5) Using the wisest *stratagem*.

(6) Accomplishing largest results at the last through human instrumentality.

5. The *Meanings* of God's interposition.

(1) All his movements of deliverance mean—GRACE.

(2) All his agencies have deeper spiritual allusions. The *lamp* for light—the *sword* for truth—the *trumpet* for the Gospel call, etc.

English Teacher's Notes.

Three pictures of rare interest present themselves in the narrative of Gideon's victory over the Midianites, each of which is introduced with the sound of the trumpet.

1. Gideon "blew a trumpet" (chap. 6:34) to summon the tribes together. His own clan gathered round him at once, and then, as the call was passed from man to man, and the messengers blew the blast from city to city, fresh adherents rallied to his standard from all the northern tribes except Issachar. The prompt response to the summons shows that they only wanted a leader; and when the thirty-two thousand were marshaled by the well of Harod, all must have looked hopefully for the striking of a decisive blow at the enemy's power.

2. A second time the trumpet sounds, but not now to bring the army together. The proclamation enjoined by Moses' law and now specially commanded by God, (Deut. 20:6), goes through the host, that all who are "fearful and afraid" are to return to their homes. Imagine the surprise, not of Gideon indeed, but of his more faithful followers, when they see so many thousands of their comrades deserting the forlorn hope! But faith is not yet tried to the uttermost. Though ten thousand have stood steadfast, the searching eye of God sees that they are not all really eager for battle, and again the numbers have to be reduced. Those only are wanted whose whole trust for victory is in God, because (1) their courage only can be relied on, and (2) the only, when the battle is won, will give God all the glory. How are these picked out? All are sent to the spring to drink before making the attack. Down go the men upon their knees, and, putting their faces into the water, take a long, deep draught, *except* one here and one there, three hundred in all, who are so eager for the fray, and so forgetful of even their own needs in view of it, that they stop only to dash a little water to their mouths with their hands, and hasten back to their posts. *These* are to be the deliverers of Israel. The rest are not indeed dismissed; but they must stay in the camp, and will only share in the pursuit when the victory is won.

3. Once more the blast is heard, not of Gideon's trumpet only, but of three hundred, waking the echoes of the hills and sending

terror into the hearts of the Midianites, thus rudely roused from sleep. At the same instant the crash of three hundred breaking pitchers, and the blaze of three hundred torches multiplied indefinitely by frightened imagination, complete the panic, and the host of the invaders becomes a fugitive mob without drawing a sword. In the terse language of the sacred historian, they "ran, and cried, and fled."

No teacher who takes any pains can fail to make the three pictures thus meagrely sketched interesting. But then what is the application?

Not in this case, I think, the warfare of the individual Christian against his own sins. Rather the great battle going on in the world between Christ and antichrist, between the usurper and the rightful King of kings; the battle sung by Heber—

"The Son of God goes forth to war—
Who follows in his train?"

This is the warfare waged everywhere with sin and ignorance and misery. The warfare in which every faithful minister and missionary and teacher is engaged, and in which every Christian should bear his part.

Who are they that form Christ's army?

Some come not at all "to the help of the Lord against the mighty," like Issachar in the case before us, and like Reuben and others on a former occasion. (Chap. 5, 16, 17, 23.)

Some come forward with enthusiasm, but draw back at the first sight of the work to be done, like the twenty-two thousand.

Some remain in the army; they do not desert, but they show no burning zeal, no eager self-denial, and though they will share in the results of victory, it is not they whom Christ can place in the posts of honour and danger and responsibility.

Some, however, are ready to take up their cross and follow their great Leader. Is their number limited? *Not by God.* Had all the ten thousand been like the three hundred, there would have been no need of reduction, for even though so many, they would have given God the glory of the victory. No, we may all be among the "three hundred" if we will.

What are the weapons in this warfare? (1) The great trumpet—the free proclamation of Christ's salvation everywhere. (2) The torch of Divine truth—a light to lighten every man. (3) The earthen vessel: the human agency through which the truth is conveyed. "We

have this treasure," says St. Paul, "in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." (2 Cor. 4, 7.)

Observe Gideon's order to his little army, ver. 17—"Look on me, and do likewise." So must the Christian soldier "look unto Jesus," and "follow his steps." (Heb. 12, 2; 1 Pet. 2, 21.)

For Senior Scholars.

I.—THEMES FOR BIBLE READINGS.

1. GREAT UNDERTAKINGS. Gen. 6, 14; Exod. 3, 10; 1 Kings 18, 24; Mark 16, 15.
2. HUMAN DISCOURAGEMENTS. Num. 21, 4; Deut. 1, 28; Matt. 24, 12; 2 Cor. 11, 27.
3. HUMAN FAILURES. Gen. 3, 6; 11, 8; John 5, 7; Acts 8, 30, 31; 1 Cor. 21.
4. THE DIVINE RESOURCES. Gen. 1, 1; 7, 21-23; Psa. 23, 3; 104, 9, 10; 147.
5. THE DIVINE RESOURCES. Heb. 12, 3; Gal. 6, 9; 2 Cor. 12, 9; 1 Pet. 4, 14; Rev. 2, 10.
6. EFFECTIVE FAITH. Heb. 11, 6; Matt. 8, 8-10; 15, 28; Luke 17, 6.
7. TO GOD THE GLORY. Jer. 9, 23, 24; Rom. 4, 2; 1 Cor. 1, 31; 2 Cor. 10, 17; 1 Cor. 15, 28.

2. SEED-THOUGHTS.

1. How was Gideon prepared for this great work?
2. Why did he rise early and pitch near the well?
3. Did the certainty of the result render human sagacity unnecessary?
4. Why was Gideon's army too large?
5. What harm could useless soldiers do?
6. Did the twenty-two thousand probably lack any thing but courage?
7. Why were most of the courageous ten thousand rejected?
8. What lesson is herein taught us about rubbish, or useless members in the Church?
9. If it is sound war strategy to recruit an army, why should God deplete his army?
10. Does it necessarily follow that those are not approved of God who are not called to every special service?
11. Was there any special soldierly quality in their manner of drinking?
12. Why were their weapons not the most warlike?

3. DOCTRINE.

"The chastening of the Lord." Rev. 3, 19; Deut. 8, 5; Job 5, 17; Psa. 94, 12; Heb. 12, 6; Psa. 119, 67.

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Blackboard.

A PRECIOUS PROMISE.
ISRAEL SAVED BY A FAITHFUL FEW.
JESUS ONLY. **GIVE GOD THE GLORY**
THE BLOOD OF ONE FOR MANY.

FOR INFANT CLASS.

GIDEON'S	SMALL FAITHFUL VALIANT	ARMY	WITH GOD'S HELP
THOUGH SMALL I CAN BE	FAITHFUL, VALIANT, VICTORIOUS,		

THE PRIMARY CLASS.

It is sometimes well to begin a lesson in an abrupt way, securing attention by some unexpected question. For instance, this lesson might be begun by the question, who was Jerubbaal? [*Explain the meaning of the word and why Gideon was so called. See chapter 6. 32.*] When the class generally understand him to be the same as the Gideon of the last lesson, describe the Midianites and show where they came from. Also, point on the map, as near as is known, the location of the places mentioned in the lesson while you describe the situation. The mountain side was covered with the Midianites, and yet God said that the Israelites were too many to conquer them. Show just here how something more than number is necessary for success. There may be so many as to be in each other's way; or they might frighten each other. This may be illustrated in various ways. God meant to show how he could save by a few, but he wanted these few to be brave. Therefore he had the order given that all who were afraid might go home. Now put on the blackboard in bold figures,

22,000.Then under it, **10,000.** Adding the twowill give **32,000,** the number Gideon had at first. Then show how the number was

still further reduced. The Lord not only wanted brave men, but he wanted men who were quick, and who could move lively. Hence the singular method of trial. The army was brought to the water. Every man who put his hand down, and, filling it with water, drank hastily and passed on, showed thereby that he was a man of quick motions. Those, on the other hand, who bowed down on their knees to drink showed that they were too slow for this work. Thus the army was brought down to three hundred men. Then show, from the narrative, how the Midianites were surprised and overcame.

Who really did this work, the men of Gideon, or God working through them? Here illustrate how God can work as he pleases. Have the Golden Text repeated. Then make application of the lesson by showing that there are sins which we are expected to conquer as the men of Gideon conquered the Midianites. Ask for the names of some of these, and show how God gives help in the fight.

CATECHISM.

5. *What are the actual privileges of baptized persons?*

The actual privileges of baptized persons are these: they are made members of the visible Church of Christ; their gracious relation to him as the Second Adam, and as the Mediator of the New Covenant, is solemnly ratified by divine appointment: and they are thereby recognized as having a claim to all those spiritual blessings, of which they are the proper subjects.

WHISPER-SONG.

Wonders God can do—
 All his foes subdued
 By a faithful few,
 Firm and true.

Lessons for May.

- May 2. Death of Samson. Judges 16. 25-31.
 May 9. Ruth and Naomi. Ruth 1. 16-22.
 May 16. A Praying Mother. 1 Sam. 1. 21-28.
 May 23. The Child Samuel. 1 Sam. 3. 1-10.
 May 30. The Death of Eli. 1 Sam. 4. 12-18.

Knocking, Knocking, Who is There?

"Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me.—*Rev. iii. 20.*"

With feeling.

1. Knocking, knocking, who is there! Waiting, waiting, oh, how fair!

'Tis a Pilgrim, strange an king - ly, Nev - er such was seen be - fore.

Ah! my soul, for such a won - der, Wilt thou not un - do the door!

2. Knocking, knocking, still He's there,
Waiting, waiting, wondrous fair:
But the door is hard to open,
For the weeds and ivy-vine.
With their dark an clinging tendrils,
Ever round the hinges twine.

3. Knocking, knocking—what still there?
Waiting, waiting, grand and fair:
Yes, the pierced hand still knocketh,
And beneath the crowned hair
Beam the patient eyes, so tender,
Of thy Saviour, waiting there.

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