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OLD TESTAMENT
STUDIES

By WILLIAM E. NEWELL

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OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES

By
WILLIAM R. NEWELL

Being the Lessons given at the various Union Bible Classes
held in Canada and the United States.



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Old Testament Studies

Introductory

The Bible is not a history of all God has ever done. Nor is it the account of all God has done since "the beginning"—that is, since He created the present universe; for, as we shall see, ages probably intervene between the first and second verses of the Bible—ages of which the Bible tells us very little, except to hint that they existed.

Nor is the Bible a complete history of that race with which it is specially concerned; for only eleven chapters are given to the first two thousand years, when the whole human race is in view; while practically the rest of the Old Testament is given to the second two thousand years, and one small nation is the center of attention.

When the Promised One, of whom the whole Bible speaks, comes to earth, and four great books of the New Testament tell us the story of it, they do not together form a "biography" of Jesus; and they confine themselves practically to three years of His life, they choose but a few special events of those years, and they do not hesitate to repeat one another almost verbatim, in narrating even these few chosen events.

While one thing is quickly certain, as we examine the Bible—that *man* did *not* write it (man does not do things in this way)—the question still comes, What *is* the Bible? Granted that it is the Word of God, what is it about? What is it for? Why did God give it? What is its great purpose or end?

We will not seek to answer all these questions now; I hope they may in some measure settle themselves as we proceed.

But we must take up the question, "What is the Bible about? With what subjects does it deal? What is it meant, on the whole, to reveal?"

I suppose we will all readily agree that the Bible is about *man*, about the *human race*. That is, that man is the being to whom the Bible is addressed, for whom it is adapted, and with whom it specially deals. Other intelligent beings—angels, good and bad; Satan, demons, seraphim, cherubim—are spoken of; but there is nothing centering in them, and they are spoken of only as they concern man, or are in relation to him. The Bible, then, is about man, and for man.

Now, when we come to examine the Bible carefully, we find that the number of subjects treated is not very great.

In the first place God explains *Creation*. He tells man how this universe that man sees, including man himself, began, and what man's nature, character and place in this universe are; and then what God expects of him—what man's *responsibilities* toward God are. This is the first great subject: *The Creation, and Man's Place in It*.

Then we have the account of *How Man has Filled His Place*, of how he has fulfilled, or, rather fearfully failed to fulfil, his responsibilities. This sad story runs from the third chapter of Genesis to the last judgment (Rev. 20 : 11-15). The other name for this subject is *Human Sin*.

The third great subject of which the Bible treats is, *The Person and Work of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Because, immediately upon man's failure, God began to tell us of a Great Deliverer that was to come to the human race. Christ, and the marvelous plan of salvation connected with Him, is the most constant burden of Scripture; and, except one, the greatest theme of all the themes with which the Bible deals.

The fourth great subject is: *The Glorious Destiny of Eternal Blessedness*, that those of the human race shall have, who, humbly and honestly acknowledging before their God their sinful, guilty and lost estate, abandon themselves to Him, hoping for His undeserved mercy, in view of His provisions and promises, in His Son.

The fifth subject is: *The Unutterable Ruin and Eternal Woe* of those who refuse to meet their God in honest

confession of their sin, because they love their sin and choose in their hearts to keep it and persist in it; and who fear, because of their guilty love of the sin they know God hates, to cast themselves upon His mercy.

The sixth and last, and greatest theme of the Bible is, *The Glory of God*. This vast subject includes all God says in the Bible about *Himself*—His character, His attributes, His ways, His counsels and His works. The extent and importance of this subject Paul sums up in the last verse of Romans 11: "*Of Him, and through Him, and unto Him, are all things. To Him be the glory forever!*"



General Opening Study

GOD'S GREAT PLAN IN CREATION

In the eternity past, before anything was created, who existed? See Psalm 90:2. Can we grasp this, that God never had a beginning, that He is eternal from the past, as well as in the future? Job 36:26.

The Eternal God.

Note the tremendous expression of Isa. 57:15. God is said here to *inhabit* what? Both the past and the future are *present* to Him. He lives, not as we do, in one moment at a time, but in all eternity, either way, constantly. Study Ps. 90:4. (*A thousand years are but as yesterday*)

Has our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Second Person of the Glorious, Triune Godhead, existed likewise from all eternity? See John 17:5, 24; 8:58 (note the overwhelming present tense here: "Before Abraham,

I AM;" and compare Ex. 3:13-15); also John 1:1, 2; Col. 1:17; John 5:23. And see those two great verses in the prophets: Isa. 9:16—note the Hebrew margin in this verse—"Father of eternity;" and Micah 5:2. And also study Phil. 2:5, R.V.

In a wondrous verse in Hebrews (9:14) the Holy Spirit also is called "the Eternal Spirit."

God, then, Three Persons in One, exists from all eternity to all eternity. Do we know what it is to fall down and worship and adore this infinite, eternal One? What creatures of an hour are we all, in His Presence!

Now, did God need to create other beings, that is, did He not have sources of blessedness and joy in *Himself*? Acts 17:24, 25; Ps. 36:9; 16:11. Did not the Persons of

From Everlasting to everlasting thou art God

Neither can the number of his years be searched out

The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity

with thee before the world was before the foundation of the world

Before Abraham was I am

at thy right hand pleasures forevermore

The glory which I had with thee before the world was

Let us make man in our image, like unto us, male and female, let us make man in our image, become as one of us

It was by him Rejoicing always before him

the Blessed Trinity exist in infinite glory, joy and divine fellowship, before there were any other beings? John 17 : 5, 24; Prov. 8 : 22-31; Zech. 13 : 7. And note the counselling of the Trinity in Gen. 1 : 26; 3 : 22; 11 : 6, 7. God evidently did not need His creatures, as we think of need. He existed from eternity, in a state of infinite glory, joy and blessedness, in *Himself*. All that is glorious, holy, righteous, good and really happy is in Him. "He needeth not anything."

Why, then, if God needeth notught from His creatures, did He make creatures? Why did He not exist forever alone, in His unspeakable majesty and glory—in His infinite completeness?

**The Universe—
Why Created ?**

Ah, do we not know? What is God? What is the word that expresses His very nature? See John 4 : 8, 16. And is Love content to be confined to itself? It must go forth to others. God, the true Source, Author and Example of pure, holy Love, must express His heart of love. He will create beings to enjoy His love and His kindness. He will make them capable of understanding, knowing Himself, the true Spring of all bliss. And He will create a universe of material objects, to show forth His infinite wisdom and perfections, that His creatures may see His glory in His works. Moreover, He will delight in these works of His hands. He will see that they are "very good." And He will take pleasure in them. *And God saw that it was good (Gen 1:10)*

the love that God hath toward us (also John 3:16)

As one of us walks out into his garden on a beautiful summer morning, delighting in the prospect: we have planted and nourished it all; we have wrought upon it and taken earnest care of it; now how it pleases us! We love the grass, the flowers, the shrubs, the trees. They seem to be our very own, and they to be glad we have them, and rejoice in them. Our very heart goes out toward all this beauty. So with God. He would create for Himself and His holy delight, and unto His glory, what we call the universe. His heart of unfathomable wisdom and love would express itself in creation.

*to the glory of God
the Father*

*glorified there
on earth*

The created universe came of God, *through* His power, *unto* His glory. Man—his origin, history and destiny—the glory of God is the key to it all. Even the redeeming work of Christ had, in the end, just the same great

**God's Glory
the Proper
End of Creation.**

object in view. See John 17:4; Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Cor. 15:

24-28) That God may be all in all.

God is the only Being who deserves glory. In the ages past, before any other beings existed, God—the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit—existed in infinite blessedness and fellowship. (See references above.) In God was summed up all that was good: righteousness, truth, holiness, love, kindness, wisdom, knowledge—all. There was no other. God was *all*. When, finally, God created other beings, He did not make them independent of Himself, but made them *receptacles* for His own holiness, wisdom and love; that they might *enjoy Him*, and *show forth*, gladly and freely, the glorious excellencies of their blessed God (1 Pet. 2:9)

*that we should
show forth the
praises of him
who hath called
you out of dark-
ness into his
marvelous
light.*

What Sin Is Sin is the creature's *refusal* to do this. Sin, without any cause whatever, revolts against God, and starts out independently of Him; it turns the glory that belongs to God and *ought* to belong to Him, and to Him ^{3rd chapter} alone, to *itself*. "Sin," says John, in the fourth verse of his first Epistle, "is lawlessness" (R.V.); that is, it is that which departs from law, or throws off proper restraint—literally, that which *refuses to be controlled*.

The awful character of sin never fully appears until we reflect on the character of Him against whom it stands opposed. It is because God is what He is, that sin is at war with Him. It is not that He is a sovereign or a despot; Satan is a cruel tyrant, and the hosts of darkness still cleave to him; but it is because God is the Holy One! Sin hates holiness. That is the awful character of it: it hates what ought to be loved!

Now there are two attributes of God that are the key to the whole Bible: God is HOLY, and God is LOVE. If we understand these two words, as the Bible applies them to

God, we shall be ready for all other truth. I pray you ponder this; it is true. Every heresy has sprung up, if traced to the root, right here: a failure to understand God's holiness, or a failure to appreciate and trust God's grace and love

God most tenderly loves His creatures. His love for them is yearning, heart-felt, *infinitely real*. How anyone can read what God did for *the world*, in John 3:16, and why He did it, and doubt the *reality of His love*, I know not. God is Love.

But God hates and abhors sin—absolutely, infinitely, eternally. It deserves and shall have His wrath and His *curse*; and those that persist in it shall have His punishment.

But oh, the *reaches of eternity*! The unendingness of those ages! The awfulness of those issues! God will lay the foundations deep and wide. He will not hurry. If He bring creatures into being, He will spare no time, no pains, to secure their *eternal allegiance* to Himself. Or, if they choose the fearful alternative of rebellion against Him, He will let their sin have time to work itself out, to reveal its true character and terrible consequences. It may take ages; but the issues are to be settled *forever*. A *million* ages are but a *moment*, compared with *eternity*!

The first great question was, Should God create other intelligent beings, beings capable of knowing and understanding *Him*? That being settled in the infinite wisdom of God, in the affirmative, another question at once arises, (I speak, of course, after the manner of men.) Shall these creatures be made with free wills, capable of choosing for themselves, or shall they be mere machines—able to see and perceive, but not allowed to *decide* and to *act*? God chose to grant them freedom.

But again, should they be hedged about with such provisions as to be effectually hindered from exercising their freedom selfishly—that is, against God? God, who alone knew what *ought* to be done, let them have, not only their freedom, but the opportunity to exercise it; and many of them actually chose to depart from all regard for God.

and allegiance to Him, into that fearful thing and condition that the Bible calls *sin*.

Reasonings concerning the origin of sin or evil are, I believe, both vain and dangerous. Someone has most wisely said, "I am not nearly as much concerned to know where my sin came from, as to know how to get rid of it." The first account we have of it in the Word of God is found, apparently, in Satan's fall, as traced in the vision of Ezekiel (28 : 14-17). And here it was simply, that "his heart was lifted up because of his beauty." He turned to himself the glory that belonged only to his Creator. And his ruin followed. Eternal doom awaits him. Rev. 20 : 10.

Now the great desire of God with respect to His elect creatures, was to have them with Him forever, delighting in Him, and glorifying Him in their glad choice of Him and His ways above all else.

But they must first be brought to know and see and thoroughly believe, that all good is in God Himself alone; else all through eternity they would be ready to leave God to go in search of other sources of good.

God therefore lets His creatures have their first being in the midst of a created universe which appeals in a thousand ways to them. And He lets them choose whether they will seek Him alone or whether they will seek their enjoyment and good in the created universe, apart from Him.

And this brings us to a great fundamental doctrine that runs all through Scripture—the doctrine of *Creation unto New Creation*. By this we simply mean, that, in the first or present creation, which began at that point in the remote past called "the beginning" (Gen. 1 : 1), God is having the tremendous issues between sin and holiness, light and darkness, Himself and all opposed to Him, once and forever wrought out. When this has been accomplished, He will bring in a *New Creation*, wherein shall dwell *perfect righteousness*; and which, being founded upon the work of Christ, and not upon the faithfulness of mere creatures, shall never pass away. (See Rev. 21 ; 2 Peter, 3, etc.)

Creation unto New Creation.

LESSON 1.

The Advent of Man in Creation.

Gen. 1—XI. 9.

1. *The Mastery of the Contents of the Lesson.*—This ought always to be the first step in Bible study; indeed, we cannot really *study* a passage till we have mastered it as a whole. There are three steps in such mastery:

1. Read the eleven chapters through continuously from five to ten times, or until their contents are familiar. Nothing will take the place of this. Some one well says,

Salvation is by faith but a knowledge of the Scriptures comes only by works."

2. Name the chapters. The chapter divisions are arbitrary, of course; but they exist, and it will behoove us to use them. Do not adopt the names here given if you can discover better ones: I. Creation—Reconstruction; II. Eden; III. Fall; IV. Cain; V. Seth; VI. Wickedness; VII. Deluge; VIII. Dry; IX. Rainbow; X. Nations; XI. Babel. Think backward and forward through the chapters by means of these names till you have not the slightest hesitation.

3. Sum up the lesson topically. By this we do not mean to "outline" the lesson, but something much simpler. Answer the question, "What great themes do these chapters deal with?" Six words will do it: 1. Creation. 2. Present World. 3. Man. 4. Fall. 5. Deluge. 6. Nations. An adequate outline of the wonderful truths in these chapters will be possible after awhile; but let us not burden ourselves with hard things in this course. A summary of the contents of a passage is easy enough if we confine ourselves to just that.

Now let us fill out our six words:

1. Creation.

Original Creation, 1 : 1.

Subsequent Ruin, 1 : 20.

2. Present World.

Wrecked Condition, 1 : 20.

Reconstruction, 1 : 26-31.

Sabbath, 2 : 1-3.

3. Man.

His Creation and Nature, 2 : 4-7.

Eden, 2 : 8-17.

Woman, 2 : 18-22.

Marriage, 2 : 23-25.

4. Fall.

Sin, 3 : 1-13.

Promise, 3 : 14, 15.

Curse, 3 : 16-19.

Faith, 3 : 20.

Sacrifice, 3 : 21.

Expulsion, 3 : 22-24.

The Two Seeds at Enmity (Cain and Abel), 4 : 1-15.

The Two Lines (Cain and Seth), 4 : 16-24; 4 : 25;

5 : 32.

5. Deluge.

The Antediluvian Apostasy, 6 : 1-12.

The Ark, 6 : 13-22.

The Flood, 7-8 : 14.

The Noachian Covenant, 8 : 15-9 : 17.

The Spared Family, 9 : 18-10 : 32.

6. Nations.

The Earth-Nations, 10 : 5, 8-14, 16-20, 25, 31, 32.

The United Rebellion, 11 : 1-3.

The Babel Judgment, 11 : 5-9.

We have now accomplished the primary business of this course, the mastery of the material of the lesson—that is, IF we have *done the work*.

II. *The Interpretation of the Lesson.*—By the interpretation of a passage, we do not mean its possible spiritual teachings, nor the secondary applications it may have, but the plain meaning of its statements in their proper setting. In the mastery of the passage, the only question is, **What does it say?** In the interpretation, the one question is, **What does it mean?** Not, we repeat, what it can be *made* to mean

by human ingenuity or prejudice. Nor, again, what it can be *used* to teach or illustrate, however legitimately or helpfully. The sole inquiry of the honest heart, in the interpretation of a passage of God's Word is, **What is the intended meaning of this passage in its native connection?** We may mention four subjective conditions of faithful Biblical interpretation: (1) Humble submission to the Bible as God's revelation. (2) Candor, or freedom from prejudice. (3) Thorough acquaintance with Scripture. (4) The illumination of the Holy Spirit. And we may add the one great objective condition of a correct text.

These opening chapters of the Word are, of course, simple, plain *narrative*. "The Bible is not a riddle, but a revelation." Only a sin-warped intellect, backed by an unbelieving heart and a proud spirit, reads the first and second chapters of Genesis into a blur of "allegory." Creation, moreover, was by a word (Heb. 11 : 3). By a simple command of God (Ps. 148 : 5) the material universe leaped into existence from non-existence. "What is seen hath *not* been made out of things which do appear," is the quiet assurance of the Holy Ghost to the children of God in Hebrews 11. "If I can believe the first verse of the Bible I can believe the whole Book," said a thoughtful man some time ago. Satan knows this, and acts accordingly.

The geologic ages lie between the first and second verses of the Bible. For in verse two the earth is *seen* rolling in space an utter desolation: "The earth was waste and void". (R.V.). The Hebrew word for "waste" is *tohu*. In Isa. 45 : 18, the Spirit of God declares that He did not create the earth in this state: "He created it not a waste (*tohu*)." The inference seems unescapable that there was a tremendous catastrophe between verses one and two, perhaps more than one, and surely a long interval. When we remember that at God's original creation of the earth it was habitable (Isa. 45 : 18), and that the very two words translated in Gen. 1 : 2 "waste and void," are repeated in Jer. 4 : 23, in connection with God's terrible future judgment on earth iniquity, we see the probable nature of the pre-adamic catastrophe. Death and savagery occur constantly in the geological fossils. When

we reflect that death is the wages of sin, and that Satan, who was originally made the prince of this world (John 12 : 31), not only sinned from the beginning (1 John 3 : 8), but was a *murderer* from the beginning (John 8 : 44), we find a clue to the dark maze of earth's history before the creation of man. Our race is comparatively a recent thing, and sin and punishment did not have their origin in Eden. It is now at the end of the *ages* that Christ has been manifested to put away sin (Heb. 9 : 26). Of these ages our race's dark history since its fall seems to constitute so far, but *one*, "the present evil age," Gal. 1 : 4, marg.

The six days, then, in this light, were days of reconstruction, not of original creation. God refits the earth for habitation, and places man over it as the head of a new order of things, with the significant command to "replenish" the wasted earth (1 : 28, cf. 9 : 1). These six days are marked by evenings and mornings and definite numerals, and were, accordingly, simple days of twenty-four hours, marked by the revolution of the earth. For light, and that from a definite source and direction, probably direct from God himself, was brought upon the scene the first day, although it was not placed in the created or restored "light-holders," the sun and moon, till the fourth day. To endeavor to identify the six days with the periods in which the strata of the earth's crust were formed, is a most needless, unscientific, and really impossible task. The seventh day, hallowed as the day of divine resting in 2 : 2, 3, is called to the remembrance of Israel in Ex. 20 : 8, 11, as a *day*, not a period—as a simple day, over against the other six of a common week. This should be carefully noted.

Chapter 2 gives additional details of man's creation and nature, and is not in this light at variance with chapter 1. In 2 : 7, man's true tripartite nature is shown. Compare 1 Thess 5 : 23; Luke 1 : 46, 47. Ignorance of this is betraying many into paths of doubt and serious error.

Eden was a region; the garden was within it, a smaller enclosure (2 : 8). The trees were real trees, and the two in the midst of the garden, no less real than the others

(2 : 9; cf. Rev. 22 : 2; Ezek. 47 : 12). The *mystic* meaning forced upon these things by some is horrible and very dangerous.

That man was able, with apparent readiness and ease, to name all the creatures (2 : 19, 20), is *prima facie* evidence of his perfect, fully developed state at creation. Here, again, is no room for the unproven hypothesis of evolution. Scientists deem correct nomenclature their severest work. Adam's unfallen mind was absolutely masterful.

Now comes the first dark chapter. *Sin* is the secret. The serpent, wisest and subtlest of all creatures under man, as well as probably the most attractive, lends itself to the jealous guile of the great enemy of God. His place as ruler of the world has now been given to man. If the latter will but disobey his God, he will fall an easy prey to Satan's tyranny, who will usurp again his former realm. The story is short, but bitter and dire. The woman, beguiled and flattered, doubts her God and falls; man, infatuated, follows her. The race is lost. Their probable glory-covering (Ps. 104 : 2) has fled. Left naked to their shame, they make shift to cover themselves with fig-leaf aprons (wonderful picture of the self-righteous sinner!), but flee in terror from God's approaching voice, and are called forth to hear the curse pronounced. First, the *serpent* is doomed to be a hated alien amongst the creatures of the earth, degraded to go upon its belly, and eat dust all his life. The serpent, probably erect before the fall is to-day universally hated, and is an anomaly in creation as to its manner of locomotion. See Isa. 65 : 25, for the serpent's future. Before pronouncing punishment upon our race, God graciously utters the wonderful promise and prophecy of verse 15. "The seed of the woman [which is Christ, Gal. 4 : 4] shall bruise the serpent's head." Then multiplied sorrow is foretold to the *woman*, with what fulfilment only woman knows. Is it a question who bears earth's heaviest woes? For *man's* sake, next, the ground is cursed to bear thorns and thistles of itself, and to yield bread only with toil and sweat.

Then a significant lesson is given the sin-stricken pair

as to God's way of covering sin. Beasts are slain by Him before their eyes, and after blood thus shed He clothes them with the skins. Thus death falls on substitutes, not on sinners—great picture of Calvary! Then they are driven forth from the beautiful garden, and the entrance is guarded lest man in his now wretched and fallen state should eat of the mysterious tree of life, which would set the seal of deathlessness upon his body, without changing his sinful nature. God's mercy shuts even His children out from that tree till Christ shall have destroyed sin and death for ever. We shall get back to it. See Rev. 22 : 2.



LESSON 2.

The Advent of Man in Creation.

Gen. I—XI 9

We saw, in our last lesson, that God, in His infinite wisdom and love, chose, at some point in the eternity past, to create the present universe, as a sphere in which to reveal Himself to certain *creatures*, whom He made capable of understanding and knowing Him, and enjoying the infinite goodness and blessedness that are in Him and in Him alone. We saw that God is the only One to whom glory and praise belong; that it is *right* for Him to be praised and glorified, for He alone is, in His being and character, *worthy* of praise—that He sums up all that is good and excellent and right, all that *ought* to be praised and loved and glorified. We saw also, that *sin* refuses to give glory to God, because it hates what is right, hates all that God is, and loves what is absolutely *opposed* to this blessed God; that therefore sin deserves and must have *punishment*, because of its awful *character* of rebellion against all that is holy, righteous and good, as revealed in God.

We saw, also, that God is permitting sin, through long ages, to work itself out to the full; in order that its real character and proper effects may be seen so thoroughly, that all God's saved creatures may see, and shun it forever.

We saw, also, that this first or present Creation, that which began at the time spoken of in the first verse of the Bible, is doomed to pass away, and give place to what is called in Scripture the *New Creation*; and the question was brought up, as to why this plan of *Creation unto New Creation* was being followed by God, in His dealings with His creatures

All through the Bible we discover, when we examine carefully, a double line being traced, a sort of *twofold manner of things*.
**Creation Unto
 New Creation—
 Why?**

Immediately God begins this present world, and has it fairly started off in blessing, a second and opposing element enters. When our race falls, God appears on the scene, and, by His sovereign word divides our race into two great classes. The seed of the woman—that is, Christ and all that are His; and the seed of the serpent—that is, Satan, and all that are his. This division, from the third chapter of Genesis to the very last of Revelation, is so strictly kept up that those who do not, or will not, recognize it, *cannot* understand the Word of God. The specious claim, made so generally to-day, that "all men are children of God," is the cause for much of the darkness and ignorance that prevails as to the truth of God.

Of course we cannot tell, nor is it our business to tell, just who belong to God and who to Satan, of the human race. But it is, nevertheless, a fact, that, while some of our race have, by God's grace, been born again from Heaven, by the Holy Spirit, and made God's children, there are others who belong to Satan—awful as the thought is; and there are some who will never belong to God, they will be the seed of the serpent forever! Terrible as it is, we all know it is the fact. Our Lord Jesus Christ looked into the eyes of some who were even very *religious* (for mere *religion* never has and never *can* save a man, or change his nature), and He said to them: "If God were your Father, ye would love Me. . . . Ye are of your father the devil. . . . Ye are not of God. . . . Ye are not My sheep" (John 8 : 42, 44, 47; 10 : 26).

Now, the very first man born into this world turned out to be a *murderer*; and the Holy Ghost says of Cain (1 John 3 : 12) that he was *of* the evil one. While Abel, whom he killed, the same verse says, was *righteous*. And our Lord says so, too, Matt. 23 : 35. And Abel knew *before he died*, that he was righteous, Heb 11 : 4. Here, then, are two distinct classes of people on earth, repre-

mented by the first two children born of our race. And the *bad* man comes *first*. He is also *religious*, Gen. 4 : 3. The first religious performance told of our race was by him. But he was not God's child—he was *of the devil*; he was not righteous, but unrighteous. Abel, on the other hand, is accepted as of *God*, as God's child; declared *righteous* in God's sight, and is saved eternally; whereas Cain, utterly refusing, even after God's gentle kindness and earnest wooing and warning (Gen. 4 : 9-15) to repent of or confess his sin, *goes out from the presence of the Lord*, and is left in the eternal darkness he had chosen—of which he was. And, still further, Cain and his line go on to *increase on earth*. Mark this. He and his line begin the *world*, as we now have it. See 1 John : 2 : 16, which describes what the Bible means by "the world." Now compare with this, Gen. 4 : 16-24. How many *new* things are there being "invented"! Compare Prov. 7 : 29. For, however we may lawfully *use* this world (Though note prayerfully 1 Cor. 7 : 31, R.V., marg.), we must always remember that the present world is just this: A place still under the *curse*, for Gen. 3 : 17-19 has never been revoked; a place, a race, living *away from God in their sins*, impenitent, careless, selfish; inventing every possible thing to make this earth an easy, pleasant place to live in, *without God*. And, added to it all, and infinitely worse than all else, this world is that field of blood in which the SON OF GOD has been murdered; and the murderers, the sons of men—except here and there *one*—have not repented, nor do they want to repent! Fearful enough! *Yet the world will go to the theater to-night as usual*. Unless a great revival come—which may our God send!

Now the general truth we discover in all this, is, that there are two great classes of beings on earth, *the enemies* and *the friends* of God; those who love the darkness and choose to stay in their sin and those who love the light, and choose to leave their sin. And that God is letting these two lines live in this world side by side; only, that the enemies of God are being *given their way on earth* for the present: even to the persecuting and sometimes the slaying of those that belong to God.

The history that follows bears this out. Things run on. Cain's line comes first (Gen. 4) and increases on earth. Seth's line, in whom are the godly (4 : 26), comes last. By and by the flood comes; for God will interfere in the course of sin, even in this present evil age, that He may warn men, and show them coming judgment. But the curse that fell upon Noah's apostate son (Gen. 9 : 25-27) does not seem to fall immediately. Instead, Ham's descendants get possession of the choice places of earth, Egypt, and even Canaan; for which Abraham the faithful has to wait—nay, his seed must suffer, while the enemy holds the land. See Gen. 15: 13-16. But note here, in verses 14 and 16, that judgment was not quite ripe, that was all, either for Egypt or the Canaanites. Note this. The people of God had to wait, but blessing was coming to them. The seed of the enemy had possession, but judgment was coming to them.

The same great fact of two lines, God's and Satan's, on earth, and the present predominance of the latter, is seen right along through the Bible.

In chapter X. of our lesson, the Japhetic and Hamitic lines come first, with their noisy "nations," and the first great Emperor, Nimrod (10 : 9-12); and afterward that of Shem, in whom was the elect seed. The "earth (11 : 1, 2) is seen making itself a name; but the Shemitic line (11 : 10-26) hastens on to the man who got out of it all, and lived in a tent, a stranger to the world and a pilgrim in it all his days. See Gen. 11 : 31; 12 : 1, 4, 5; Acts 7. 3, 4; Heb. 11 : 8. You know that Abraham is the pattern believer, the father of those that are faithful; and the verses I have referred to have this one expression about him: "He went forth"; "Get thee out"; "he departed out"; "they went forth"; "Get thee out"; he came out"; he obeyed to go out." As to this world, he did not possess much; he was sent through it, looking for a city that was to come. Heb. 11 : 10, 13-16.

We trace throughout the Bible, as well as through human history since the Bible was written, the fact that there are just two great classes of human beings: First, those who set their hearts on this earth, and seek to enjoy

this present life to the full; and second, those who discover the uncertainty, and unsatisfactoriness of earthly things, seeing that death and judgment awaits all the world, and therefore cast themselves humbly upon God, and set their hopes beyond this present life and this present creation, and live as strangers and pilgrims among men—*waiting for something yet to come.*

We may, now, outline briefly this great plan of God, revealed in His Word, of *Creation unto New Creation.* We shall find it to be a very key to the interpretation of Scripture, being the *General Method of God in respect to the Created Universe.*

I. THE FIRST, OR OLD CREATION.

1. Created "good" by God, Isa. 45 : 18; 1 Tim. 4 : 4. Compare, as to the present world at its inauguration, Gen 1 : 31.

2. But invaded by *sin*, and involved in the curse, ruin and death brought by *sin*, Gen. 1 : 2 (*tohu and bohu*—"desolated" and "empty"; see Lesson I), also the earth at present "cursed" on account of man's sin, Gen. 3 . 17

3. Subjected to "vanity," that is, to the ceaseless *unattainment* that is so apparent everywhere. Everything of this creation is laboring and travailing for *nought*. See Rom. 8 . 20, R.V. Study *Ecclesiastes*; in which book God lets the wisest and richest mere man that has ever lived, go the complete round of enjoying all that creation could offer, apart from God—"under the sun." The verdict is, "It is all vanity and vexation of spirit"; and the conclusion at last is, "Fear God and keep HIS COMMANDMENTS, for THIS is the WHOLE of Man." Creation was subjected to vanity by God to prove its utter inability to satisfy any creature. God only can do *that*. As Augustine so beautifully puts it. "O God, Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee." The same lesson is seen in

"Change and decay in all around I see:

O *Thou that changest not*, abide with me."

The grass grows—and *withers*; the flowers bloom—and *fade*; the trees rise—but *fall*, and *rot*. Spring makes such

promises! But winter straightway blasts it all. Man lives a few poor days, and *dies*; and shortly all his proudest works are levelled to dust. *God lets nothing, absolutely nothing, attain permanence in this creation. This whole creation is subjected to vanity.*

4. Not only so, but the present, or first creation, is *doomed to pass away*. See Matt. 24 : 35; 2 Peter 3 : 10; Rev. 20 : 11. And to pass away so utterly that "the former things shall *not be remembered*, nor come into mind," Isa. 65 : 17. The transitory character of this creation could not be more startlingly stated. It is only a passing thing, and it will literally be gone forever. Not a trace will be left of it, and the very *memory* of it will be taken by God (Isa. 63 : 18) from the minds of those of His creatures who are in the New Creation.

II. THE NEW CREATION.

1. It will be *real*; that is, it will be a literal heaven and earth, that will take the place of the old. See Rev. 21 : 1, and the rest of those two marvellous closing chapters of the Bible. The resurrected saints must have a *place* to be and dwell in. Resurrection does not deny, but asserts, a literal, material body. Joseph's tomb was *empty*, after Christ arose. The new heaven will be just as literal as the present heaven.* And the new earth will be just as literal as the present earth, being the abode of the literal nation of Israel, then restored and regenerate, (Isa. 60 : 21); yet real and literal (Isa. 65 : 18-25); and being also the abode of "the nations of the saved," who shall walk in the light of that city that shall be the center of the new earth. See Rev. 21 : 24, etc.

2. The New Creation will be *new in all respects*. The old having passed completely away, all things will be new, as saith the Spirit in Isa. 65 : 17; Rev. 21 : 1, 5. The infinite resources of our God will be seen in new designs, new purposes and ends, new thoughts and ways. We

* By the term "heaven" is meant the created "heaven" or heavens" (2 Peter 3 : 7; 2 Cor. 12 : 2), the regions in which, or upper surfaces upon which the heavenly beings, or "hosts," properly belong, and where they dwell (Col. 1 : 20; Eph. 1 : 10, R. V., margin); and not, of course, the throne of God, which is eternal. See Ps. 45 : 6; 93 : 2

cannot conceive its excellencies. We know that to every Christian heart the last two chapters of the Bible have a peculiar sweetness of glory, an air of *satisfaction*, found nowhere else. It is our rightful sphere, that New Creation. 2 Cor. 5 : 17 says we are in that creation—*of* it, being *new creatures*. And Peter (2 Peter 3 : 12, 13) tells us to *look* for and earnestly *desire* the day when it shall come fully in, in the outward sense. Christ is already in it body as well as spirit. He is in newness of life complete, Rom. 6 : 10; we are also, as to our *spirits*, 1 Cor. 6 : 17; John 3 : 6. We shall, by and by, be in the new creation as to our *bodies*, at their redemption, when Christ comes, Rom. 8 : 23; Phil. 3 : 20, 21, R.V.; 2 Cor. 5 : 1-4. But it will be when the same words can be said of the created or material universe that can now be said of the regenerated person, the true Christian, as to his spirit, that our real *day* will have come. Compare 2 Cor. 5 : 17 and Rev. 21 : 4a, 5. The Old Creation, and all that is of it, was judged at the cross. We who are in Christ are on new ground—*resurrection-ground*. We will see our complete satisfaction, when all Christ's and our enemies have been subjected, and the old order of things has passed forever away, and "all things," like ourselves, are *new*.

3. This New Creation will be *eternal*. See Isa. 66 : 22; Rev. 22 : 3, 5. It will not be subjected to vanity, for sin will have then had its full trial, and shall be permitted no more to invade God's works. "There shall be no more curse." Hallelujah! At last there will be REST. This creation will NEVER *pass away*

4. It will be the *home* of *righteousness*, 2 Peter 3 : 13. This, of course, follows upon the preceding. But let us emphasize it.

5. And it will be filled with unlimited, unmixed JOY. Constant ecstasy would ruin us in these trial days. We, like our dear Lord Jesus, must be "perfected through *suffering*," Heb. 5 : 8, 9. But in the New Creation discipline will be unknown—all will be eternally perfected: the days of sorrow will be over and forgotten, Rev. 21 : 4, etc. It can hardly be conceived; but it shall be so.

We must leave for another lesson the remainder of this

outline of the New Creation. We must study yet the different grounds of the two creations; their history in brief; and the great destiny of the New Creation, through Christ and His blessed work.

We will trace, with brief comment, the important events of the chapters left from our last lesson; leaving to the reader to follow out the details more carefully.

A Sketch of Chapters 4-11.

The fourth chapter tells the awful story of Cain. Self-righteous in his worship, first—Heb. 11: 4; cf. Luke 18: 9-14, envious of his faithful brother Abel next; then a red-handed murderer and a hardened despiser of God's mercy; finally setting out independent of God, and building the first city (can you think why a wicked man should seek city life?), and, along with his descendants, pitting human inventions against the laborious checks of the curse, and the polite arts against quiet meditation; and the dark drama ends with the horrid blood-song of Lamech: "I have slain a man—Lamech shall be avenged."

Verses 25 and 26 of chapter four tell us what to name the genealogy of the fifth chapter. It is the godly line of Seth, Cain's younger brother, that the Holy Spirit is tracing. Adam, the first human sinner (yet saved, we believe); Seth, a child of grace; Enoch, "probably the best of the world's gray fathers;" and Noah, whose story fills four chapters to come, are the great names here. This chapter covers over 1,500 years.

The sixth chapter of Genesis is startling and black. The flood is coming. Wickedness has ripened. The terrible leaven of sin has worked in both lines of the race, till only one righteous family of eight persons (1 Peter 3: 20) is left on earth. Verses 11 and 12 describe that age. Lawless lust and universal murder sum it up. That the frightful, unnatural iniquity of the time was not confined to the children of men is believed by many of the best Bible students to be the teaching of Scripture. The "sons of God" of verse 2 cannot mean the children of Seth, who had become as bad as the family of Cain. The Hebrew expression translated "sons of God" is used four

times in the Old Testament, always referring to another class of beings than men. See Job 1 : 6; 2 : 1; 38 : 7; Dan. 3 : 25. And in the New Testament the name "son of God" is applied only to those born again, John 1 : 12, and thus *directly created* by God (1 John 1 : 13; 2 Cor. 5 : 17), not humanly begotten. And the word translated in the authorized version "giants" doubtless indicates something more than men of great stature. A hint of the truth is given in Jude 6. Compare Jude 7. The demigods of early classic song find a basis of fact, perhaps, in the latter part of the fourth verse of Gen. 6. These are truly awful themes, and it is well not to dwell on them too largely; but the warning of these verses is needed in these days, when even in Protestant countries Spiritualism, with its communion with demons, is gaining ground on every hand. A book by the English author Pember, called "Earth's Earliest Ages" (Hodder & Stoughton, London), will explain this uncanny subject quite fully.

God's final verdict in verse 13 is one of doom. The charge to Noah to build the ark follows. The ark is to this day a marvel. Probably much larger than the "Great Eastern," and constructed with a wisdom and strength that made it ride, with its immense cargo of creatures and food, through the watery overwhelming of the world, and weather a voyage of months, it reveals anew the Mind and Hand that are wiser and stronger than man. The ark may well typify God's salvation in Christ.

Chapter 7 describes the deluge, terrible, universal, drowning, destroying. Not stopping to look at the significant account of the origin of the waters of the deluge, we will simply note in the last verse of the chapter that the waters covered the whole earth for five long months—an unbounded ocean whose surface was nearly fifty feet above earth's highest mountain-top (verses 19-20), "and all flesh died that moved upon the earth.

The waters were assuaged in chap. 8. Month after month the weary watchers in the ark waited, drifting here and there as the waters subsided, simply trusting God's faithful piloting. First a raven, then a dove, are sent forth for traces of dry land. It was over a year before God called

Noah forth, with the long-imprisoned denizens of the ark. With grateful heart he offered sacrifice to the gracious God who had brought him through the judgment of the world unharmed. God's answer comes that He will no more curse the ground for man's sake, for that from man's very youth his nature is evil had been proven abundantly from the age that had just closed. The sweet promise of the last verse follows, "While the earth remaineth, seed, time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease."

Several momentous things are told in the next chapter. In verse 2 man is again given dominion over the creatures; their attitude to him, however, is to be no longer the loving submission of the age of innocence, but "the *fear* of you and the *dread* of you shall be upon every beast of the earth." Again, in the first chapter only vegetable food was assigned to man; now, animal food is allowed. Some have seen a deep reason for this, which is suggested in I Tim. 4 : 1-5.

A great law of social order is now laid down by God in the 5th and 6th verses, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Into man's hand is put the magistrate's sword for the first time. It is folly to resist this fundamental principle of God's government of our race, because of any sentimental feeling about capital punishment.

Then follows God's great and condescending covenant with every living creature on earth, not to destroy the earth again by a flood. The rainbow is given as a token of this covenant, and the explanation of the joyous complacency we feel at the sight of the rainbow probably finds its origin in an instinctive understanding of its meaning. The unity of the present race of man is plainly shown in verses 18 and 19, "Of these (the sons of Noah) was the whole earth overspread." The shameful story of Ham's unfiliality and Noah's prophetic curse ends the chapter.

There is one word unknown heretofore that marks the tenth chapter. It is the word "Nations," verse 5 (twice), 20, 31, 32 (twice). Established government seems to have

been unknown to the antediluvians. That was an age of freedom from all restraint except individual conscience. The flood-wreck resulted. God now establishes the State. Chapter 9:6 is the basis of it, as before observed. Cf. Rom. 13:2-4. The descendants of Noah now divide into nations and kingdoms. Nimrod, the first autocrat and conqueror, stands forth (verses 3-12). One can almost hear the marchings to and fro of the peoples in this chapter. It is a marvel, too, of ethnology. We find our own ancestors early in the list (verses 2-5). Note that both the Japhetic and Hamitic lines are disposed of, before that of Shem is taken up, for from Shem is to come Abraham and the chosen people. The Bible is not primarily a history of the world, but of the people of God and God's various ways with them. Though, of course, the general outline of God's dealings with the whole race will be traced. The story of the race as a whole will soon be dropped, while the line of God's chosen will be carefully traced on.

The eleventh chapter shows the united families of men moving east till they find the marvelously fruitful plain of Shinar, between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, the seat of empires for ages after, and chosen by Satan as the first center of his opposition to the people and worship of God. Modern research at Nineveh has revealed the organization, about the time of Nimrod, of an avowed Society of Satan, a secret order whose seat was afterwards moved to Pergamos, in Asia Minor (cf. Rev. 2:13), later to Rome, and will finally be taken back to the land of Shinar again, for the last great rebellion. See Zech. 5:5-11. We soon see men building away at the great tower that they say "shall reach unto heaven," to "make themselves a name," and to cement finally their political and social union. "They are intoxicated with their new power of ordered government," and being all of one tongue, and their way to godless progress wholly unimpeded, they are ready to forget God utterly, when by a sudden fiat from His throne their speech is confounded. In amazement and panic they huddle into such groups as can yet understand each other. Thus they are scattered

over the earth. The rest of the chapter takes up the line of Shem, to lead us on to Abraham's story, and will rightly come in the next lesson.

The flood story is a great panorama of man's iniquity and God's long-suffering, and also of man's helplessness against God's power; but the tower on the plains of Shinar is poor proof that men learned the lesson of their littleness.

The first direct reference to Christ in the Bible is the promise and prophecy of verse 15 of chapter 3:

The Types. "The Seed of the woman (Christ; see Gal. 4: 4) shall bruise the serpent's head" (Satan; Rev. 20:2). And there are six remarkable types of Christ in this lesson. By a type is meant a person, thing or event, that foreshadows in some way a greater person, thing or event of the future. Compare the *light* of Gen. 1:3, with Christ's words in John 12:36; "I am come a light into the world." See also John 1:9 and 5. Again, the skins of slain animals with which God clothed Adam and Eve after they had sinned, are the first pictures of Christ's being slain for us, and His righteousness put on us as a garment. Abel's sacrifice (Gen. 4:4) looks right forward to Christ on the cross; while the ark is a wonderful picture of the security of those in Christ and their preservation through the hour of judgment. See 1 Peter 3:18-22; John 5:24, R.V. Two men, Adam and Noah, also stand out as typical of the Son of God (1 Cor. 15:22; Heb. 11:7).

The human race is traced in these eleven chapters through three stages or dispensations of its history; God is trying or testing the race in distinct ways through these different ages. 1. The age of *innocence*, from man's creation to his fall. 2. The age of *freedom*, from the fall to the flood, during which time, God left man without direct restraint, except his own conscience, even human government not being yet inaugurated. 3. The *postdiluvian* age, from the flood to a time we shall discover in our next lesson. Until the eleventh chapter the whole race has been considered. It having thrice failed and wandered utterly away from God, He now prepares to select and

train a particular nation of His own, for purposes He will reveal directly.

Our next lesson will be, Genesis 11:10 to 25:10: *Abraham, the Father of them that Believe.* Read these chapters at least a half dozen times over, ere you take up the notes of the next lesson. *Nothing must take the place of this reading for yourself.*



LESSON 3.

Abraham, the father of them that believe.

Genesis XI. 10—XXV. 10.

In this course of lessons the details of the passages we study will not, as a rule, be taken up, nor will it be attempted to give a critical or exactly analytical study of the books as a whole. The writer must frankly confess that the one great object of the lessons is a moral and spiritual one. Therefore the great *principles* of things will be sought and emphasized, even at the sacrifice of *apparent* thoroughness and consistency. It is not a mere knowledge of the Bible that we want, but we want to know *the mind of God*. We want to get into sympathy with *Him*, and learn to look at things from His viewpoint. God made known His *ways* unto Moses; the children of Israel saw only His *acts*—the outward manifestation of His power and glory, Ps. 103 : 7. Moses *sought* this wondrous knowledge of *God Himself*, and found it accordingly; as we see in Exodus 33 : 13, 18; 34 : 1-8. May we do likewise!

Our Proper Attitude in Bible Study.

Now we shall find many of these great divine principles, these *ways of God*, to be things, as Peter says (2 Peter 3 : 16), "hard to be understood." But let us not treat them as Peter here says, "the ignorant and unsteadfast" do, to their own *destruction*. Let us bow humbly before God's holy Word, accepting all He says and does in absolute faith that it is right and good; and that, if He sees best, we shall by and by know more fully why He has done as He has done. Only, by all means, let us *not* shut ourselves out from full fellowship with God, as many do, by refusing to admit some plain statement of fact or of principle that God gives us in His Word.

An old Puritan divine used to say, "There are just two things that I want to know First, does GOD speak?"

Second, What does God say?" Let the godless world laugh all it may; there is no other *Christian* attitude toward the Word of God, but that of absolute child-like submission to *its authority*. The only question is, What does God, here in His Word, plainly declare? No matter how I feel about it, or have hoped about it—what God says *settles* it.

The Church of God must come back to this or perish.

You must take up your cross, Christian, somewhere; and here, on the inspiration and authority of God's Word, is probably to-day the most actual conflict between the Church and the devil-ruled world.

In the light of these great *underlying principles* of God's dealings with His creatures, we shall be able intelligently to study the details of Scripture.

I. The first thing is to review the last lesson (chapters I-II : 9) by chapter-names, topic-words, and topical outline. In a class this should be done in concert till there is no faltering by anyone. Make much of this review, always. Review the great truths also of the past lesson. The teacher should have such a masterful hold of the lesson, that he can, by careful questioning, bring the class to the discovery for itself of these great outline truths in each lesson; then, by persistently reviewing he should harrow them in till the class is utterly unable to forget them.

II. These Abraham chapters, 11 : 10—25 : 10, should be read till you can run through them without hesitation. If you read them through every day for a week, and then twice through at a sitting, you will be glad you did it.

III. Look up carefully the geography of these chapters, noting the location of every place mentioned; also trace the journeys of Abraham till they are familiar. Find the proper pronunciation of every name used, and fix in the memory the meaning of the principal names.

IV. Let us now rapidly sketch the story: The Shemitic ancestry of Abram traced, with their Mesopotamian home and history; God's purposeful call of Abram and the great sevenfold promise to him; the long journey of obedience and hope: Canaan at last, but Canaanites; the comforting

vision of God, the altar-and-tent life begun; the famine, Egypt and the sad backsliding; then back to Canaan and Bethel, worship and joy, with Lot's worldly choice of Sodom, the place so soon to be judged, and a separation from his godly uncle, who moves up to Hebron, the place of fellowship. Now the first great battle of the East and West is on, with valiant Abraham—a real general—to the rescue of captive Lot, and on the way back the mysterious Melchizedek with his effectual ministry to the man of faith about to be flattered and tempted. The great covenant with Abraham follows, giving him Palestine forever, and promise of multiplied seed to fill it. The foolish Hagar-expedient to obtain the promised seed, with its utter failure, follows, and then thirteen long years of waiting, (between chapters 16 and 17) when circumcision is given as a token of the covenant, and the boy Isaac promised to the faithful patriarch of ninety-nine years. Anon, with two of the heavenly host, the Lord appears to Abraham, to announce that the sin-cup of Sodom at last is full unto judgment, and to give his friend opportunity to pray his poor nephew out of the burning. Then follows the doom; the third age has closed; the tale of Lot's horrible progeny, destined to be the worst enemies of God, is added, and the story of Abraham's second fear-spasm about his wife; then the child of promise is born and the mocking Ishmael cast out. Now comes the supreme heart-test of Abraham—the offering of Isaac, his son. Will he do it? He will, without once faltering. And then he is blessed by his God to the full. The aged Sarah is next laid to rest in the quaintly-purchased cave of Machpelah. The glad wooing and wedding of Isaac follows—a beautiful chapter. A few more years, and the pilgrim is “gathered to his people”—we know them who they are.

Only one mighty man moves in these chapters. Others than Abraham (save Melchizedek, who was greater, Heb. 7:4-10). seem pygmies. Abraham continually breathed the air in the mountains of faith. If he descends—for he does—he is soon ashamed and goes back directly. He was the friend of God (2 Chron. 20:7). and the father of them that believe. Rom. 4:11; Gal. 3:7. God found

something rare in him. See Neh. 9 : 8. "Thou foundest his heart faithful and madest a covenant with him." Compare 2 Chron. 16 : 9. Yet in himself he was weak as other men; he knew it, and also the place of strength. "And Abraham fell on his face and God talked with him." Gen. 17 : 3.

V. The chapter-names: XII., Call; XIII., Separation (from Egypt and Lot); XIV., Victory (over kings and covetousness); XV., Covenant; XVI., Hagar; XVII., Circumcision; XVIII., Intercession; XIX., Sodom; XX., Abimelech; XXI., Isaac; XXII., Testing; XXIII., Machpelah; XXIV., Bride; XXV., Death.

Run backward and forward through these names till it is perfectly easy to do so, and always think through the story as you repeat the names.

VI. The topic names: Call; Preparation; Covenant; Waiting; Fulfilment; Testing; Fruitfulness. The whole story of Abraham groups about these seven words. Think through the chapters three or four times with this in mind, assigning the details of the narrative each to its proper topic-head. Then write out for yourself, under the seven heads, the topical outline you have thus secured. Go as much into detail as you please; only be careful to keep the great features of the story before you. If you will keep looking at Abraham from God's view-point, who is giving us the story of His dealings with His servant, and is revealing to us those events and epochs of Abraham's career which He deems important, you will quickly recognize and understand the important features of the lesson. Remember James 1 : 5, and ask God boldly for wisdom to see the deep truth in this story. He will give it to you.

VII. The character of Abraham should be taken up and studied most patiently and thoroughly. It does not pay to hurry in any Bible study, but haste will be ruinous to good results here. Will it not pay you to become intimately acquainted with the man whom God called His *friend*? See Isa. 41 : 8. Take time, then, to do it.

In the study of a Bible character, it will be well to proceed in the following general order:

1. The pre-natal influences: genealogy, character of parents, etc., cf. 2 Tim. 1 : 5.

2. The life-story: including the careful examination of the early life and advantages, the details of the narrative throughout, and the making of the epochs or stages into which the life seems naturally to fall.

3. The primary or original elements of the character, as far as they can be discovered: *i.e.*, the man as he is when God takes him up.

4. Spiritual history. This is the most important line of character study. The general rule in it is, to look at a man's life from God's view-point. He mapped and managed it, with an end in view in every detail, and a general end in the whole, for every character in the Bible stands for some great truth or lesson. And somewhere in the Bible always, I believe, God gives His design in each of the great Bible characters, explains His method with them, and gives His estimate of them. First, then, should be sought the end God has in the character before us. What did He plan that the man should be, represent, or do? Next, what are the great steps, or crises, in the man's life, by means of which God's plan was affected? And what means did God use to bring these about? Men's spiritual lives, as well as their natural lives, consist of great epochs, or periods, each of which has been entered upon at some crisis or turning-point in their affairs. These pivotal points must be discovered, or we shall fail in the real sense to grasp the meaning of the lives we study. The ordinary details of the history will now most profitably be studied in the light of these great epochal events. The minor events lead to the crises, or result from them.

5. The final character: the man as he is at last, as the result of God's method with him, noting his strong points and weak points, tracing each to its source, if possible; and finally summing up the man in one characteristic word. In Abraham's case this is easy. He is the great mah of what—?

VIII. The following topics should be carefully studied:

1. The call of Abram: God's reason for it; objects in it; probable method of it; difficulties of obedience to it; secret of Abram's obedience, cf. Heb. 11:8; things left; things gained (search concordance).

2. The progressive revelation of God to Abraham; (Revised Version best).

1. As the LORD (Jehovah, His name as in covenant with His people), 12 : 1, 8; 13 : 4, 18. 2. God Most High, (El-Elyon, Creator—God Over and Owning All), 14 : 18-22. 3. Shield and Exceeding Great Reward, 15 : 1. 4. The Almighty God, (El Shaddai), 17 : 1. 5. The Righteous Judge, 18 : 25. 6. The Everlasting God, 20 : 33. 7. The God of Providence (Jehovah-Jireh), 22 : 14. The context in connection with each passage should be carefully studied, as illustrating the occasion, circumstances and methods of God's ever-sufficient and always-fitting revelation of Himself to His children. Wonderful and delightful discoveries will attend such studies.

3. The Abrahamic Covenant, Gen. 15 and 17. On what basis made—God's grace, or Abraham's works? See Gal. 3; etc. Exactly what did its promises include? To whom were they ultimately made? Gal. 3 : 16. Have they yet been fulfilled? Will they yet be fulfilled? How? When? Compare the Abrahamic covenant with the Noachian, Gen. 9.

4. Circumcision: Its object or end; its meaning; its connection with the covenant.

5. Lot: his history, motives, character; conversion—when? religious experience (2 Peter 2 : 8); family and progeny; the spiritual lessons his life teaches.

6. How are we Abraham's children? Cf. Gal. 3 : 7; Rom. 4; John 8; Luke 16, etc.

7. Melchizedek. Cf. Heb. 5-7. The man; the kinship; the priesthood—its origin, order, object, and location (at Salem, later Jerusalem). Christ, the next priest-king. Zech. 6 : 13; Ezek. 21 : 26, 27. Why no more till He come?

8. Angels: their nature, manifestation and ministry. See chaps. 18 and 19.

9. The Angel of the Lord (first mentioned in 16 : 7): Who? See Gen. 22 : 11, 12; Judges 13 : 18-22; Zech. 3 : 6.

10. Prayer: its privilege, proper objects, power, method, self-limitation, and answer. Ch. 18; 19 : 29.

After all this study, several special hours should be set apart in which to meditate, familiarly and lovingly, and

with humble prayer, upon the life and character of Abraham, until the great patriarch lives before you and becomes one of the men of God whom you know. Follow Abraham through every experience of his life, putting yourself in his place; thus you will instinctively realize his motives—you will know him. Without these hours of deep, quiet, holy reflection, the precious lessons you may have learned will either soon slip away from you or will never become of deep, living profit in your life or service.

Why did God call Abram out of his own country—why was it necessary? See Josh. 24 : 2 (R.V. best). And more than that, what great principle was involved? See Luke 14 : 25-27.

Practical Questions. Do God's claims always take precedence of, and often absolutely set aside, those of nature? What Bible instances can you find of this? How was God's calling Abraham *out* of the world, as He did, a kind of *judgment* on the world? Think of this. Compare what God says about the effect of Noah's obedience to Him, in Heb. 11 : 7. When anyone nowadays trusts, loves and confesses the Lord Jesus Christ, how is that a kind of *judgment*, also, upon the world? What has the world accounted Jesus to be? Isa. 53 : 12c. And what has it done to Him? Acts 3 : 14, 15. Every real Christian is a witness against the world. By and by what place shall we have? 1 Cor. 6 : 2. God help us to see all this! Of course, in the light of this, we *must* be *separate* from the world. Study 2 Cor. 6 : 14-18.*

Why did God allow Abraham to fail in *faith*, in Gen. 12 : 10-20? See also 20 : 1-14. Was not faith his strong point? Why then the failure *here*? Do not pass lightly over this. Reflect on it.

Why did God plague *Pharaoh*, in 12 : 17, instead of Abraham?

What did Abraham re-establish when he gets back into

* Note in this passage the above reference is to the Christian's relation to the world not to other Christians, as some would apply it.

Canaan? 13 : 3, 4. Do you think he had a "family altar" in Egypt? Why not? If you have not one in your home it is quite a proof that you are living where? Hadn't you better get back to God? If you do, will He bless you? See Gen. 13 : 14, 18. Probably if you do get back into real fellowship with God, some half-hearted *Lots* will be leaving you, 13 : 10, 11. But you need not fear, for Who will be your reward? 15 : 1.

Why did God let Lot be taken captive, in 14 : 12? Does God promise to protect even His children (and Lot was one—2 Peter. 2 : 7, 8), from danger and worldly misfortune, if they run after the world as Lot did? 1 Tim. 6 : 9, 10. Are you running after this world? Are you sure you are not? The best proof that you are not, will be, that with Abraham you have journeyed in the *other direction* from the "plain of Jordan" and Sodom, and have come and dwelt in *Hebron*, the "place of fellowship" with God. See Gen. 13 : 18. Who really gained, in the long run—Lot, who sought the world, or Abraham, who sought God? Compare Gen. 13 : 10, 11; 14 : 12; 19, with Gen. 13 : 14-17. See Mark 10 : 29, 30; also 1 Tim. 6 : 6-8.

Note in Gen. 14, who has the real *power*, the man who compromised with the world, or the man who lived in separation from it. You know they tell us, "If we want to have power and influence with the world we must live in it, and, in a sense, be *of* it. If we want to win card players, we must learn to play cards," etc. Do you believe this? How much real power did Lot have in Sodom? Gen. 19 : 9.

Why did Abraham not want the King of Sodom to be able to say he had made him rich? 14 : 23. Did God approve his course here. See 15 : 1. How?

Why and how did God count Abraham's *believing* Him, for *righteousness*? If you can answer this question you have hold of the great cardinal doctrine of the gospel. Pray and study over it. Compare Rom. 10 : 4; 4 : 3-5, 16, 20, 23-25; 3 : 20-24; Gal. 3 : 6-14. If you want to find a book that will marvelously help you here, read *Luther's Commentary on the Galatians*. This dear old truth of *justification by faith* needs another great revival. In these days

men talk not so much of "salvation by *works*," as "salvation by *character*"—perhaps even a more soul-damning heresy than salvation by works. If you want to find how much man's "character" as well as his "works" go for in God's sight, read Rom. 3 : 9-20. An allopathic dose of unadulterated *Romans* is what the Church of God needs this day.

Abraham, then, is the great example of the believers in God in the midst of a world of sin. The human race had departed altogether from God, even unto that horrible thing called *idolatry*; in which Satan and his demons had usurped, in man's sin-darkened heart and mind, God's place. See 1 Cor. 10 : 20; Deut. 32 : 17, etc. The god of this world had become (and still is) the devil himself, 2 Cor. 4 : 4; 1 John 5 : 19. So God called Abram out of the whole scene, and, showing him his sinfulness and his utter inability to help or save himself, led and enabled Abram to *trust Him*, thus bringing him at once into *righteousness* (how, we shall see by and by), into *fellowship with Himself*, and into *separation from the world* that was still living in sin.

Of course, thereafter, Abraham must live a *stranger and pilgrim*, as long as he was in the midst of this evil world.

This was what God wanted—why, we shall see in our next lesson.

In our last lesson we found Abraham to be the great Bible example of what? Gen. 15 : 6; Rom. 4 : 18; **Review.** James 2 : 23. And he is called the "father" of whom? Rom. 4 : 11. And also the "father" of what portion of the circumcised people, the Israelites? Rom. 4 : 12. And what did we find Abraham's faith in God leading and enabling him to leave? Gen. 12 : 1-4, and Heb. 11 : 8. And to obtain what? 15 : 6. And to live how? Gen. 15 : 13, and Acts 7 : 5, with Heb. 11 : 9, 10. And to yield what? Gen. 13 : 8, 9; 14 : 21-24. And to gain what? 12 : 2, 3; 13 : 14-18; 14 : 14-16; 15 : 1. And to literally fulfil what? Gen. 17. And to persist and prevail in what? Gen. 18 : 22-33, with 19 : 29. And to obtain what? Gen. 21 : 1-7, with Rom. 4 : 7-21—a marvelous passage! Study it in the

Revised Version, and pray over it. (But don't forget Heb. 11 : 11, 12, also.) And Abraham's faith led him to endure what? Gen. 22 : 1-19, especially verses 5 and 8 with Heb. 11 : 17-19. And to buy what? Gen. 23. How was his faith shown in this transaction? If he sent back to his old home for a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24) why not take Sarah's body back thither for burial? Abraham's faith in God got him what title in Canaan? Gen. 23 : 6, margin. What title in heaven? Isa. 41 : 8. What two things did God find in Abraham that particularly pleased Him, and made Him call Abraham His friend? Heb. 11, verses 8, 9, and 17; compare with verse 6; Neh. 9 : 8, compared with Gen. 22 : 18; James 2 : 20-23, and John 15 : 14. *Faith* and *faithfulness* sum up his life. He trusted God and did as God told him. Can we all be *the friends of God*? Ps. 25 : 14; John 15 : 14. *Are you one of God's friends?*

Practical Questions.

What was the meaning of the ceremony of Gen. 15 : 9-17? What, precisely, did God at this time promise to Abraham's seed? 15 : 18-21. To whom, really, was this promise made? See Gal. 3 : 16. In His hands it is safe, and will be realized. Israel after the flesh lost all claim to it long ago. The land of Palestine will, however, become the possession of Abraham's children, by and by, when they accept their Messiah, Zech. 12 : 10-14; 13 : 1, 2; 14 : 8, 10, 11, 20, 21; Ezek. 36 : 30-33.

Why was Ishmael not chosen of God instead of Isaac? Ishmael was a child of the flesh—of Abraham's natural life and powers. But Isaac of what? Gal. 4 : 23, 28. And he was begotten and born on what principle? Rom. 4 : 17-21. And was chosen and called of God on what ground? Rom. 9 : 7-11. These great salvation principles of faith (on the human side) and sovereign calling (from the divine side) exclude all fleshly glorying; which is what God must do, if He and His dear Son are to have all the glory in human salvation. Hagar represents all *we* can do, and it is rejected, Gal. 4 : 30. Isaac represents what *God* does, in grace, for the *dead* and *absolutely helpless*, Rom. 4 : 17, 19.

Just why did Sarah suggest and Abraham adopt, the plan of Gen. 16 : 2? Note this. Was Sarah naturally a woman of faith? 18 : 9-15. Is anyone full of faith *naturally*? Jer. 17 : 9. But note the words, "even Sarah herself," of Heb. 11 : 11. Bless God! There is hope for each of us to become mighty in faith if we will *in our own case* count God faithful to His promises. Do you believe that? Then begin to do it *to-day*.

How long did God let Abraham *wait* on account of his fleshly plan in Ishmael? Compare Gen. 16 : 3. 16; 17 : 9. God *must* let us come to the end of *our own ways*. How often we delay God's plans by interposing our own! God's Isaacs have to wait till our Ishmaels are out of the way.

Note most carefully, now, the four great promises of the Abrahamic covenant, in 17 : 2-8. Exactly what are they? Pick them out, and remember them. The rest of the Old Testament is going to take for granted that you know that God has given Abraham and his seed these four great blessings.

What sign or seal or token does God now appoint for the seed of Abraham (after the flesh) to receive, to mark the fact that they are in covenant with Him? Gen. 17 : 9-14. How long is this covenant with its token to last? 17 : 9, 12, 13.

But now distinguish very carefully several things that differ. First, when did Abraham get his righteousness, in chapter 17, when he was circumcised, or many years before? See Gen. 15 : 6. So circumcision has nothing to do with making the seed of Abraham righteous before God. See Rom. 4 : 9-11. This is very important indeed; for, just as many nowadays think that baptism gives them salvation or righteousness, or at least commends them to God, or that partaking of the Lord's Supper betters their standing, or that being church-members makes them safe for heaven, so the Jews got to think that because they were the fleshly seed of Abraham, and were circumcised of course they were saved. But see what John.

Paul, and our Lord Jesus say as to this, Matt. 3 : 8-10; Rom. 2 : 28, 29; Gal. 6 : 15; John 8 : 39-44.

We see, then, that circumcision was simply the token that those who took it were in *outward* covenant-relations with God, while it did not secure salvation for anyone. Just as many who were baptized church-members, communicants, and even *workers*, are still *lost*, because they have *never been born again* (John 3 : 3), *have not the Holy Ghost*, and so are *none of Christ's* (Rom. 8 : 9), and shall *depart from Him in that day*. (Matt. 7 : 21-23; 25 : 41-46). These are awful words! But what if they are facts? Do they apply to you?

Those of Abraham's fleshly seed who really were saved are described in Rom. 4 : 12. In the verse before this Abraham is said to be "the father of *all* them that believe," of all ages, whether of the Jewish race or not; he is also, in a further and peculiar sense, the father of *circumcision* to certain of the Jewish race ("the circumcision")—who are not only outwardly circumcised, but who also inwardly *believe*, and *follow the faith of Abraham*. Note this with very great care. This splits the earthly nation of Isaac into two great parts: the *real Israel*, and those that are only *of Israel*. Compare Rom. 9 : 6-8, 27. This will appear further, as we go on. Righteousness and salvation, *even* for Jews, are altogether independent of their Jewhood. Circumcision and membership in the Israelitish nation brought many privileges (Rom. 3 : 1, 2; 9 : 3-5). But *not salvation*. Abraham, their father, got righteousness and salvation, and became the father of the faithful, before he knew anything about circumcision. And if you are *of faith*, if you are trusting *Christ* instead of *yourself*, you are a true *child of Abraham*, Gal. 3 : 7. Abraham gets all his *children* by *faith*—along that line and no other. Faith puts people into relation with Abraham and his salvation blessing, Gal. 3 : 9. Circumcision, for the *believing* Israelite, added the additional blessings of the *earthly* people—the land of Palestine, the promises, etc.

Unbelieving Israelites, though circumcised, had no real relationship whatever to Abraham, in God's sight.*

Why was Abraham able to recognize so readily the heavenly visitors of 18:1? Compare John 14:19, 21. Note also Amos 3:7; Ps. 25:14. Note also Gen. 18:17-19.

What lessons as to the cumulative character of guilt, and God's government of the earth do you see in 18:20, 21? Compare 15:16; Dan. 8:23; Matt. 23:32-36; James 5:4. Why did Abraham so earnestly pray for Sodom? Why did he stop short at 18:32?

Why did Lot find greater difficulty in getting the angels to visit his house, than Abraham the Lord of the angels? 19:1-4 and 18:1-5. Why did the Lord Himself not enter Sodom? Why did Lot seem to his relatives as "one that mocked"? 19:14. Why did Lot "linger"? 19:16. Why did his wife look back? 19:26. (Are you remembering her? Luke 17:32.) What did God send on those cities? 19:24. From whence? 19:24. Was the brims'one and fire literal? 19:28. It was a *sample* of what? Jude 7. *Note this.* If it was literal in Genesis what is it in Revelation? Rev. 14:10; 19:20; 20:10; 21:8. With what precisely similar appearance? Rev. 14:11 and Gen. 19:28.

* Circumcision was a sign God had utterly condemned and rejected the flesh—that is, all man was by nature, God had given man the power of begetting seed; but He would set a mark upon the very bodies of that people with whom He had entered into covenant, that testified that it was not their natural seed He was choosing. It was a mark of death, of cutting off in judgment all man could beget—that is, the whole human line. It was, therefore, in God's sight a confession, on the part of those who received it, that they had passed the sentence of death on all flesh as sinful, and vile, and lost, and stood with God apart, separated from the world by death.

Circumcision found its fulfilment in Christ's death, burial and resurrection. See Col. 2:11 (R.V. best). Christ at the Cross (not before) became identified with our sin—with all that we were, by nature as well as practice (2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 6:6, R.V.); and brought all flesh to an end before God through His death. Then He arose, in "newness of life." Rom. 6:4, "to live unto God;" and we who are in Him, partake of this new or resurrection life. Thus we are in the New Creation (2 Cor. 5:17), and old things are passed away. We are one with Christ, members of Christ risen. The life that we have is His life, that has passed through death and resurrection. We share His deliverance from the "body of the flesh" (Col. 2:11, R.V.), for we share in that entire cutting off of Christ by death from the old creation (with which at the cross He became identified). That is, we have been "circumcised with Him."

The Word of God interprets itself. Let us walk softly. Remember 2 Peter 3 : 16, 17.

Why did God "prove" Abraham? Gen. 22 : 1, R.V. See verse 12. God knows what is in our hearts, but He loves to see it *come forth*, in our *actions*. See Deut. 8 : 2; 2 Chron. 32 : 31. Does God know what you *love*? See Gen. 22 : 2. Do not hesitate, if He proves you about *that thing*. Get up early and offer it to Him, Gen. 22 : 3. It will pay (Gen. 22 : 15-18); but anyhow, let GOD have it. What did He give *you*? John 3 : 16.

Why did Abraham refuse to take the field in Gen. 23 as a gift? Compare 14 : 22, 23; 1 Chron. 21 : 22-25; 3 John 7.

Of what is the beautiful story of Gen. 24 a wondrous type? 2 Cor. 11 : 2; Eph. 5 : 25, 27; 1 Thess. 4 : 16, 17. Compare with this last passage Gen. 24 : 61-67.



LESSON IV.

Isaac and Jacob, the Heirs of the Promise.

GENESIS XXV. 11—XXXVI.

Proceed first with this lesson according to steps I., II. and III., of Lesson II. Remember that the foundation work of reading and re-reading must be faithfully done each time. The rest of the lesson presupposes this.

The chapter-names of the advance lesson are: XXV., Birthright; XXVI., Abimilech II. (compare ch. 20); XXVII., Blessing; XXVIII., Ladder; XXIX., Service; XXX., Increase; XXXI., Mizpah; XXXII., Wrestling; XXXIII., Prevailing; XXXIV., Disgraced; XXXV., Bethel; XXXVI., Esau.

Two great characters of Bible history now come before us: Isaac, not a mighty man by nature, yet made truly majestic in dignity by the heritage of promise, faith and blessing on which he entered as the covenant son of Abraham (see ch. 17 : 19; 25 : 5, 6-11; and Jacob, intense, watchful, shrewd, possessed of boundless resources, bargain-making, treacherous and mean; and yet, withal, earnest at heart, and anxious to have the favor and blessing of God.

God's covenant promises descended to Isaac. He knew them, prized them, held them, used them and handed them on. There is not much written of him. Gentle, calm, easy-going, he seems to have lived the quiet, ordinary life of an opulent oriental patriarch. Three excellent elements of his character should not be overlooked: his meekness, 26 : 16-22 (meekness being that excellent quality which will be imposed on rather than fight); his prayerfulness, 25 : 21; 24 : 63; 26 : 23-25; and his accepting God's will, though against his desire, 27 : 33. His fondness for ven-

ison reveals a weakness that has touched other than orientals and has dimmed other spiritual vision than Isaac's. That he deemed Esau a fit inheritor of the covenant blessing of Abraham and was ready to make the occasion of bestowing that blessing a dinner of antelope, makes us slightly ashamed of him. But he might well be of some of us, perhaps. He was a good man. God owned him. His religion was, pre-eminently, fearing God (31 : 53; 48 : 15).

The great facts in this lesson's story of Jacob are these: Getting the birthright; stealing the blessing; flight from home, and the ladder vision at Bethel; twenty-one years' service with his Uncle Laban, with his marriages and hard-earned prosperity there; his sudden flight with all he had; Laban's pursuit and their final compact; the angel's withstanding him on the borders of Canaan; his reconciliation with Esau; settling at Shechem; his daughter Dinah dishonored and avenged; then back to Bethel and real favor with God, and finally, to Hebron, Isaac's home—"the place of fellowship." Jacob was ready at last to take up the full Abrahamic testimony and Isaac was called home.

Make your own topical outline from these facts, as in Lesson II., and drill thoroughly upon it.

There are two great crises in Jacob's life which should be specially studied. The first is at Bethel, in the twenty-eighth chapter, when, fleeing from his outraged brother, he lies down at night in helpless weariness, with a stone for his pillow. God has an opportunity now in Jacob's weakness to open heaven, to reveal Himself, His grace and His purposes, and make anew to this poor wanderer His mighty covenant promises, all unconditional and full to running over. There was no receptivity in the waking hours of this man, so full of self and meanness, for such a divine unfolding; it must be done when nature is dull and quiet in sleep. But mark Jacob on awakening: Fear, dread, haste to get away, a pillar set up, a bargain made with God for food and raiment and bodily safety (how low his thoughts compared to what God had promised!), and he is gone on his self-chosen way.

The years of service for a hard master, and the increase of children, cattle and goods, fill out the story of his long exile.

Eleven sons (learn carefully their names and order of birth) and one daughter are born. But four wives, and the best of them a half-idolater (ch. 31 : 34), and that to the end of her days (35 : 4, 16-18) did not tend to make Jacob's home a model. Witness his sons' behavior afterward. His keen device for the multiplication of his kind of cattle shows the real Jacob of those days—scheming, supplanting and swindling, depending on himself.

Though God is not forgotten, he is too self-strong and self-resourceful to need God much. The Father's only resort with such children seems to be to put them where they must have His help—where they can no longer go forward or back or to either side. Then they will cry to Him. See if Jacob does not come thus into a corner directly—the second great crisis of his life.

Jacob's clandestine leave-taking of Laban comes now. God has told him to go, but he would not be Jacob if he were quietly to wait on God to get him away honorably. The disgraceful quarrel with his uncle over, and the gruesome Mizpah pillar set up, he goes on to face a worse trouble. Esau is coming, armed and vengeful, to meet him. He would fain flee on after his people, but a Mysterious Stranger stops him. He advances, but is grappled by a strong arm. Through the long hours they wrestle. Jacob cannot, shall not, go on into the land of promise and inheritance until, with his pride and self-strength broken down utterly, and in humble confession of his real character-name, Jacob, the supplanter, the swindler, he hangs helpless on God alone for the birth-right he tried to buy and the blessing he tried to steal years go from Esau. At last he is a prince—knighted by Jehovah's own hand—"Thy name is Israel . . . a prince." Now God will call Himself "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," and that name Jacob will go on Paul's great catalogue of worthies in the eleventh of Hebrews. He is limping on his way—a victor because his strength is gone. He is leaning now on God. Jacob's

growth in grace—into the beauty and wisdom of God, from this time on should be carefully marked. Proceed with the thorough study of his life and character as well as that of Isaac, after the directions given in Lesson II. for character study. There are three great periods in Jacob's life as in that of Joseph. Find and define them.

Chapter 36 disposes of Esau and his descendants, that the story of the chosen line may proceed. It was Esau's rude pun in chapter 25 : 30, as one has shown, that got him the nickname Edom: "Feed the red [pointing to the pottage] to this red" [pointing to himself]. "Therefore was his name called 'Edom,' or 'red.'" And three times over in this chapter, by the repetition of this name, the Holy Spirit reminds us of that light despising of the priceless birthright by this profane man (Heb. 12 : 16, 17). Let us remember that Esau was fully worthy of losing all he lost, as is every one who sells his heavenly inheritance for a mess of earthly meat.

Mr. F. B. Meyer's little book, "Israel, a Prince with God," will be found wonderfully interesting and profitable in the study of the character of Jacob. Before any such help, however, the story should be mastered, and the truths you discover thoroughly studied and applied, with God alone as Teacher.

Why did God wait till Abraham had died, ere He blessed Isaac? Gen. 25 : 11. What blessing was this? Gen. 26 : 2-5. See Gen. 12 : 2, 3; 17 : 18-21; 21 : 12, 13; 20 : 7; 27 : 4, 24-29, 33 and 37; 28 : 1, 13-15; 31 : 3; 32 : 29; 35 : 9-13; 48 : 3, 4, 13-20; 49, especially verse 28. We see in these verses that there was this peculiar character in God's dealings with the patriarchs, that, from Abraham on, God's definite and very marked favor rested upon a certain chosen line, descending from the father to the son or sons whom God indicated, generally by prophetic inspiration, in the form of a father's "blessing" upon his family. Note, please, in the verses referred to above, what in general was included in the divine blessing upon this chosen line. Gen. 17 : 3-8 will sum it up fairly; but search these other

Lesson Questions.

Scriptures. If we could only get you to digging in this Genesis Klondike!

Why did Jacob *want* the birthright? Gen. 25 : 31. Jacob was after what the birthright, by *natural* relation, brought—what was that? Gen. 27 : 1, 4. Why did he desire it? See if you can answer this; it is a great key to Jacob's life. How did Esau regard the birthright? 25 : 34. He merely thought of what? 25 : 32. What vast difference, in the early life of these boys, appears in 25 : 27? (see margin of R.V.).

Did Jacob really *gain* the birthright by buying it? Isaac still regarded whom as the inheritor? 27 : 1-4. And Jacob still felt it necessary to do what, in order to secure the blessing? 27. Who really gave Jacob the birthright? When? 25 : 22, 23. Compare Rom. 9 : 11, 12. Was it Jacob's more industrious character that inclined God to give him the preference over Esau? Rom. 9 : 11. Did Esau *lose* the birthright, by his despising it? Heb. 12 : 16, 17, with Gen. 27 : 30-40. Can men mock God, that is live fleshly lives, and inherit spiritual blessings? Gal. 6 : 6, 7; Num. 14 : 21-23.

Which was nearest right, Isaac, in 26 : 16-22, or his father, in 21 : 25? Meditate upon this, in the light of Lev. 19 : 17; Prov. 25 : 12; Matt. 18 : 15; and also Prov. 15 : 1, 18; 25 : 15; Matt. 5 : 38-42; 1 Cor. 6 : 7.

What do you think of Isaac's spiritual life, in comparison with that of Abraham? Note 25 : 28—what two faults here? Compare 27 : 4. Do you not think Rebekah had told Isaac God's word in 25 : 23? Why did he make the error, then, of thinking to bless Esau? Why did Rebekah not look to *God* to fulfil His own promise, regarding her younger son? Why did Isaac do as in 26 : 6-9? But note verse 12. We must consider these patriarchs in view of the light God had *then* given; not by the epistle of Paul, for example, as in Eph. 4 : 25. Note this as an important *principle* of Bible study. We may also remark, in general, that it is because the Bible tells the *facts* about its characters, that so many unpleasant things are told of them. How would all the *facts* about *our* lives look? *Bad* folks hate the Bible. Isaac had a profound reverence for God.

which even Jacob, while carnal, saw, Gen. 31 : 42, 53. He got his prayers answered, 25 : 21. Do you? He had a gentle, simple, trustful, loving heart. Study 26 : 15-23, 26-31; 24 : 67; and especially 22 : 7-10—exquisitely beautiful! Note what God said to him and what the world thought of him, in 26 : 24, and 28, 29. He fulfilled excellently Rom. 12 : 18. Jacob had hardly come into Canaan before he had a sad conflict on his hands. See Gen. 35. And note the tenor of his twenty years' life with Laban, 30 : 31.

Study Jacob. God loved him specially and tenderly. See Mal. 1 : 2. Why? Do we know why? There is hardly a more carnal saint in the Bible than he, along many lines. Yet God calls Himself "the God of Jacob" much oftener than "the God of Abraham." Why? Dear friend, do you know what *grace* is? God *loves* to take the most unlikely, the most unpleasant, the most sinful and unworthy of men, and transform them into very saints of light. Think of what it took to change the *supplanter* of 27 : 18-24, into the *prophet of God* of 49. Have you learned to *trust* this *grace* of our blessed God? Acts 15 : 11; Titus 3 : 4-7.

Just a few questions on Jacob. Why did Jacob stay at home, while Esau hunted? 25 : 27. What was the cause of his mother's preference of him? 25 : 28. Was it all maternal, or was there some faith in it? 25 : 23. What was Jacob's sin in 25 : 31? In 27 : 19? In 27 : 20? Why did God not charge him with these sins, in 28 : 10-15, before He blessed him, and gave him the covenant promises? Study this. How did Jacob appreciate such *grace* as this, at the time? 28 : 17. How, twenty years afterward, in the "tight place" of 32 : 6, 7? See verses 9 and 10. But there though forced to admit the *grace* (verse 10), he only makes it the basis of a *request*. See verses 11 and 12. Before morning, however, he at last consented to *know* whom—yea, *begged* to know Him? See 32 : 29, 30. Note that when Jacob at last got back to Bethel again (35 : 1, 6), and God reveals Himself to him (35 : 9-13), he is no longer "afraid," nor does he call the place "dreadful;" but he seems lovingly to linger there (35 : 14, 15). He *knew* God, now. Compare 1 John 4 : 8, 19.

Now, why did not Abraham have years of struggle and darkness, ere he knew God, such as Jacob had? Abraham *went right on* with God, from chapter 12 to chapter 25 with but two *very brief* eclipses of faith (12 : 10-20, and 22); while Jacob practically *lost* the twenty years with Laban, and, for that matter, the many years before that. *All the years are wasted in which we are not advancing in the knowledge of God.* During all these years Jacob was working for whom—seeking whose interests? But at the end of his life he confessed that all his support and preservation had really come from whom? Gen. 48 : 15, 16. How sad, to waste weary days anxiously worrying over what God alone can do? Study Jacob's career, in the light of Matt. 6 : 19-34, R.V.

But beside *self-seeking*, there was one other serious drag to Jacob's spiritual advancement. Did you notice it? See Gen. 29 : 18, 20—excellent so far. But see 31 : 19, 30, 32—bad enough! But Jacob did not yet know of it. But now see 35 : 2, 4. Here was known and permitted idolatry; for Rachel's sake—*his* idol, we fear. For this he delayed so long, even after Peniel, to go on to Bethel, and still on to *Hebron* ("fellowship"), and Isaac and the patriarchal succession (35 : 27). And God had to take Rachel from *Jacob*, ere *Israel* was ready at last to *go on with God*, as Abraham had done so readily and rapidly. See Gen. 35 : 19-21, 27. He *buried her* where *Christ* was *born*. Gen. 48 : 7. How suggestive!

Do you, dear friend, know anything that is hindering you from *going on with God*?

LESSON 8.

Joseph: Son, Sufferer, Sovereign.

GENESIS XXXVII.—L

1. Do not fail to read these chapters *every day*, during the week. You may think this quite a task. But if you will faithfully perform it, you will *possess* this story, so full of beauty,

Directions.

grace and power, so abounding with spiritual lessons of practical and eternal worth. When you get really *familiar*, thus, with a passage of Scripture, it keeps unfolding its treasures to your mind more and more. Often, when traveling, or about your work, when you cannot turn to the printed page, you will find your knowledge of Scripture a priceless treasure—a source of constant refreshment. If you faithfully occupy your mind with God's Word when you *have* opportunity to read it, God will see to it that your soul is delighted and refreshed by His Word when you *have not* the opportunity to read it. So we beg of you, *keep reading the Book!*

2. We would suggest the following chapter-names. If you can find better, do so; these are only suggestive: XXXVII. Joseph Sold; XXXVIII. Juda'; XXXIX. Potiphar; XL. Butler and Baker; XLI. Joseph's Exaltation; XLII. Brothers' First Visit; XLIII. Second Visit; XLIV. Humiliation; XLV. Reconciliation; XLVI. Jacob in Egypt; XLVII. Blessing Pharaoh; XLVIII. Blessing Ephraim and Manasse; XLIX. Blessing Twelve Sons; L. Two Funerals.

Drill thoughtfully on the names till you hold every chapter's contents in memory.

3. Condense the story into a simple, concise statement of its great facts, and give each fact a single-word name if possible; thus you have your topical outline. Labor to make this outline as perfect and satisfactory as possible. Review the story repeatedly by means of it.

Before we begin the story of Joseph, it will be well to note the lessons of chapter 38, which make a remarkable break in the narrative. After sketching the early days and virtues of Joseph, the Spirit of God stops to trace the shameful story of Judah. Now *Judah*, marvelous to say, is to prove the elect son and tribe, from whom is to come David the King, and David's Greater Son. But why? Why not from beautiful-charactered Joseph? Such a tale as Gen. 38 is! Dear friend, you must remember that God's *grace* is what chose Judah. Grace does not look for human worth; but, because there is *no difference*, since *all have sinned* (Rom. 3), God's grace often takes up the *most outwardly bad*, that everyone may readily see that it is God's *grace* that is working; that God is *not* giving His blessings on the ground of human merit at all.

Then look at *Tamar*, in Gen. 38! But she is put into the chosen line as one of the ancestresses of our Lord Jesus. At least three women of Christ's ancestry had a blackened character, while a fourth was shut out from blessing by the *law*. See Matt. 1 : 3-6; Josh. 2; 2 Sam. 11; Deut. 23 : 3. How *strange* this! Yes; this is *grace*. This is blessing neither according to nature or law: this is THE GRACE OF GOD!

Take up now the life of Joseph according to Lesson II. Do this work most thoroughly. You will be entranced with the beauty of the character before you, and you will be greatly profited by knowing him. Examine especially the following topics: The ingenuous loveliness of his youth; the peculiar love of his father for him—reasons for it, in Joseph, in his brethren, in Jacob; his prophetic dreams—arguing what spiritual state in Joseph, and what present and future purposes of God? the exact state of his brethren's hearts toward him, and why? the startling special providences manifest in his whole life; God's reasons for allowing his imprisonment in Egypt; the side-by-side development of patience and power in Joseph; his marked ability—how manifested? his loyalty to God, and his faith in the covenant promises in the midst of dazzling worldly success; his beautiful filial fidelity. The word, I think,

that best sums up his many-sided character is used of his Great Antitype in Ps. 45 : 2, middle clause.

Joseph is one of the most remarkable of all the human types of Christ. We will note some of the important respects in which his history foreshadows that of Christ. "The sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them" is the theme which Joseph's story so wondrously sets forth. Compare the questions of Jesus to the two in Luke 24 : 26; also Heb. 2 : 9, 10; 5 : 7, 8. In the sense of 1 Peter 2 : 21; John 15 : 19, 20; Rom. 8 : 17, and 2 Tim. 2 : 12, we see in Joseph an illustration of the life of present suffering and future glory to which every believer is called.

JOSEPH.

CHRIST.

1. Lived with his father in Hebron, "the place of fellowship." 37 : 14.

2. Joseph was his father's beloved son. 37 : 3.

3. Hated by his brethren. 37 : 4.

4. Received (in his two dreams) the revelation of God's purposes concerning himself. 37 : 5-11; 41 : 9; 45 : 5-9.

5. Faithfully and frankly testified to his brethren of what God had revealed to him. 37 : 5-6, 9, 10

6. Was hated the more for his words. 37 : 8-11.

7. Was envied by his brethren. 37 : 11.

8. Was sent down by his father out of Hebron to minister to his brethren. 37 : 13, 24.

9. "They said: 'Behold this dreamer cometh; come, let us slay him.'" 37 : 19.

Was with His Father before coming into the world. John 16 : 28.

Christ was the beloved Son of His Father Matt. 3 : 17.

Hated by His brethren, the Jews, John 15 : 24; and at first by His own brethren in His Nazareth home. John 7 : 1-7.

Received the revelation of God the Father's will concerning Himself. Isa. 50 : 4-9; John 5 : 20-30; 12 : 27, 28.

Christ did the same to His brethren. John 8 : 40 : 18 : 37

Was hated the more for His words. John : 15 : 22-25; 7 : 7; 8 : 40.

"Pilate knew that for envy the chief priests had delivered Him up." Mark 15 : 10.

"The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." 1 John 4 : 14. "He came unto His own." John 1 : 11.

"They said: 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him.'" Matt. 21 : 38.

10. They sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver, and delivered him over to the Ishmaelites. 37:28.

11. Put, innocent, into the Egyptian dungeon with two criminals. 40:3.

12. Raised up from the dungeon by the hand of Pharaoh, made second in the kingdom, and given all authority. 41:14, 43, 44.

13. Was 30 years old when they proclaimed his kingly exaltation. 41:41-46.

14. Took a bride to share his glory. 41:45.

15. When the seven years of famine came, his rejecting brethren were compelled to come to him for aid. 42.

16. Joseph dealt with his brethren severely at first, to try them and bring them to repentance. 42:7-17.

17. Was reconciled to his brethren and became their preserver and benefactor. 45:46.

18. All peoples came to Joseph for sustenance (41:57), and became the servants of Pharaoh through him (47:13-26); but he gave all the honor to Pharaoh, and took only second place.

Jesus Christ was sold for thirty pieces of silver and delivered over to the Gentiles. Matt. 26:14, 15, 37:28.

Put, innocent, into the place of death with two malefactors. Luke 23:32, 33.

Raised up from the dead by God's power, made to sit at His right hand, and given all authority. Acts 2:32-36; Matt. 28:18 R.V.

Was 30 years old when He began to proclaim His kingdom. Luke 3:23; cf. Mark 1:14, 15.

Jesus is taking a bride to share His glory. Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 19:7-9, 14:21:2.

When the seven years of great tribulation come (Dan. 9:27, 12:4; Matt. 24:21) Christ's brethren after the flesh will begin to cry to Him for aid. Zech. 12:10; Matt. 23:39; Hos. 5:14-6:3; Isa. 26:16.

Christ will do the same with His brethren, Hos. 5:15; Ezek. 22:19-22; Isa. 10:20, 21; Zech. 13:9.

Christ will be likewise. Isa. 11:12; Jer. 32:36-44; Mal. 4:2.

All the earth will yet come to Christ for His kingly blessings, and will be subject to God through Him. Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:10; Psa. 72:7-17; Zech. 14:16. But He will Himself hand over the kingdom to God, His Father—"that God may be all in all." 1 Cor. 15:24-28.

We have now seen the beginning of God's ways with the human race. We have witnessed the appearance on the scene of MAN. We have been forced to see his utter and terrible failure—first, in the blissful state of *innocence* in the beautiful garden; again, in that state of unrestraint except the strivings of God's Spirit and the testimony of conscience, between the Fall and the Flood; and finally under his new power of ordered human government on

General Notes.

earth, between the Flood and the Dispersion at Babel.

Then we saw God calling a chosen man out of all connection with the race as such—away from his country, his kindred, and even his father's family, to be a *witness for God*, in the midst of the apostasy and sin of the world.

Abraham (with the patriarchs after him) had this three-fold office and testimony. First, he was asked by God to live as a *stranger* on earth, and therefore a *pilgrim* in it, Heb. 11 : 9, 13. As such, his life was a constant testimony to men that the world was *wrong*. God's man lived *separate* from it. This is the first principle of the testimony of the saints of God from Abel to the last judgment. *Separation from a world living in and loving sin.*

Second, Abraham was God's *prophet*. See Gen. 20 : 7. That is, he was God's mouthpiece or spokesman among men. He was to be God's representative, not only in living separate from the godless world, but he was the selected channel of communicating God's mind on earth. He was to know God's counsels, and declare them to men, if God chose.*

* Of course, in such scenes as his intercession for Sodom (Gen. 18), his prayer for Abimelech's house (20), and his sacrifice on Mount Moriah (22), Abraham appears as God's priest. But his priestly work is simply in natural connection with his being God's prophet or representative (20 : 7). There was one who in Abraham's day sustained the office and testimony of both Priest and King for God on earth, after a heavenly type—that is, according to grace, and Christ's eternal work. Study Heb. 7. He was above Abraham, for he represented Christ, while Abraham represented simply those who believe on Christ.

So that, while Abraham performed priestly work in connection with his own family and in his personal dealings among men, the great office of Priest-King for all the earth was not given him. It was given to Melchizedek, and he was stationed at Salem (afterwards Jerusalem), the place which God from the very beginning (Jer. 18 : 12 R.V.)—probably ages before Adam was created—had chosen on earth as the place where He would forever set His name, from which He would rule the earth, and to which men should come to worship Him. Melchizedek, then, represented Christ as God's heavenly King and Priest.

Later, to a family and tribe of Abraham's fleshly line, because God would test man along every line, were given the kingship and priesthood: Moses was "king in Jeshurun" (Deut. 33 : 4, 5); and Aaron was God's priest on earth (Ex. 28). But Moses and Aaron failed even to reach the holy hill of God in Jerusalem, not to speak of reigning and ministering there.

Later still, the tribe of Judah and the family of David having been chosen in grace (Ps. 78 : 68, 70), after Israel's general failure in the land, and their rejection, as traced in the book of Judges (Ps. 78 : 55-67), God let the kingship be attempted by David and his fleshly

Third, Abraham was God's *friend* (Isa. 41 : 8). God loved men, and would have some with whom He could hold blessed fellowship. Abraham was pre-eminently the intimate companion of God, in his day. What a favor! It is most wonderful of all God grants us including all else.

In the story of *Jacob* we see the struggle of the human heart, ere it consents to this *separate* calling and life—ere it gives up all selfish and worldly ambitions, and agrees to live for God alone in a sinful and careless earth. In Abraham this struggle was not nearly so marked, though doubtless he had it. His royal, ever-springing *faith* carried him usually above the things of earth. He, more than either Isaac or Jacob (note Heb. 11 : 9, 10), kept looking for a city that had real permanence, the heavenly city.

line, with what success David himself sadly tells, in 2 Sam. 23 : 1-5. R.V.

Everything of the flesh must be got out of the way ere Christ takes His place as Prophet, Priest and King, all in all. So God gives the chosen tribe of Judah a still further trial. He allows them to separate from the ten (who had already showed their badness sufficiently), and to be restored after their captivity, only to show themselves an utter wilderness—graceless, fruitless. For when John began to preach, the prophetic office had been vacant four hundred years; the priestly office was in the hands of a horde of Sadducean infidels, and the kingly office was filled by a family of Edomites, the line of the God-rejected Esau, the very types, in Scripture, of the flesh!

Then, when Jesus came, the world said, "Let us kill Him!" And the descendants of the favored tribe of Judah led the assault.

Nothing now remained of man's claims. He had utterly failed along all lines. Blessing for man cannot come from man.

Now Christ has gone up to heaven to wait for a season, Heb. 10 : 12, 13. By and by He will return. He will bruise the serpent's head, as the "seed of the woman;" but not because the woman was righteous or worthy, but in grace (1 Tim. 2 : 14). He will be the "Seed of Abraham," and will inherit Abraham's blessings; but it will not be on account of the faithfulness of the rest of Abraham's seed, but through His own faithfulness; and God's promises to Abraham will be fulfilled through Him (Gal. 3 : 16, 22, 29). He will be at the seat of David and of David's tribe of Judah, and will inherit the kingly throne of His Father (Rom. 1 : 3; Luke 1 : 32, 33), but not because David or Judah succeeded. David and Judah failed. (See Gen. 38 and 2 Sam. 11.)

Christ's eternal offices of Prophet, Priest and King are given to us in pure grace, after our failure along every line, and are given on the basis of Christ's own merits and work alone.

So Melchizedek, the truest human type of Christ in the Bible, appears as blessing all them that believe (in their representative, Abraham—Gen. 14 : 18, 19; Gal. 3 : 9): but no earthly or human connections are ascribed to him. Neither his genealogy, his parentage, nor the fate of his birth or death—no human relationships whatever are noted, he is made (in his appearance in Scripture) like unto the Son of God, who, though He became a man to reach us and take our sin, did all His work for us as the Son of God.

But poor Jacob had a hard fight with God's tender but *separating* plans for his life, ere he gave up, and began to *wait for* God's salvation (Gen. 49:18). In reality there wrestled a *Man* with him more than one fleeting night of his checkered life. It is to be feared the most of us resemble him rather than Abraham, in this respect.

In *Isaac* we do not see, I think, any particular *advance* in the patriarchal testimony. He resembles a great many of God's real saints, in that he just "lived along" through his life, neither getting from nor giving to the enemy, any particular harm; not extending the work of God in any direction in particular, but rather simply, quietly conserving it. In Jacob, on the other hand, God took advantage of the very vigor and energy of his natural self—yea, of his very *self-seeking*, to get a great triumph of *grace* in and through him. With him (at Peniel, Gen. 32) the name and the nation of Israel had birth. Through him God's name was published and honored by the greatest earthly monarch of the day (Gen. 47). By his mouth more great prophetic utterances were given than by anyone else before Moses (See Gen. 48—49). And the graces of the Spirit are peculiarly beautiful in him, and so *apparent*, in view of the natural untowardness and ungraciousness of his character (What special graces do you find in Jacob's later years? Search and see)

Now in *Joseph* we see still another phase of God's dealings with men—an *advanced* phase, we may see. For Joseph's life is also, as was Jacob's, a life of *divine discipline*. but while Jacob suffered because of his fleshliness and self-seeking, Joseph suffered because of his unselfish faithfulness to God. He was "hated without a cause," as was Jesus (John 15:25). Esau had sore grievance against Jacob; Laban felt bad also, the Canaanites would have risen in rage against him if God had not restrained them (Gen. 34:30. and 35:5. R V). But no evil is told of Joseph. There is hardly in the Bible another character so pure. Yet the first part of his life is full of the keenest trial, suffering, and sorrow. And he is put continually into circumstances where to be true involves persecution. See Gen. 37:2, 5, 9, 10; 39:11-20. Nor would God let

him get out of this testing and trial, though Joseph would have helped himself (Gen. 40 : 14, 15, 23), until the appointed time was fulfilled. See Ps. 105 : 17-19. Jacob was kept the most of his life in the first reader, learning the lesson of *surrender*; Joseph began almost where Jacob left off, and went on into the second reader at once—that of learning *obedience through suffering* (compare Heb. 5 : 8); and finally God had him so perfected in this that he let him into the third class, that of *perpetual victory and power*. The latter part of Joseph's life is one of constant sovereignty over all things.

In the lives of these patriarchs, then, we have beautifully portrayed the various features of the life and walk of faith, in the midst of a world away from God.

The book of Genesis traces in type the spiritual history of a believer from his salvation by the word of promise and his covering with Christ's righteousness, in Adam; through his self-struggle with the flesh, the old nature, and his defeat by it, in Abel (compare Rom. 7); the way of victory by the surrender of the old creation in him to judgment and death, and the entering upon newness of life, in Noah (compare Rom. 6); the calling and separate walk of faith, in Abraham (Heb. 11); the life and privileges of conscious sonship, in Isaac (Rom. 8; Gal. 4); discipline and development, in Jacob (Heb. 12; Rom. 12); seeing, hoping, enduring, and finally reigning, in Joseph (2 Tim. 2).

This may bring us to say that a thorough review of this book should now be made.

Review of Genesis.

I. Review the book by chapter-names and topical outlines till wholly familiar with it

II. Condense the topical outlines now into the few *theme-words* that suggest the contents of the book. Creation, Fall, Deluge, Nations, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph—you can group all of Genesis about these words. Carefully do so.

III. Next, we must find the *key-thought* of Genesis, the great central idea set forth in it, about which, as a center, the book arranges itself, or which, as a theme, explains

the book. We believe that this idea is *Human failure becoming the occasion of sovereign grace*. Man failed and fell in Eden; fell lower when left to himself before the flood; fell into daring apostasy at Babel; fell into hell itself in Sodom and Gomorrah (Jude 7). Grace must intervene or the race is gone. Grace came, and those who desired it easily found it, 3 : 21; 5 : 22, 6 : 8; 15 : 6; God even thrusting it upon those who as yet knew little indeed of its meaning, as in 28 : 12-15; 32 : 1; 49 : 8-12, compare chapter 38. As to those who will not honor God by becoming beholden to His grace, they simply sadly perish in their pride. God would, but Cain, Ham, Nimrod Ishmael and Esau would not. Search if it is not so, Rom. 1 : 28. See if Gen. 25 : 34; 26 : 34, 35, and Heb. 12 : 16; Gen. 27 : 36. 41 (compare 25 : 32, 33) and 32 : 6, do not explain the hard words of Mal. 1 : 2, 3, and Rom. 9 : 10-12.

IV. The *key-word* of Genesis should next be found. I would suggest *Selection*. Those who would prefer to elide the initial "S" may do so. The race as a whole having failed three times (once in Adam, Rom. 5 : 12, R.V., then before and after the flood), God chooses a people to represent Him on earth, suffering the other nations to walk in their own ways for the present. See Acts 17 : 16

V The great *beginnings* in the book of Genesis may be traced with profit. Twelve, perhaps, are pre-eminent: The beginning of the created universe; of the present world; of man, the Sabbath, marriage, human sin, prophecy, sacrifice, human death, human government, nations, Israel.

VI. The *types* in the book of Genesis are many and marvelous. The types of Christ should first be carefully found and studied. (See Lesson I. for those of the first chapters.) In Melchizedek we see Christ's eternal royal priesthood (study Heb. 5-8); in Isaac we see the beloved Son yielding to the Father's will, even unto death, and received back by resurrection (see Heb. 11 : 17, 19); while in the ram, whose sacrifice spared Isaac, we see Christ substituted for us. The 24th chapter is an exquisite picture of the Holy Ghost, who speaks not of Himself but of Christ, going forth to call the Church to be the Bride.

for the inheriting Son of the Father, showing her Christ's things to attract her to Him, and finally bringing her to meet Him as He comes out from His Father's dwelling. See John 16 : 13-15; Eph. 5 : 25-27; 1 Thess. 4 : 16, 17, comparing the word "caught up," in verse 17, with the same Greek word in Acts 8 : 39. We notice that Sarah—who typifies Israel after the flesh, dies (*i.e.*, is set aside) before Isaac gets his bride. See Rom. 11 : 25; Acts 15 : 14. For Abraham's subsequent fruitfulness, Gen. 26, compare Rom. 11 : 26; Acts 15 : 16. Jacob's ladder speaks beautifully of Him who gives us access to God and brings us heavenly blessings and ministry. See John 1 : 51; Heb. 1 : 14. Joseph as a type of Christ has been already spoken of. Many other most profitable lines of typical and spiritual teaching in this wonderful book might be suggested, but it is left to the student, to whom, if he has faithfully performed the study we have suggested, new and blessed lines of truth are presenting themselves everywhere through the book, to develop these.

Why did Joseph tell his father of the evil lives of his brethren? Gen. 37 : 2. Why did Jacob have more fellowship with Joseph than with any of his other sons? Why did God send those *dreams* to Joseph? 37 : 5-10. They were a real prophecy of whose career? Did Joseph do wisely or right in telling them as he did? What effect did their narrative have? 37 : 11. What was the condition of heart that could hate so lovable a character as Joseph? Study this. It pictures the state of heart of those that reject and hate whom? See John 15 : 25; 3 : 19, 20. Did all of Joseph's brethren have *equal* enmity toward him? Compare Gen. 37 : 18, 19, 20, with 21, 22, 29, 30, and 26, 27. But they all joined, evidently, in the lie of verses 31-33, and the hypocrisy of verse 35. Do all rejectors of God's offers of salvation and blessing in Christ show exactly equal spite? See, for instance, Matt. 22 : 4-6. But the spite is there, in the human heart, waiting to be developed.

Practical Questions.

The human heart is a very hell in miniature. It *hates* that which is better than itself. See 1 John 3:12.

Why did God permit all these sad troubles to come into Jacob's life? How did Jacob regard them while he was passing through them? Gen. 42:36. But *afterwards* how? Gen. 42:11, 15, 16; Heb. 11:21. Compare Heb. 12:11.

In Gen. 38 God lets us see the immorality and unfaithfulness of the sons of Jacob, as in chapter 37 we have seen their envy and hatred. And yet, out of this *Canaanitish* alliance, and *confusion*, God, in *grace*, brings the line into which His Son was born! See Matt. 1:3. Where *sin* (not righteousness) abounded, what did grace do? Rom. 5:20.

What various testings does God put Joseph through? Go through his life and count them up. See, for instance, Gen 37:4, 23, 24, 28, 36; 39:1, 7-12, 13-20. 40:14, 15, 23. And do not omit the dark *unbelief* of 50:15-20.

Why did Joseph treat his brethren as he did ere he made himself known to them? Would it have been safe, or *right*, for him to be reconciled to them till they had recognized and confessed their sin? How is this illustrative of God's treatment of the sinner? Does God want the sinner to suffer under the pangs of conviction? But it is *necessary*, for the sinner's own sake!

What was the actual effect of Joseph's treatment of his brethren, upon them? Trace it carefully, in Gen. 42:6, 13, 21, 22, 28, 35; 43:17, 18; 44:13, 14; 45:3, 15. Compare Judah, as seen in 44:18-34—a wondrously pathetic passage—with the Judah of chapter 38. God knows how to bring down our pride, and break up our selfishness.

LESSON 6.

Exodus -- The Book of Redemption.

EXODUS I—XI.

Introductory. God has been revealing to us, in the book of Genesis the great *principles* upon which He is dealing with the human race—that He is testing them thoroughly, under various conditions, during a series of ages or dispensations, permitting them to prove their utter sinfulness and helplessness, apart from *Himself*, and the grace and righteousness He alone can bestow.

We saw, in Gen. 11, that upon the third terrible failure of our race, God humbled its pride, and hindered its godless progress in its own course, by breaking it up into *nations*; and we soon perceived (Gen. 14) how the very "wrath of man," shown in the contests of these nations, served the purpose of God in keeping back the race from such unified wickedness and godless solidarity as are seen in both Gen. 6 and 11.

Meanwhile, all these nations being for the present, so far as divine teaching was concerned, suffered to "walk in their own ways" (Acts 14 : 16), God is getting a *pilgrim* nation ready—a nation separate from all others, to stand for *Him*, and for *truth* and *righteousness*, in the midst of the earth.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the "*fathers*," as they are called in Scripture (e.g., Deut. 10 : 15; John 7 : 22), are taught one great lesson, *that they are STRANGERS and PILGRIMS on earth*. Separation is the *first principle* of holiness, in a world of sin and evil; and *God's* people must learn it. So God *promises* the fathers Canaan, but does not give it to them in possession as yet, till they and their seed shall learn their *separate, peculiar* character. Abraham and his elect son and grandson must all live and walk by *faith*; and must even *die* in faith, without seeing the land theirs in actual possession (Heb. 11 : 13).

Then God took four centuries to get the *children* of these fathers to realize that they were not of the earth. God painted the word, "PECULIAR" on this Israel vessel of His, and put it into the brick-oven of Egypt to burn in the lettering.

In Exodus He sends Moses to take them out of the oven. We shall see how well they retained God's inscription.

Genesis, then, left us with the apostate world rejected, a seed chosen and covenanted with by grace, and allowed to go down into Egypt to wait for their promised inheritance till the cup of Canaanitish iniquity should fill, and the pride of the Pharaohs should head up for punishment, Gen. 15 : 13, 14; until, moreover, the patriarchal families might multiply into a nation, and through bitter affliction be brought to realize their need of God, and be ready to be separated to Him as His people; and until, finally, their human deliverer should be chosen, trained and ready See Psalm 105 : 23-26.

Now in Exodus we shall find God remembering and visiting His chosen people Israel; judging their enemies; redeeming and delivering them from their cruel oppressors; and graciously sustaining them in life and victory in the danger-fraught wilderness. We shall then see Him testing them by the great legal covenant at Sinai, and will be forced to witness their utter breakdown; but in the instructions concerning the tabernacle and its service, which precede the failure of the people, and which speak throughout of Christ, we shall discover the plans and workings of grace, above and over law; and we shall be made to remember constantly that the law is but the schoolmaster to lead to the only One in whom is salvation Gal. 3 : 15-29. Finally, in the renewed form of the broken legal covenant we shall discover that mixture of law and grace under which the people were educated for centuries in the land of Canaan, and to which Paul gives the appropriate name, "the ministration of death," 2 Cor. 3 : 7.

We shall find the book of Exodus falling naturally into four great parts for our study:

I. Exodus 1—11. *The People of God Afflicted, Remembered, and Visited.*

II. Exodus 12—18. *The People of God Redeemed, Delivered, and Sustained.*

III. Exodus 19—24. *The People of God Tested Under Pure Law.*

IV. Exodus 25—40. *The Plan of Grace; the Failure of Law; the Ministration of Death.*

We shall find the book of Exodus full of the most beautiful and instructive lessons for us as Christians. The Holy Spirit, in 1 Cor. 10 : 6, 11, declares that this very Exodus history was so arranged by God that it contains constant *types* for us. How diligently, then, should we study it—yea, how prayerfully and humbly! Read 1 Cor. 10 : 1-15.

The People of God Afflicted in Faithfulness; Remembered in Mercy; and Visited in Power.

I. *Read the chapters seven times.* Do this work faithfully; do not shirk it. Only by such

Directions.

repeated readings will you come to grasp the lesson as a whole; and it is only after thus grasping it that you will be able to comprehend its great truths. In this book of Exodus we are to discover the keys to the whole history of Israel, a history that occupies the greater part of the Old Testament. Surely it will abundantly pay us, then, to master the contents of the book, especially when this can be done in so easy and simple a way. Read the chapters over quietly seven times, each time, if possible, at a single sitting, and you will have in mind their contents, ready for consideration in arrangement, study and meditation. *First, then, read the chapters seven times.*

II. We would suggest the following *chapter-names*: You may find better. Do not adopt these without first finding the reason for each one, and persuading yourself that it is as good as any. Remember that a chapter-name is simply a title applied to an arbitrary division of Scrip-

ture (for such the chapters generally are), for the purpose of summing up or suggesting as **exactly and strikingly** as possible the contents of the chapter, as aids to memory, mastery and reference. You will find that as portions of Scripture become really familiar ground to you, and as you discover the deeper truths in them, these names will disappear. But they have a real use and are not to be despised. (I. Bondage; II. Bulrushes; III. Bush; IV. Signs; V. Straw; VI. Jehovah; VII.-X. Plagues; XI. First-born for Death. Each of the four plague chapters may be named separately, if desired; it seems best, sometimes, to group together under one name several chapters treating of the same subject.) The chapter-names should now be thoroughly used, the lesson being reviewed again and again by means of them, till all is familiar.

III. Seek next to discover the several great themes or *topics* here before us, around which all the lesson naturally groups itself. (1) The Bitter Bondage, ch. 1. (2) The Deliverer's Preparation and Call, ch. 2-4 : 26. (3) God's Testimony to Israel, ch. 4 : 27-6 : 27. (4) God's Testimony to Egypt, ch. 6 : 28-11. These will cover the entire lesson. Do not accept them, however, till you have proved them.

The following lines of study are now suggested, to be taken up in the order named:

The Egyptian Bondage.

- a. *Its cause*; externally, Ex. 1 : 8-10; really, Ps. 105 : 25; cf. Gen. 3 : 15
- b. *Its object* on Pharaoh's part, Ex. 1.
- c. *God's purpose* in permitting it:

- (1) As toward Israel. See Ex. 2 : 23; cf. Deut. 32 : 36.
- (2) As toward Egypt, Gen. 15 : 14.
- (3) As toward all the earth. Rom. 9 : 17.
- d. *Its results*:

(1) The revelation of the true character of the Egyptians, as deserving and ready for God's judgment. Nothing so discovers the real state of heart of the world as the presence in its midst of a people who are not of it, because they are of God. See John 15 : 19. The hatred of the world is no marvel, the same apostle says in his first epistle, third chapter, 13th verse; and certainly not,

in view of the origin of the wall between the seed of the woman, or Christ's own, and the seed of the serpent, or the world. The cross of Christ is the great revealer of the *thoughts of the heart*. See Luke 2:35. The people which that blood shelters, and who show forth that cross must always be hated by those whose sin is thus exposed, but who refuse to be saved from it in God's way. Thus the attitude of men toward the people of God ever reveals their real attitude toward God Himself. Be a Christian's testimony for God never so weak, he is yet one of God's people, and those that are of God hear and love and minister to him, 1 John 4:6; Ps. 16:3; Matt. 10:14, 15, 40-42; Matt. 25:34-36; while those who are not of God, but of Egypt, which is the true type of this world, neglect, despise and persecute him, Gal. 4:28, 29; 1 John 4:6; John 15:18-25; 8:37-44; Phil. 1:28; 1 Peter 4:3-5. Indeed, I believe the real root of the present hatred of the Jews by the nations of the earth is found in Rom. 8:7, "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God." Not, indeed, that the Jews of the present excite the world's enmity by their likeness to God in character; but it is through their being inevitably a reminder to men of the true God—a constant, evident, unconquerable proof of the existence of the God of the Bible; for these are His ancient people, and there is no escaping it. The answer of Frederick the Great's chaplain to the sudden demand of the Emperor for a proof in one word that the Bible is true, was simply, "The Jew, Your Majesty." It is surely not his astuteness and shrewdness in worldly dealing that has made the Jew hated; precisely the same traits displayed in a Yankee are lauded nowadays.

We have dwelt on this point, because it is all-important, in the study of the remainder of the Old Testament, in understanding the favor shown by God to His people, to remember that the nations were each brought to the test of the presence of the chosen people of God, and were judged according to their treatment of them; by the great principle we have described. The hatred of the peoples against Israel was simply the outworking of their deep rebellion against God's sovereignty, which God thus

brought to public manifestation, ere He punished it. God has the right to choose, elevate and bless whom He may please; to despise the objects of His choice is to show the real spirit of the world, as described by Christ in His words to the disciples, "Because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." If we keep this well in mind, we shall have no trouble in accounting for God's ways with Israel and the nations, either in the past or in the future, as revealed by prophecy. For Israel is yet the elect people, the destined head of the nations, the touchstone by which every people shall yet be tried, Isa. 40 : 12, Obad. 15, 16; Joel 3 : 1, 2, 11, 12; Matt. 25 : 31-46. (The "brethren" in this last passage, are evidently the Jewish remnant.)

(2) The increased fruitfulness of the people of God is another great result of their oppression. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." Study the results of other persecutions of the saints, *e.g.*, Acts 4 : 1-4, v. 17-26, 42; 6 : 7; 8 : 1-4, and of other bondages, *e.g.*, Phil. 1 : 12-18.

(3) The reduction of the people to extremity, that they might seek their God. Chap. 2 : 23-25; 3 : 7. This is the end of all God's afflictions of His people, that they may turn to Him. See Heb. 12 : 1-11; Ps. 107; Hos. 5 : 14-6 : 3; also the seven sweet verses on affliction in the 119th Psalm, 50, 67, 71, 75, 92, 107, 153.

(4) The opportunity for the display of God's almighty power, in the redemption and deliverance of His people, and the judgment of their oppressors, Rom. 9 : 17.

a. *His parentage*: study their character, as far as possible. For a foundation, take Heb. 11 : 23.

Moses.

b. *His birth*: its time—just when the oppression was most terrible, and the danger greatest: how was God glorified thus? Compare the remarkable statement regarding the child Moses in Acts 7 : 20 (Greek, *fair unto God*) with that of John the Baptist in Luke 1 : 15. The peculiar goodness of this babe is twice said to have been the great incentive to his parents to preserve his life, Ex. 2 : 2; Heb. 11 : 23.

c. *His preservation*—how providential and remarkable?

d. *His early life* with his parents. How long, probably? How did His mother probably train him, in view of his soon going to live at court? The Romish church says, "Give me a child until he is ten; you may do what you like with him thereafter."

e. *His life as a prince of Egypt*. As to his early ability and exploits, compare Acts 7:21-23 with Josephus.

f. *His loyalty to the people of God*; the unlikelihood of it, naturally. It involved what, as to his own pride, his apparent future prospects, the comforts and pleasures of life, all his selfish ambitions? What were the causes of it; in his early training? in his own inner religious life? Study Heb. 11:25-27, noting first his *faith in God*, v. 24, as the root of all; then his *spiritual discernment*, v. 26; then his renunciation of the world, v. 24, and his choice of the cross, v. 25; his victory over the fear of man, v. 27, and, finally, his life of fellowship with God, v. 27. How was his life at court probably spent? Two words in Heb. 12:25, 26, answer: "pleasures," "treasures." Yet that he was a diligent student is shown in Acts 7:22, which tells us that he was versed in all the wisdom of that wisest of earthly peoples; while the same text declares his ability as a leader of men. Josephus describes him as the triumphant leader of Egyptian armies. God knew His man; there was perhaps every element of a man of God in this faithful soul in those early days—but one, that one an absolute essential, however. See 2 Cor. 12:9.

g. *His first great effort for the people*, Ex. 2:11, 12. What inspired it? What emotion had probably possessed his generous soul for years? Was his deed selfish? Was it wrong? See Acts 7:25. Was it well-timed? Was it understood? Why? Was it ignorance of mind, or pride of heart, that was the real cause of Moses' rejection by his people? See Acts 7:27, 35. Who else came to His own, and His own received Him not? John 1. What was the cause in their case? Let us remember that Moses is a great type of Christ as the Deliverer of Israel, first in his proffer of himself, and his rejection; then in retirement (cf. Hosea 5:15; Matt. 23:37-39; Luke 10:12); and fin-

ally in full manifestation to them, with all the powers of God, for their deliverance, when they accepted him, and were delivered. Cf. Rom. 11: 25-27; Hosea 3: 5; Isa. 35: 3, 4, and 10. But in whose strength does Moses seem here to be acting, in his own or God's? One can be trying to do a real work of God in self-energy. It was a very different man that God found at Horeb, forty years after this. Here is a high, impetuous, daring spirit, rushing into conflict with God; there is the very meekest man in all the earth, on his face, begging to be let off from the very mission he once coveted. This leads us to the next step.

h. *The training of the forty silent years.* Note the means which God took to humble him: his social degradation—what? his new occupation—how; abasing to him? Gen. 46: 34; his rustic, probably coarse, wife—congenial, do you think? see Ex. 4: 25; his knowledge of the condition of the people he loved, with no power to help them; his seclusion, with the probable thought that he was set aside, perhaps not needed, by God.

i. *His call, Exodus 3-4.* Note its occasion; its place, cf. Elijah, 1 Kings 19; its circumstances; its peculiar method—why the vision of the unconsumed bush? cf. Gen. 15: 13, 17; Zech. 13: 9, and Mal. 3: 2-6; its revelation of God: of His nature, character, name; of His heart toward Israel; of His gracious purposes for His people. Note also His promised presence with His chosen servants; see Jer. 1: 8, 19; Judges 6: 11-16; Acts 18: 10; Matt. 28: 20. His infinite patience with their weakness, fear and unbelief; His full answer to every doubtful question, and His persistent placing them in His service, despite all their objection. On the other hand, mark the five pleas of Moses against God's request, 3: 11, 13; 4: 1, 10, 13. Study them; they are characteristic. The root of them all is in each of us. Meditate deeply on God's answer to each of these querulous arguments of His servant. There will be no more profitable exercise in this lesson than this, especially for those of us who are called to stand for God before men. It is of the utmost importance that when God calls, we shall, with Samuel and Isaiah say, "Here am I." 1 Sam. 3; Isa. 6; else we shall be in danger of losing part

of our commission, as many believe. Moses did at this time (Ex. 4 : 14-16); or of being cast for a season into the sea of chastening (Jonah 2).

j. *The searching at the inn*, Ex. 4 : 24-26. Why had Moses not circumcised his child ere this according to Gen. 17 : 10-12? Are there many Christians to-day who are avoiding the cross to preserve peace in the home? Is this the will of Christ? Matt. 10 : 34-36. Can a servant of God disobey the Word to please men, and go on exercising God's power? Moses was not thus allowed, nor shall we be. Probably the severest test of the consecration of some of us is at this moment in our own family. Let us be true to God, or the experience of verse 24 may be ours. Much sickness and sad chastening, yea, and premature dying, might easily be avoided by God's people to-day. See I Cor. 11 : 30-32.

We shall now leave the student to follow up thoroughly and systematically Moses' life, which it is hoped every one will do, as it will prove a study of limitless value. We shall note, from time to time, the various crises in his career, but refer the reader to the simple biographical plan in Lesson II., and beg that by this or some better method, a real acquaintance be formed with him like whom "there hath not arisen another prophet since in Israel," save the Greater One of whom Moses himself prophesied, Deut. 34 : 10; 18 : 15-19; .cf. Acts 3 : 22, 23. God is now about to put into Moses' hands the greatest power, so far as we know, that has ever been held by merely mortal hands. Investment with authority is the supreme test of character. Judged by this stern rule, the character of Moses as summed up in Numbers 12 : 3, is more like that of Him whose is all power in heaven and on earth, and yet whose heart is meek and lowly, than is any other character revealed to us: "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." Perhaps he was no more humbly faithful, indeed, than was he of whom the Holy Ghost witnesses, that he served the Lord "with all lowliness of mind," and who accounted himself "less than the least of all saints." Literally, the first half of Rev. 15 : 3 reads.

"And they sing the song of Moses the bonds slave of God, and the song of the Little Lamb." After these words a David might well write, *Selah*. Let us all stop and ponder, till we hear in our hearts One saying, "He that is least among you, the same shall be great." And let us really *study* Moses' life.

See Ex. 4:17—6:27. Its *need*, from the people's present condition and present circum-

The Testimony to Israel.

stances; its character, how suited to the people's need? Study especially 6:1-8. Its *first effect*, Ex. 4:27-31; its later effect, ch. 5:20, 21; 6:9. Were the people worthy, because of their steadfast faith, to be delivered, or was it God's grace that brought them out? Trace the similarity between the experience and conduct of the people in their bondage—which is only increased at first by Moses' coming to save them—and the action of the soul under conviction of sin. Until the Passover plan is revealed, the people of God are in *bitterness*; nor does the testimony of the fact of the mercy of God, as in ch. 6, bring peace or confidence toward Him till the soul is shown THE BLOOD and its meaning, as in ch. 12. Let this sink deep into our hearts. The *Passover*, in God's sight was the *beginning of days* for His people Israel. Just so John the Baptist's ministry was only a *preparation*: he called sin to remembrance, and got men ready for the Lamb who alone could take it away. Moses' testimony in Egypt revealed to Israel the real character of the land they were in, and their danger, as well as their misery there.

What was its *purpose*, towards Pharaoh and Egypt?

The Testimony to Pharaoh.

towards Israel? towards all the earth? God could have brought His people out without all or any of this parleying with the Egyptians: why did He not do so? Go thoroughly into this subject. Compare God's dealing with Egypt with His method of testimony to and judgment of the ante-diluvian world; with His ways with the cities of the plain; with His revealed future course with this world, which is to be very similar to that with

Egypt at this time, in several important respects. Some even believe that one of the witnesses of that time spoken of in Rev. 11 : 3-6, will be Moses himself. As to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, note carefully the attitude he took toward God at the very start, Ex. 5 : 2, and how stubbornly he maintained it, 7 : 13, R.V., and remember that the prophecy of 3 : 19 did not compel, but simply fore-saw, this evil man's perverseness. Proverbs 29 : 1 also epitomizes this particular rebel's history; for again and again he was warned of the result of his obstinacy. "God gave them up" is the fact thrice recorded with awful simplicity in the first of Romans, of those wilful sinners who "held down the truth in unrighteousness," and "refused to have God in their knowledge," Rom. 1 : 18, 28, R.V. From this judicial abandonment into the divinely sent "strong delusion" of 2 Thess. 2 : 11, 12, there is but a step. The verse preceding repeats the reason for their damnation, and shows that they might have been saved. In Ex. 5 : 2, when Pharaoh cried, "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go," he might have omitted the last three words. It was not so much the divine command, as the divine Person, that his heart defied. "And sin," saith the Holy Ghost, "is lawlessness," 1 John 3 : 4, R.V. If God's wrath and power needed to be made known in all the earth (and do they not even in these our own days!) where can it be so publicly proclaimed as from the loftiest throne of the world? And if choice must be made of one in whom to show them forth, could there be vessel more meet than this proud boaster who vaunts himself as the very man of sin will do, and utterly despises dominion? 2 Peter 2 : 10-12. Meditate prayerfully on Pharaoh, and then turn to Moses. Satanic pride and heavenly meekness! The ninth of Romans gives no serious trouble to those who have seen the King, Jehovah of Hosts. Read all of Isaiah 6. And to those that ask the two hard questions of Romans 9 : 19, the eternal God vouchsafes no other reply than these four other questions of vs. 20-24.

Study the nature of them; the character of them adapted to humble Egypt and reveal God's universal power. Note the peculiar effect of each plague on Pharaoh and his people; the typical character of them, for they evidently have such character (cf. The Numerical Bible, Grant); the prophetic character of them, compare with the plagues of Revelation; for those will be as literal as these upon Egypt. When we *believe* the book of Revelation it is not so hard to *understand*.

Study these as the peculiar tools of Satan in blinding men to God's presence and power—the office of magic in every age. Find their names in 2 Tim. 3 : 8; compare

The Magicians. them with other magicians and soothsayers in the Bible, e.g., Balaam, Simon Magus, Elymas; collect passages against the black art, for such fortification is needed in these days, when, in some places, even professing Christians are running after spiritualists, necromancers, fortune-tellers, etc. (See e.g., in Deut. 18 : 9-14; Isa. 8 : 19, 20, as to what God thinks of sorcery.) Note the character of their opposition—*imitation*, one of Satan's constant methods of resisting God's people; note the final impotency of their efforts. How did their partial success best prove their imposture? Note also that their efforts always increased the evil they mocked at, instead of mitigating it. So infidels, Satan's servants, resist God's servants in their efforts to get salvation to men, but themselves give no relief to the world's misery, on the contrary, only ever increasing it.

The growth of Moses during this crucial time in Egypt is a most delightful study. How was it a testing time for him? Would he have been able, in Ex. 2 : 11, 12, 15, to stand as he did in the terrible conflict with Pharaoh in 5-11? Why not? Study this. What, exactly, makes him bold now, where before he fled? He had met whom? chap. 3. He *knew* who was with him? Do we know it? Are we trying to preach, teach, or *live*, without the consciousness that *God* is with us? Is it great

Moses' Development.

See back of book

wonder, then, that we fail? Can we all have this glorious consciousness of the presence of God with us? How? See John 14 : 16-18: 21, 23; 1 Cor. 6 : 19; 2 Cor. 6 : 16—7 : 14; Rom. 15 : 13.



LESSON VII.

The People of God :

**Redeemed by Blood ; Delivered by Power ; Sustained
by Grace.**

EXODUS XII—XVIII.

We have now come to one of the *great* passages of the Word of God. Not that any part of it is of *small* importance. It is *all* the *Word of God*, and shall abide forever, and be proven of divine worth by Him who spake it, before all the universe. But there are passages of it that deal with the *vital truths of God's great plan of salvation*; and this renders them of especial importance to us now, in this present life, where our chief concern is to learn the way to God. When we are safely landed in eternity, God will doubtless show us new beauties and excellencies in His blessed inspired Word, that we had neither capacity nor time to receive in the present life. We do well in our study of God's Word to dwell constantly on these great *key-passages*. While we gladly follow out the minor or *related* lines of truth in the Bible, we should be ever returning for deeper study to such great themes as touch directly God's great plan of salvation by Christ.

In the book of *Genesis*, we have seen chapters 3, 12, 15 and 22 to have very special teaching for us along these great fundamental lines. Now, in *Exodus*, there are also certain chapters which are preëminent for their *salvation* lessons. Four of these, 12, 14, 16 and 17, lie in our present lesson. Of these, the first, chapter 12, the great *Passover* chapter, is of course first and most fundamental. Oh, that every professing Christian knew in a *heart* way its wondrous lessons!

On the whole, this present lesson is the most important we have studied thus far. *The beginning of the Gospel* is

CHRIST CRUCIFIED. See 1 Cor. 15 : 3. That, Paul says, is the "*first of all*" truth. Then (1 Cor. 15 : 4, 5) follow the next two: CHRIST BURIED, and CHRIST RISEN.

In Romans, the great epistle that sets forth systematically the plan of salvation, Paul shows first that all the world is under *judgment because of sin* (Rom. 1—3). Then, Christ crucified is set forth as the *sacrifice, or propitiation, through His blood, for sin* (Rom. 3 : 21—5 : 10). And then, in Rom. 5 : 11 to 7 : 6, Paul shows how we were *identified with Christ*, in His death and burial, so that we now (we who are *in Christ*—that is, we who are true Christians, true believers) have been brought out into *resurrection-life*—"newness" of life, in and with Christ; where, when we truly realize the *facts*, we have *glorious liberty and victory*, according to Rom. 8.

Now, all this is set forth in marvelous *picture, or type*, in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

First, there was *Egypt*. All through the Word of God it stands for man in his *natural state*—sinful, guilty, at enmity with God, living in the desires or lusts of the carnal mind—*away from God*, and *under God's judgment*.

Then, second, *Israel is in Egypt*, and have to be redeemed by *sacrifice*. The people of God—God's chosen, are seen to be "*by nature children of wrath, even as others.*" That is, it was no difference in the natural quality of the *flesh* that made the sons of Jacob God's elect nation. They were under the same condemnation, *naturally*, as the Egyptians. They had to be protected by *blood*: that is, they themselves were liable to *death*. They had to be delivered by a *substitute*, who was to *die in their place*. It was the *sign of death accomplished*—the *sprinkled blood*, that God looked for, that awful night, in Exodus 12; and no *fleshly goodness*. May God sink this into our hearts! It is the bottom lesson in this great passage. *All* were under judgment *alike*; only in the case of Israel the judgment fell on the Passover lamb, while upon the unprotected Egyptians the stroke fell direct. Here, then, is the essential difference, in God's sight, between His people and the world: the former have taken refuge as condemned sinners, behind the blood of a Substitute that has been

judged and punished *for* them, while the latter are going on to judgment *uncovered, unsheltered*, and of course they will have to bear the judgment upon *themselves*, as did the Egyptians (How *fearful* that day.) Study Exodus 11 : 7. *GOD has put a DIFFERENCE between HIS people and this Egyptian world* Which side are you on? Are you sheltered under the blood of Christ, or not? *Settle it.* It is the greatest question, by infinite odds, you will ever face! I should not wonder if some are going on with these lessons who are not yet trusting the *blood of Christ*.

Then, third, Israel *went up out of Egypt*. All connection with the old things was broken (Compare 2 Cor. 5 : 17.) There was burial and resurrection—they entered the Red Sea, as in burial, and came out on the resurrection side—the new, separate, triumphant side. Here is Romans 6. The eating of the slain lamb shows their identification with it. All this typifies our deliverance from the old creation and all its power, as well as from its sin and its judgment, through *our* identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. This fact of our identification with Christ is the fundamental truth of the Pauline gospel. The Christian who does not realize it has hardly begun proper *Christian* experience.

Then, fourth, there is God's beautiful *provision for His people* in this new sphere. The supplies of Egypt are cut off. The world no longer nourishes the child of God. His life is sustained by Christ from *heaven*, for the Risen Christ is the true *Manna* for the Christian.

But in all this we are anticipating, perhaps, too much. Only we must remember that in the history on which we are now entering, the *typical* is the *true* teaching for us. God means us to learn the deepest spiritual lessons in these events of Israel's going up out of Egypt. May our hearts be simple and obedient enough to be taught. Satanic intellectual *pride* keeps the modern "*critic*" (What a name for a blind worm!) from God's heavenly bread in this sweet story.

i. Read the chapters (Ex. 12-18) at least seven times.

The Lesson.

II. The *chapter-names*: XII., *Passover*; XIII., *First-born for God*; XIV., *Red Sea*; XV., *Triumph Song*; XVI., *Manna*; XVII., *Striving (with Moses, with Amalek)*; XVIII., *Jethro*.

III. Prepare a careful *topical outline*, and drill on it, as usual. Deal with the *hearts* of things. Thus, for instance, we might have: *Redemption by Blood (the Passover)*; *Deliverance by Power (the Red Sea)*; *Guidance (the Cloud)*; *Provision (the Manna and the Rock)*; *Defence (God helping against Amalek)*.

IV. A most careful study of the *geography* of the *Exodus* should be made. Though not complete, as some of the localities are not yet certainly known, it is yet very instructive indeed. I would advise every Bible student to take time and pains to master the map of the Bible lands. Of course, that of Palestine *must* be thoroughly familiar, before one can be really at home in the Old Testament. We shall hope to give some simple directions for the study of that land when we reach its borders in our study.

General Notes.

In *Genesis* we saw that God has *His own people*, in the midst of a sinful world that was apostate from God, and under Satan's rule. But the people of God in *Genesis* were *individuals*, not a *nation*. There was, of course, a chosen *family*, and a still more distinct *line*, in that family whom God owned as *His*. But there was no *national* testimony, as yet. There was the *promise* of national life and blessing, to God's people. See, for instance, Gen. 12 : 2; 17 : 6; 18 : 18. But these promises were not realized in *Genesis*. The chosen stock were simply called a "seed;" and they were sent down into *Egypt* in that character, to wait God's time of deliverance, when He would visit them and take them to Himself as a *nation*, and give them a definite national inheritance, and specific national blessings. See Gen. 15 : 13, 14; Deut. 4 : 34, 37, 38; 7 : 12-15, etc.

In *Exodus*, however, we are dealing with a *nation*. Especially is this true from our present lesson on. The *Passover*, I suppose, really *begins* Israel's life as a nation—*God's* nation, upon earth, Ex. 12 : 2. These children of

Jacob were God's people, of course, before that, and were acknowledged as such by Him, Ex. 2 : 23-25; 3 : 7, 10. But before God can openly own them as His before the world, and before He can dwell among them in covenant relation, there must be *sacrifice*. Of course Israel were God's elect people. But there was no ground of distinction from other nations in Israel themselves. They were simply children of Adam the First, after the flesh, as were others. The fact that God had chosen them did not make their *flesh* any better; just as the fact that a man is a Christian does not improve the flesh in him. Rom. 7 settles that.

So that there had to be another ground of God's public acknowledgment of Israel than that of His election of them. This ground was the *shed blood*. It was on that dread night of judgment that God "*put a difference*" between His people and the world. The real difference, of course, was that Israel were His chosen people; but the difference publicly "*put,*" or manifested, was His sparing Israel from Egypt's judgment, Ex. 11 : 4-7. The *mark* of that difference, in God's sight, was *the sprinkled blood*. He looked only for *that*, Ex. 12 : 13. That blood upon their doors meant that Israel acknowledged their place as sinners, and as deserving judgment for their sin, and also that they accepted and trusted God's plan of dealing with sin: that is, *by the sacrifice of a substitute*. On this sacrifice-ground God could publicly own Israel as His nation on earth. Otherwise He would have been acknowledging the *flesh*, which He will never do—modern literature to the contrary notwithstanding. There is nothing for God in fallen man. *He has rejected it ALL*. Human nature is a rotten carcass in God's holy sight. Even His elect nation He passes under judgment in Egypt, ere He accepts them as His nation. There is a high warning here for the wide-mouthed *man-boasters* of our shallow day. One longs for the end of this "*man's day*" (1 Cor. 4 : 3, R.V. marg.), even if it bring (as it will) such a fearful scene as Isa. 2 : 11-22 describes. The world will not admit that there is any *difference* between God's saints, who have taken their shelter under Christ's blood, as lost sinners, as God has commanded them, and its own proud moral-

ists and legalists and self-righteous strutters; just as Pharaoh refused to admit the claims of God as to His people Israel. But Pharaoh *had* to admit God's claims, in *agony* and *terror*, when the *judgment* fell. See Ex. 12 : 29-31. So will the men of this world, by and by. They also will acknowledge *then*, in the "day of visitation" (1 Peter 2 : 12), to God's glory, but too late for *themselves*, the *essential difference* between God's blood-sheltered people and the unbelieving rejectors of God's only way of salvation.

God, now, after the Passover night, had a people whom He could publicly and righteously own as *His*, because they were on *redemption-ground*.

That same Passover night, after feasting, with girt loins, on the paschal lamb, they came out with a high hand. God would not have His children left under the power of sin one moment when once they have been delivered from its guilt through the blood of Christ. Entire and immediate separation from sin, seen in the unleavened bread, and utter repentant judgment of the past and the self-life, in the bitter herbs, are the prerequisites; and the soul, thus prepared, is to feed on Him who passed through the wrath-fires of God for us, and in the strength of that meat to go up out of the land of bondage forever. But just as God would have all the glory in that blood-plan of redemption of His people from the death that overtook Egypt, so will He now have all the glory in the Red Sea plan for their deliverance from the enslaving power that would again overtake them. They were hastening on between the arms of the sea to the wilderness—their safety must depend upon their fleetness. No saith God, "turn back to the Egypt side of the sea, into that death-trap between the sea and the mountains, where the enemy will find and follow you, and whence you cannot escape. Then I will get Me glory." And He did. Our Father always gets glory when we let Him put us where only He can deliver us. Then we can sing His glorious praise as Israel did. Ex. 15; Ps. 116 : 12, 13; 40 : 1-3.

Marah's sweetening tree shows what the cross of Christ can do for the desert bitterness of life. Gal. 6 : 14; 2 Cor. 12 : 9, 10. And it is never very far from Marah to Elim's palms.

The manna is a beautiful type of Christ, the heavenly bread of His people, Jno. 6 : 49-51, "ministered by the Spirit, as the dew exhaled and left it." But the rock, smitten (17 : 5) with the rod of judgment (see 7 : 17), yielding the living stream, exquisitely reverses the figure—this is Christ after Calvary giving the water of life to His people, and ministering the Spirit unto them, John 7 : 38, 39; Acts 2 : 31-33. In the conflict with Amalek, the great type of the flesh, as Egypt is of the world, we are shown the double character of Christ's victory over sin in us—by intercession above (Moses) and His presence within us (Joshua). In the passage that follows, ch. 18, we have a picture of the coming kingdom, with "the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God" (1 Cor. 10 : 32), all present, the latter two in type, in Jethro and Zipporah; while the center of all is seen in Moses, the type of Christ, as the Great Deliverer of Israel, ch. 18 : 12, 13.

Copics for Study.

1. *The character of Israel at the Exodus.* Note: Their condition for four hundred years past—productive of what spirit? Their conduct in Egypt toward Moses and Aaron—indicating what? Their conduct at the Red Sea in Ex. 14 : 11, 12? The real depth of their praise in ch. 15? See Ps. 106 : 12, 13. Their subsequent actions in 16, 17? Yet whose people were they? Why—because of their own goodness? With whom had God made the covenant that made Israel His people? Gen. 15. Was God now taking Israel out of Egypt for Himself, because they were worthy, or because of His own faithfulness? Are Christians saved because of their own merit, or by simple grace?

2. *The question of the eternal salvation of this chosen nation.* This is a problem often brought up, and is a great puzzle to many. It ought not to be, if we accept the plain statements of Scripture. We may say three things regarding this matter:

(1) In Romans 9 : 6-8 we are told that not all the

natural seed of Abraham, not all the nation of Israel, were really in God's sight *Israel*. They were not all "*Israelites indeed*" (John 1 : 47). To be sure all, even the "stranger within their gates," had certain earthly privileges, as the chosen *nation*. But God was *testing* this earthly people of Israel, in these Old Testament times, and on until they rejected and killed their Messiah. He was "*proving* them, to know what was in their heart" (Deut. 8 : 2). He would have them show whether they were able, *in the flesh*, and on *natural* grounds, to inherit His great promises to His nation Israel. They failed, failed utterly, failed *awfully*. Then the Lord set them as a fleshly nation aside—He rejected them as on *natural* grounds. This was at the close of Christ's earthly ministry to them. The cursing of the fig-tree (symbol of national Israel) was a strong setting forth of His rejection of Israel *after the flesh*, forever, Matt. 21. The mere fact, then, that a man was a natural descendant of Abraham or Jacob signified nothing as to His eternal salvation. "It is not the children of the *flesh* that are children of God; neither, because they are *Abraham's* seed, are they all children," Rom. 8 : 7, 8.

(2) There were, in this earthly nation, those who had *personal faith toward God*, as had Abraham. These were saved. These were those spoken of by Paul in Rom. 4 : 12, "who were *of the circumcision*, but who also *walked in the steps of the FAITH of our father Abraham*." The character, sad to say, of most of the Israel of those days is described in Deut. 32 : 20, and Heb. 3 : 10, 19, and 4 : 2.

(3) Those who were saved, through their personal faith in God, were, of course, not as intelligent in their faith as are we, who look back on God's whole finished work by Christ. They "*hoped in God's mercy*," and cast themselves upon Him as sinners, as did David in Psalm 51 and 32. They also obeyed His way of approaching Him by *sacrifice*. See Ps. 50 : 5. God saved them in view of Christ's coming work on the cross.

(4) Israel as a *nation* have not yet had their "sins taken away." The believing remnant of the tribulation days will form the nucleus of the nation born in a day. They will repent, "look to Him whom they have pierced," (He

will be evidently *revealed* to them in the heavens), there will be "a fountain opened for them, for sin and for uncleanness," and they will, thus saved, be received as a *nation*, a nation "born in a day." Thus they will *all* be on *redemption-ground*, in that blessed day. God will refine away from Israel all the "sinners in Zion," among them, by the tribulation troubles, and will bring the remnant *through the fire*. They will then, when at the end of their own righteousness (their curse so long), cry to God, and find the Lord Jesus as their Righteousness. They will then be received as individuals, and accounted as a *nation*, on New Creation ground. Study the following passages as to all this: Heb. 8 : 7-13; Rom. 11 : 27; Isa. 66 : 8; Ezek. 20 : 38; Jer. 30 : 6; Matt. 24 : 21, 22; Zech. 13 : 8, 9; 12 : 10—13 : 1; Rev. 1 : 7, R.V., marg. (these "tribes" are those, evidently, of Israel).

3. Another great theme that should be carefully studied is: *The Passover*: a. Its *details*—master these thoroughly first of all. b. Its immediate *purpose toward Israel*: as to shelter—exactly from what, and how, did the blood protect Israel? As to separation from Egypt: how did the sprinkling of the blood make Israel separate from Egypt in God's sight? Why did God choose this particular sign to mark His people? Does He do so yet? See 1 Cor. 1 : 18-25; Gal. 6 : 14. When Christ on the cross said, "It is finished" (John 19 : 30), did He refer to what man had done for himself, or what He had done for man? Could man do anything to save himself? See Rom. 5 : 6; 3 : 20. Now, if man's redemption was thus wrought out by Christ on the cross, and man himself did not help in it at all, who ought to get all the glory in man's salvation, man or God? Who is constantly trying to take the credit? Since the blood of Christ was to be the great and only price of Israel's redemption (for Israel, as well as we, were saved only through the cross of Christ, not by the law. Gal. 2 : 15, 16), what more meet than that they should take on themselves the sign of the paschal lamb's blood—the picture and pledge of that precious blood of the Lamb, which in God's counsel was the real ground on which He was then dealing with them in grace? 1 Peter 1 : 19-21;

Rev 13:8 As typical of this fore-ordaining of Christ to sacrifice, is the selecting of the lamb on the tenth day of the month, and its being kept for sacrifice till the fourteenth. Think of Christ marked and kept by God for sacrifice for our sins! What should this beget in us? 2 Cor 5:14, 15.

c. *The purpose of the Passover as toward Egypt* should also be studied most thoughtfully. As Noah's ark condemned the world of his time, Heb 11:7, and as the cross of Christ has condemned both Satan and his host, John 12:31; Heb 2:14, 15, Col 2:15, and this whole world, John 3:16-20, Gal 6:14, Acts 2:36; Heb. 10:13, Rev. 5:12; 6:16, 17 which is in Satan, 1 John 5:19, so that sprinkled blood, on that dark night of judgment, witnessed against all who were not under it, as rebels, with their king, against Jehovah, His people and His plan of salvation. Those Egyptians who were not thus rebels did not need to perish. Remember that a "mixed multitude" went up *with* Israel *out* of Egypt (Ex 12:38), not that these were all saved, but that it was permitted by God for others than the seed of Israel to identify themselves with them is plain, not only here, but all through the history of the chosen people.

d. *Israel's part* in their preservation by the passover lamb exactly what did they have to do? Study this. How does it correspond to, or illustrate, what the sinner has to do in the matter of his own salvation?

e. Why was God so careful to have the Israelites *remember* this great event, and teach its significance to their children? See Chap 13. And why did God ask, at this time, for the sanctification to Himself of all the first-born?

f. What about the *leaven*? Why was it excluded? What does it represent? Take a concordance and see if leaven ever means what is *good* in Scripture. In Matt 13 it may *seem* to do so; but compare all other passages, and decide, in view of Matt 16 and 1 Cor 5.

4. *The Passage of the Red Sea* Study: the unnecessary of it, humanly speaking (see map); the manner of it—how a great test of faith? God's presence in it, cf Isa 43:2.

Ps. 23 : 4; the blind presumption of the Egyptians, with its explanation in Prov. 29 : 1; 2 Thess. 2 : 10-12, and its double antitype in Rev. 19 : 19-21, and 20 : 7-10; and the spiritual meaning to us of the Red Sea crossing, 1 Cor. 10 : 2, R.V., marg.; Rom. 6 : 3, 4; Col. 2 : 12.

5. *The Song of Triumph.* Study its form, and its manner of utterance by Israel; its spirit; its high spiritual and prophetic discernment; its motives; its general correspondence to the first joy of realized salvation in the individual soul.

6. *The Manna:* Trace, with a concordance, its meaning throughout the Bible. We shall have more concerning it.

7. *The Rock:* Do likewise with this, on the authority of 1 Cor. 10 : 4. A wonderful Bible reading will be thus obtained. The following references show to whom the "Rock" of the Word of God refers: Num. 20 : 8-11; compare 1 Cor. 10 : 4; Deut. 32 : 4, 15, 18, 30, 31; 1 Sam. 2 : 2; 2 Sam. 22 : 2, 3, 32, 47; 23 : 3; Ps. 28 : 1; 31 : 2, 3; 42 : 9; 62 : 2, 6, 7; 71 : 3; 78 : 35; 89 : 26; 92 : 15; 94 : 22; 95 : 1; Isa. 8 : 14; 17 : 10; 32 : 2; Ps. 118 : 22, 23; Isa. 28 : 16; Dan. 2 : 34, 35; Zech. 3 : 9; 4 : 7; Matt. 21 : 42; Mark 12 : 10; Luke 20 : 17, 18; Acts 4 : 11; Eph. 2 : 20; 1 Peter 2 : 4, 6, 7, 8.



LESSON VIII.—Part I.

The People of God:

Tested under Pure Law.

EXODUS XIX—XXIV.

We have now come to a part of Scripture more generally misunderstood, perhaps, than any passage we have yet considered—one might almost say, than any passage in the Bible. For, though the *giving* of a law by God to men seems natural enough to our minds, the real *object* God had in giving it is far enough from our thoughts.

Introductory.

For, when we see that wondrous sight in Exodus 19 and 20—the great and holy Jehovah coming down to earth, and, amid a mighty and overwhelming display of His glory, speaking the ten tremendous WORDS, directing His people Israel what must not be done by them and what they must do, we take it for granted that this is God's perfect plan of dealing with men, this legal method. It appeals to us as most reasonable. It is the natural relation of Sovereign with subject, and apparently the necessary relation of Creator with creature; and, so far as we can see, the only possible relation of God with other beings. God, the Creator, the Sovereign of all, must make the law for His creatures, His subjects; and they have nothing else to do than to obey. This is perfectly in accordance with human reason. And we naturally proceed to explain the scene at Sinai on this basis. Of course, we say, the relation of Israel to God as His people must depend upon their behavior. Of course His election of them as His peculiar nation must be founded on their obedience to His commandments. Of course this is why He is giving them the law at Sinai—that they may by their keeping the law, become God's own people. For does it not definitely say so, in Exodus 19:4-6?

Now, if we conclude thus, and look no deeper, Israel's history will by and by become an utter *riddle* to us. We shall be more and more perplexed, also, at God's ways, not only with Israel but with the Church of God in the present age. We shall get into great confusion as to what the doctrine of the *grace* of God is—the great principle upon which we are being saved.

The great question, then, at the outset of the present lesson is, What was the object of God in bringing Israel to Sinai, in placing them under law?

It will be well, ere attempting to answer this most important question, to proceed to the

The Lesson. mastery of the lesson, as usual.

1. Review the preceding lessons in Exodus by chapter-names and topics. (Keep doing this, as you advance—not losing hold of any matter passed over.)

2. Read the present lesson (Exodus 19-24) every day, and if possible twice a day, during the week. Seek to enter into the spirit of these chapters. Especially consider God's attitude toward Israel here, comparing it with that toward the patriarchs in Genesis, with Moses and Israel in Egypt, and with as now. This is supremely important. Remember Hebrews 12 : 18-24. Do not omit this work. Reflect that if you get the truth regarding this present lesson, you have a *great* KEY TO THE WHOLE BIBLE.

3. The chapter-names: XIX. Mount Sinai; XX. Ten Commandments; XXI.—XXIII. General Ordinances; XXIV. First Covenant. (Chapters XXI.—XXIII. may be particularly named if desired. Where a section of Scripture is really a unit, as is this, it is often well to give the whole a name expressing the general contents, though several chapters are included.)

Up to this point (Exodus 19) God has been dealing with His people Israel in *grace*. That is, His favor toward them has not been conditioned on their works or their worthiness, but on God's own faithfulness to His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God had definitely *promised* to be a God to Abraham's seed, to give them the

**General
Notes.**

land of Canaan, and to multiply them beyond measure, and to make them a world-wide blessing (Gen. 12 : 2, 3; 15 : 5, 18, 19; 17 : 5-8) — God must, of course, be true to His promises. He had not made any *conditions* in these promises. They proceeded from His *love* to these patriarchs. "Jehovah had a *delight* in thy fathers to *love* them," says Moses to Israel, in Deut. 10 : 15, "and He chose their seed after them." "If the inheritance (Abraham's inheritance of blessing from God) is of the law, it is no more of promise," explains Paul in Gal. 3 : 18. And then he adds, "God hath granted it to Abraham through promise." And in the following verse he shows that the law given at Sinai was an entirely separate and additional thing, having nothing whatever to do (as see verse 17 here) with the promises, or what God had four hundred years before the law was given granted to Abraham on the ground, not of Abraham's faithfulness, but His own heart of kindness.

In Romans 5 (one of the greatest chapters in the Bible) Paul definitely shows that the patriarchs were not under law. There was in those "no law." There was sin; but it was not, like Adam's great act of transgression, the violation of definite law. From the time that Adam fell, until God came down at Sinai, "from Adam until Moses," there was no such thing as God's giving men a legal basis of relationship to Himself. He had given that to Adam, Adam had failed utterly, and the race with him and in him. God went on dealing with the race, in different ways and under various conditions; but He did not acknowledge them as His covenant-people, in the sense of setting up anew the broken relationship between them and Himself. He did not, even after the flood (Gen 9) return to have fellowship with man, or dwell with him, as He had had fellowship with him in Eden, and as He afterward dwelt with Israel in the tabernacle and temple. He let the nations "walk in their own ways," "overlooking," for the present, their "ignorance" of Himself. (See Acts 14 : 16 and 17 : 30, R.V.)

When, upon the repeated and aggravated failure of the race to come back to Him of their own accord (Gen 4—11), God called out the patriarchs from the rest of mankind.

He did not place them under law, as Israel, in the present lesson, are about to be placed. Instead of this, there is, throughout the history of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the most exquisite familiarity with God on the part of these simple hearted saints. They walk with God directly, setting up their altars wherever they are, and calling on the Lord in much the same blessed freedom as we enjoy to-day (since the veil of the law has been taken away by Christ's death).

"Abraham," says Paul, in Rom 4, "looked unto the *promise* of God." He was not thinking of a thousand legal or ceremonial distinctions. These had not been given. Abraham was not under the law. Circumcision was simply a seal and sign that he was already righteous by faith. It marked him and his seed as God's favored ones. But Abraham had nothing under the sun to do with the law. It was given four centuries later; and the Holy Spirit says explicitly that the law could not make the promises of none effect. Even if the law had been given in Abraham's day, and he had broken it (as he would have done), his inheritance would still have been secure, for it was his on *another principle* altogether, that of definite, unconditional *promise*.

We must not, then, think of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, or the children of Israel, or Moses himself, in his early years, as *under law*. Until this present lesson (Ex. 19 and 20), God is dealing with this chosen line altogether for His own sake, on the basis of His own promises. Even in His visiting them in Egypt, and delivering them, it was "His covenant with Abraham; with Isaac, and with Jacob," that He "remembered." See Exodus 2 : 24.

What, then, is the law? What was it for? Why did God bring His people under it? What results did God seek thus to accomplish? Just what, if we can discover it, was the purpose of this long history that follows, of Israel under the law of Moses?

We could hardly ask a more important question. In the proper answer of this question will lie hidden the answers to most of the great questions of our salvation.

May God help us at least to open up this great subject for our further and deeper study. Its full understanding will require much careful, prayerful study. Its answer lies in a realm to which the human heart is a natural stranger.

It will be well, first, to note what was *not* the purpose of the law. We may be somewhat surprised, as we discover:

The Purpose of the Law.

1 The law was not given to men as a means of salvation, that is, a means of making men alive—regenerating them.

2. Nor was the law given to make men righteous, that is, to give men a standing before God by keeping it.

3 Nor was it given as a way of holiness, that is, as a means of sanctification for those already saved

4 Nor was the law with its accompanying ceremonies given as a final mode of worship of God.

We may be even more surprised to note the following facts regarding the law, on the positive side:

1 God gave the law to bring out men's badness, not their goodness.

2. Although the law is holy, it increases man's sin, instead of diminishing it.

3. The law condemns, curses and kills, instead of justifying, saving or giving life

4 God Himself pronounces the law weak and unprofitable, as far as helping man's condition is concerned. He did not delight in the dispensation of the law, and declares that it "made nothing perfect."

5. God Himself in the person of Christ, met all the law's requirements against man, in order to take it and its responsibilities off man's shoulders; that man, free from all bondage, might enjoy His God, and delight himself in His presence.

6. To resort to the law now for God's favor, or for salvation, is accounted by God rejection of Him and His Son, and results finally in eternal damnation.

LESSON VIII.—Part II.

The Purpose of the Law.

In our lesson, as begun last week, we stated certain facts regarding the Law, and God's purpose or end in giving it, and promised to cite the scriptural proofs of the statements then made. We must insist, as we did last week, that this question of the object of God's law is one of the most important of all possible Bible questions.

1. First then, that the law was not expected by God to bestow salvation and life upon men, is plainly seen in the following Scriptures: "If there had been a law given which could make alive, verily righteousness would have been of the law," Gal. 3 : 21. Here Paul plainly declares that not only have men failed to be saved by the law, but that the law *could not save them*; that God has never yet given a law that could "make men alive"—that is, regenerate and save them.

Now, at first thought this seems a direct contradiction of God's Word by Moses, in Lev. 18 : 5: "Ye shall therefore keep My statutes and mine ordinances; which, if a man do, he shall live in them"; and also of the like verse in Ezekiel 20 : 11: "I gave them My statutes, and showed them Mine ordinances; which, if a man do, he shall live in them." And that well-known answer of the Lord Jesus to the Jewish lawyer in Luke 10 : 28, who had asked what he must do to inherit eternal life, seems to be flatly contradicted here by Paul in Galatians. For when Christ referred this lawyer to the law, and he had summed it up into its two great commandments, our Lord then said: "Thou hast answered right: this do and thou shalt live."

But however *seeming* the contradiction be, Paul plainly declares, by the Spirit of God, in Gal. 3 : 21, that the law *could not* make people live.

2. We claimed in the second place, last week, that the law was not given to give men a standing as righteous before God by their keeping it. Here human reason utterly breaks down. We can conceive how the law might not

be able to quicken or regenerate men—to give life to those dead in trespasses and sins (as all men are); but how else could a creature have a standing before God—how else could he be made righteous, but by keeping God's commandments? Righteousness surely arises, saith reason, from doing righteous things, and can arise in no other way. For if God hath given commandments (and here in Exodus He speaketh aloud from the mountain ten great commandments, and that in a terrible voice, calling men to obey Him)—if, then, God giveth commandments how else shall we become righteous before Him, than by obeying these commandments? Thus man's reason argueth.

Then cometh God's Word: "*By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight.*" Rom. 3. 20. R.V. See also Gal. 3: 16. Here is a direct, plain statement by the very Person who gave the law, that no human being will become righteous in His sight by keeping

The question at once arises, Were these commandments of God *unrighteous*? If no one can become righteous by keeping the law, it must be a bad law. The answer comes from God, "The law is holy, and righteous and good" (Rom. 7: 12). Then is our reason in deeper perplexity than ever. The Lord gave these commandments; they are holy and good; the Lord saith, "Keep them. And then the apostle saith, "By keeping these commandments thou shalt never become righteous, thou shalt not be justified. Though God did indeed give thee these commandments to keep, thou shalt not gain any standing before God whatever by thy keeping of them."

Then, when man's reason beginneth to rebel utterly against such foolishness as that God should give a law, and not give man credit for keeping it, then God's Word again cometh in with a last and fatal blow to all man's wisdom:

As many as are of the works of the law are under a curse," Gal. 3: 10. Now, to be "of the works of the law" is simply to be seeking righteousness by doing what the law commands. Such, saith God, are *under a curse*. So far from becoming righteous, they are bringing doom upon their heads—nay, doom hangs already over them, for they *are* under a curse

3. We saw, further, that not only are men not made alive, or made righteous by the law, but that they are not made *holy* by it. That is, neither was the law given to save men, nor was it given to sanctify men after they are saved. By and by we shall consider how men are saved and made righteous, since the law cannot help them to salvation: but of course we naturally suppose, after a man is saved God gives Him the law to obey and to be holy thereby.

Now Paul, in the sixth of Romans, is dealing with this very question of the holy living of those already saved. In chapters three to five the question is, how to be saved. But from chapter six on, it is, how to live a holy life, *after* you are saved. And he says this is not to be through the law; that the law will not enable even a saved man to live a holy life, but, on the contrary (as the seventh chapter shows), if a man tries to be holy by the law he will fall into worse and worse bondage, and finally into utter despair in the matter. So that Paul makes the astonishing announcement, in Rom. 6 : 14, that saved people are *not under the law*, but another arrangement altogether; and he further says, in Rom. 7 : 4 and 6, that saved people have been made *dead* to the law, and are now *discharged* from it (R.V.). And the object of our being set free from the law, he says, was that we might, at last, in this state of freedom, "bring forth fruit unto God," which we never did or could do, under the law. For, as he explains in Rom. 8 : 3, the law was utterly powerless to make us fulfil its requirements (for reasons we shall see later) and *could not* bring us into a holy life. So that the law was not given to justify, for it never justified anybody; nor was it given to sanctify, for it never sanctified anybody.

4. Then we stated that the law, with all the ceremonies that were connected with it, was not intended by God as a permanent or in any respect a final mode of *worship*. For, in Matthew 27 : 51, we see the veil of the temple rent in twain, and thus the whole system of things of which the law was the center, done away; as is explicitly stated by the Holy Ghost in Heb. 8 : 13, where the whole legal covenant is said to be "old," "aged," and "vanishing away."

What, then, is the law? Why did God give it? If it was not to bring men life nor righteousness, nor holiness, not a means of access and worship, what then was it for?

The answer is exceedingly plain from Scripture.

But ah, how few really *believe* it, when they hear it! How few really *accept* the truth we now approach in their inner *hearts!* For, though they may outwardly assent to the doctrine, they secretly *doubt* of it. The reason will be apparent why the natural heart has no relish for the truth as to God's law, as He Himself reveals it to us.

In Romans 3:20, Paul tells us, "By the law is the knowledge of *sin*."

Again, in Romans 5:20, "The law came in, that the *trespass* might abound."

Again, in Romans 7:7, "I had not known *sin*, except by the law; for (for instance) I had not known coveting (that is, I would not have known coveting as a sin) except the law had said, 'Thou shalt not covet.'"

Again, in Gal. 3:19, "What then is the law? It was *added*, because of *transgressions*."

"That sin might be shown to be sin," that sinful men might discover how utterly bad they really are, in God's holy sight, God gave certain of them His law, saying, "These commandments express what you as children of Adam on earth ought to be—what I desire you to be and to do. Now *do* these commandments. *If* you do them, you shall live by means of them. If you perform fully all I ask of you, of course you will be righteous, and I must accept you on your own merits."

Thus our Lord spoke to the young lawyer, who said, "What must I *do* to inherit eternal life? Of course, if he is going to be saved by doing, there is only one place to refer him. God had already told men what to *do*, if they would live, Lev. 18:4, 5. So Christ referred Him to the law, and said, when the man summed up the law well: "Thou hast *answered* right; this *do*, and thou shalt live." (Most people, in reading this sentence, wrongly emphasize the words "right" and "live," which makes just the opposite of the right meaning).

The great trouble with men is just this: NOT ONE OF THEM HAS EVER PERFECTLY KEPT GOD'S LAW; that is, MEN HAVE ALL SINNED. Moreover, men all have a SINFUL NATURE, A NATURE WHICH IS UNABLE TO DO GOOD, IN GOD'S SIGHT.

Now God knew all this when He gave men His law. But men did not know it, and they must FIND IT OUT BY EXPERIENCE. So God gave them His holy law to keep saying, if they keep it, they shall have life and blessing by it. He knew they would utterly fail. But they shall have their trial.

And a long, bitter history that trial was. It extended from Sinai to Calvary. At Calvary men showed their exact character, by seeking to *destroy God Himself*; for God was *manifest in the flesh*, in Christ. Men had dreamed they were good and holy, and that they knew God and were serving Him. When at last they saw Him, they said, "Come, let us kill Him!"

Do you wonder that God, who really *knew* men, did not expect the law to bring out any righteousness, or holiness, or goodness in man?

We shall see, as we go on in our study, how the law brought out the utter *badness* there was in man.



LESSON VIII.—Part III.

We have seen, then, that God did not give the law to men because He expected to secure their salvation or holiness thereby; but in order to reveal to them their utterly sinful and lost state.

God's Purposes in giving this Law.

By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3 : 20), is a fundamental truth. Keep it well in mind. The law of God, being infinitely holy in its character and in its requirements, must condemn sinners. Some people think that God will, at the judgment-day, balance up a man's good deeds against his bad deeds, and save the man on the principle of general credit, if his good works outweigh the evil ones. But such an idea is utterly preposterous, when we reflect on the *absoluteness* of God's justice. Even on earth, when a man breaks the law, there must be penalty. For a convicted murderer, for instance, to ask the judge to release him on the plea that his life has been respectable, will at once be seen to be the height of unreason. The law has been broken. There must be satisfaction. Nor would the plea (made toward God by sinners constantly) that hereafter he will murder no more, be accepted. Neither past goodness or future promises can atone for breaking the law. Suppose a criminal should say to the judge, "If you let me off I will come to your house and work for the rest of my days," you would cry out against that plea as rank bribery. And you would be right. But that is the very plea sinners constantly make toward God. They have sinned, they admit; but surely God will be satisfied if they do good works the rest of their days for Him. And so men make God lower than an earthly judge. What shame! What folly! **GOD MUST PUNISH SIN.** His nature necessitates it. His government demands it. Human reason must admit it. Human conscience testifies and warns of it. But, last and finally, God's Word declares it "He will by no means clear the guilty" (Ex. 34 : 7) If God forgives the sinner, it can be only after the sinner's sin has been righteously dealt with.

Sometimes one man steps up and pays another's fine, when the convicted man cannot himself do it. But that is not setting aside the law, but obeying it and honoring its claims.

Now God knew that men had all sinned. He Himself declares that (Rom. 3 : 10-18, 22, 23). The whole race, Israelites as well as Gentiles, were under sin (Rom. 3 : 9). The law, therefore, could do nought but condemn. Especially is this so, since the law is "spiritual" (Rom. 7 : 14), and must search the heart of man, and condemn the least secret departure from God's will. Indeed, the tenth commandment of the law is, literally, "Thou shalt not *desire*." That is, Thou shalt have no other will or choice or secret longing after anything but the will of God—what He wills you to have, and because He wills you to have it. This sums up the whole. It is practically the same as "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, strength, and mind." No room was given to anything besides God, and His will, in the human heart: *all the heart—the whole being*, was claimed by God, as His constant due.

But no man since Adam fell, as we all know, has kept this great law of God—to love Him with the whole being. All have sinned. The law, therefore, when it comes, at once discovers man's sin to him, and condemns and curses him for it. Nor can the law show mercy. "The law is not of faith," or grace (Gal. 3 : 12). It proceeds upon principles of absolute justice; and it must, therefore, condemn all human beings, to whom it is given; for it finds them all guilty of breaking it. It therefore "concludes" (or, R.V., "shuts up") all things under sin (Gal. 3 : 22). And that was just what God gave it for. **THAT THOSE WHO WERE ALREADY BOTH BY NATURE AND PRACTICE SINNERS MIGHT FIND OUT THEIR SIN.** For the law, by making known what God's will was for the children of men, showed how far short men were coming. "By the law came the *knowledge* of sin."

So let us once for all (if possible, for it is hard to do), rid our minds of the thought that God was giving the law at Sinai, expecting that men would be able to keep it, or be really inclined to keep it. He knew what was in

man (John 2 : 25). Long before the law was given—centuries before, God had declared what was in man. See Gen. 6 : 5, 12; 8 : 21. Read these verses carefully. Even Moses discerned what was in Israel. See Deut. 31 : 24-29. And Joshua also saw that people's real moral inability to carry out their resolutions for good. See Josh. 24 : 19.

The great objects God had in giving the law, then, evidently were:

1. To reveal, to men on earth, His holiness and righteousness: that He hated sin and must righteously deal with it.

2. By this revelation of His holy character and requirements to show men their own sin, in that they fell short of keeping His law; and also to show men their helplessness, in that they would find themselves unable to change their nature and keep His law, even after it was given them.

3. To prepare the way, thus, for the revelation of God's own mercy and grace in Christ, who would, in due time, take all man's responsibilities toward God upon Himself, and answer to God for the broken law, by suffering its penalty in His own Person, on the cross. The law would convict, condemn and curse man; then, when man at last realized his need, his lost condition, he would be ready to accept of a *Savior*. Thus the race waited for the "fulness of the time" (Gal. 4 : 4), for God to send forth His Son.*

This Mosaic law, was it given to the whole race, or only to Israel? This is an all-important question, and must not be lightly passed over.

To whom was the Law Given ?

In the first place, we have seen the race as a whole tested three times, and proved each time a failure. (See opening lessons on Genesis.) Then we

* Of course, during the centuries from Moses to Christ, individuals who realized their need of mercy (as David, in Psalm 51), found mercy. They threw themselves upon God, despairing of their own righteousness, just as we do now. Faith in God is in all ages essentially the same. See Hebrews 11. Only we now have the finished work of Christ declared to us. We are told in the Gospel of what God, by Christ, has done; those before Christ looked to what God would do for them. They knew but dimly what it would be; but they knew the Holy God would do right regarding their sin, but that in His mercy He would save them. He would, they trusted, be "a just God and a Savior": how, they knew not fully.

found God setting the race as a whole aside (so far as His direct dealings were concerned), and choosing a special seed; which, in Exodus, we have seen developing into a nation, and, after the sign of redemption by blood (the Passover), brought out of Egypt, to be a separate and peculiar people to God—His chosen nation on earth.

Now it would be quite strange if God should take up the race as a whole again, after He had set it aside, until, at least, His immediate purposes regarding Israel have been fulfilled. Indeed, we trace, throughout the Old Testament, the fact that, from the time God chose Israel until they had so sinned against Him that He could no longer own them, He regarded all other nations as outside His covenant-dealings, as, indeed "no nations," in comparison with Israel. See, for instance, Eph. 2 : 11, 12; Deut. 22 : 21; Amos 3 : 2. In giving the law to Israel by the hand of Moses, then, God is simply proceeding with His purposes as to *Israel*, not the other nations. Nowhere in the Bible, moreover, does God say that He gave the ten commandments to the race as a whole. On the contrary, He does definitely declare that He gave them to *Israel*; and He constantly deals with them on this basis, that they had His law—while other nations or people He regards as not being possessed of His law, other than that written in their hearts. See, carefully, Ex. 31 : 12-17, where the Sabbath, the token of the national covenant with Israel, as the rainbow had been of the Noachian, and circumcision of the Abrahamic covenant, is said, in verse 17, to be a sign between the Lord and *the children of Israel*, forever. And in Ex. 34 : 27, after the terrible *breach* of chapter 32, Moses is told to write the words of the renewed form of the legal covenant, because, says God, "after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee (Moses), and with *Israel*." In Deut. 4 : 6-8 we see how distinctly Moses realized that this law at Sinai was not given to the other nations, but to Israel only. This same consciousness appears in all the teachers and prophets of Israel throughout the Old Testament. Paul declares, also, in Rom. 3 : 2, and 9 : 4, that it was *to the Israelites* the law was committed,

and to none others. This is a self-evident truth to the candid student of God's Word.

But we need faithfully to apply this great fundamental fact. Thousands of professing Christians—real Christians, too, many of them—really believe that all the world was put under the law. Many even hold that Christians are still under it, after conversion! Of this we shall speak more fully by and by.

Master these very carefully. These chapters of Exodus

General Notes of the Lesson.

are far more vitally important to a full understanding of God's ways with Israel than at first we think.

We have, here, first, the nation brought to Sinai, or Horeb, the place of God's declaration of Himself in the legal dispensation. Moses here had his first revelation of God (Ex. 3); Elijah fled here when Israel had utterly apostatized, as he thought: where else could he flee? (1 Kings 19). Malachi calls Israel, in spirit, back again to Horeb, in the last chapter of the Old Testament. It seems to be the place where man meets God on the ground of his own responsibility; and where, consequently, God reveals what He must have man be and do.

Calvary, on the other hand, is where God meets man in grace, on the ground of what He Himself is and has done. The first is law, the second grace. Some are still making Christ a second law-giver, a greater Moses. But these two mountains lie as far apart as earth and heaven.

Inasmuch as Israel had already, both in Egypt and in the wilderness, begun to show their real spirit, that of sinful self-suffering and rebellion at God's ways, God brings them here to reveal His law to them, that they may see both Him and themselves in a true light.

God therefore takes His distance from the people here. Instead of approaching them in the holy familiarity of love, as He revealed Himself to Abraham, His friend, He comes down on the mountain in awful majesty, making the very earth to tremble. And He speaks audibly, "in a great voice," those great "words" called the ten commandments. His voice, heard by all the people, terrifies them most utterly. They flee in agony from the presence of that

Jehovah whose commands they had said (before they saw His glory and majesty) that they could fully obey (Ex. 19 : 8). They cry to Moses (20 : 19) to draw near to God on their behalf but they see that they are not able to stand such fearful holiness and majesty. *The revelation of the law made them realize their need of a mediator.* This is the proper work of the law of God, at all times (Gal. 3 : 24). It was the power of that awful voice of God, speaking the holy law into the very *being* of those who heard, that so influenced them. They were overwhelmed. Compare Deut. 5 : 22-27. Of course they promised to keep all God asked of them.

But they did not know their own evil hearts. God saw that their hearts remained unchanged, in spite of their great awe in His presence, and their fair promises to obey Him. See Deut. 5 : 29. "Oh," said God to Moses, regarding these people, "that there were such a *heart* in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always!" He knew how soon their *real* heart would manifest itself.

In these ten fundamental requirements God is simply applying the great command to love HIM with all the heart, to various general lines of life and conduct. If we consider these commands carefully for a little, this fact plainly appears.

1. In the first commandment *the absoluteness of God* is maintained—there is and is to be none other.
2. In the second, *the glory of God* (Rom. 1 : 22).
3. In the third, *the honor and truth of God.*
4. In the fourth, *faith in God* is commanded—in the perfection of His work. (Compare Heb. 3. 4.)
5. In the fifth, *the order established by God upon earth* must be respected.
6. In the sixth, *the image of God* is to be recognized. (Compare Gen. 9 : 6.)
7. In the seventh, *the bounds and limits ordained by God* in human relationships are to be preserved.

8. In the eighth, *the providence of God* for each individual must be recognized: to steal from another is to take what I must regard as his by God's appointment, and thus to rebel against God.

9. In the ninth commandment, *the righteousness of God* is not to be disregarded; to lie about another breaks connection with the God of truth.

10. In the tenth (the last and deepest, in a sense, of all) *the will of God* is in question. "Thou shalt not *desire*." Thou shalt be absolutely and constantly content with God's appointment for thee. In other words, Thou shalt live a life of absolute acquiescence with His will, in every minutest particular.

These ten commandments claim *the whole man for God*. That is all; and certainly it is reasonable and right.

But man, since his fall, has been *his own god*. We shall soon see how this law of God works upon man.

Meanwhile, after giving the people a number of sample *ordinances*, illustrating the application of these ten commandments in their national life (chaps. 21—23 : 19), and giving the people certain great promises of earthly blessing if they are obedient (23 : 20-33), God makes a formal *covenant* with the people of Israel, on the basis of their promise to keep His law (chap. 24). This covenant is only ratified, and "dedicated" (Heb. 9 : 18-20) with blood; and God reveals Himself to Israel's representatives (Ex. 24 : 9-11).

Yet it was "afar off" that they saw and worshipped. See Ex. 24 : 1. They could not come near, verse 2. Moreover, there is something awful in the expression of verse 11: "Upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand." Ah, how *justly* might He have done so! But He forbears. They have promised to obey (verse 7). The shed blood has witnessed their covenant. They shall now be given a fair and full opportunity to prove their powers of obedience and self-holiness. God will treat with them on the basis of their vows.

The Legal Covenant.

But He now calls Moses up into the mount (verses 12-18), to give him, for this sinful (though self-confident) people the revelation of the tabernacle and its service; which speaks throughout of *Christ*, and His work as the Great High Priest of His people.

Something higher and more sure, thank God, was in His heart than the promises to obey His law of these poor Israelites.



LESSON IX.

The Plan of Grace; the Failure of Law; the Mixture.

EXODUS XXV.—XL.

We have seen, thus far in Exodus, God bringing the people He had chosen and redeemed and delivered out of the oppressor's hand, to Sinai, where they are to learn their own utter sinfulness and weakness to do good. Apparently reversing His whole attitude toward them, which until this time had been blessing in *grace*, on the ground of the *promises* to their fathers, God now proposes to the people blessing upon the condition of their *works*, their *keeping of His law*. We have noted how ready the people are to rush into such an arrangement. "All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do" (Ex. 19:8). Man naturally believes in, and depends on, himself; and he must learn, at bitter cost often, of his own helplessness.

After speaking in an audible and awful voice, from the midst of the glory on the top of Sinai, the ten commandments which expressed the principles of God's whole will for this earthly people Israel, He calls Moses up to Him in the mount, that the people might have a full season of testing, apart from the external restraint of Moses' personal presence, to see what was in their hearts. They had heard God's will. They could not forget quickly the fearful and searching voice of Jehovah, in the ten commandments. The question was, Will they obey? Do they really love this law of God? Can they fulfil its demands? The sum of it was, that their *whole heart* should be their God's: they were to obey Him, and worship Him, and cleave to Him, and to Him alone.

Moreover, there was His holy *Presence* on Sinai's top, in plain view of all the people. It was not a question of *faith*. It was plain *sight*. God was there before their eyes; though shrouded in darkness, every Israelite plainly saw the fact that Jehovah, whose voice they had heard speaking from the mountain, was really God, and rightly claimed their worship and service. What will they do?

We shall soon see. And we shall need to ask ourselves why they did as they did. We shall find here one of the greatest pictures in the whole Bible, of that most deceitful and wicked thing—the *human heart*.

Ere calling Moses away from the people for forty days (the number of divine testings or probations of man on earth, as see Matt. 4 : 1. 2; Jonah 3 : 4; 1 Sam. 17 : 16), God has Moses most solemnly witness this legal covenant, this promise of the people fully to obey God, with *blood* (Ex. 24 : 8). The blood here speaks not of atonement. For the people were now taking a position before God on their own righteousness and moral ability—just the opposite of the sinner's place (as see Luke 18 : 13, marg.). The *sin-offering* is not seen in Ex. 24, but the people begin with the *burnt-offering*, which symbolizes their offering of themselves fully to God; and they have *peace-offerings*, on the ground of that (Ex. 24 : 5). The blood, then, of Ex. 24 : 8 was the witness against the people, that they had bound themselves to do that law, the penalty for violating which was *death*. Of this awful responsibility the blood here speaks. The *law* is not of *grace*. Let us not confound these things.

We shall, indeed, find in the provisions God gives Moses on the mount, in our present lesson, those ordinances which speak to us of the atonement of Christ: such as the brazen altar, at the entrance of the tabernacle court, and the mercy-seat, or "propitiatory," upon the ark of the covenant in the holy of holies. But these things are not actually given to Israel until after their fearful apostasy in Ex. 32; when they are compelled, in some real measure, at least, to take the *sinner's* place, in view of their open and horrible violation of the law they had so loudly promised to fulfil. God, in chapter 34, *renews* the

legal covenant, with Moses as *mediator*—the type of *Christ*. Then (though the forms of the law are kept up, for the time for *Christ* to come was not yet), the provisions for man's approach to God by the blood, of the cross, as plainly set forth in the tabernacle, with its system of sacrifices and priesthood, are given to the people.

Strictly speaking, the people were never under absolutely pure law; for then the holy wrath of God against their sin would at once have consumed them. Even in the covenant of chapter 24, God was acting in grace, behind it all; for if He had not been so acting, He would not have borne with such people as *Israel* at all. Instead of judgment, He was shewing them mercy, when He put them under the law that revealed their sin, and showed them their need of His forgiving grace.

Especially is this grace seen in the final or mixed form of the legal covenant (chap. 34). Because then their sin had broken out into *transgression*. And it was there, in the scene of their sin, that God's grace behind all this law-plan shines most brightly.

By the plan of grace, of course we mean God's counsels as set forth in the tabernacle concerning salvation in *Christ*, which He revealed to Moses in the mount before ever He sent the two tables down to the wretched people (chapters 25—31 : 17); by the failure of law we mean, not its failure to perform its proper office—to reveal sin (it did that effectively; in this instance! chapter 32): but its utter failure to prove a means of salvation to *Israel*, "*what the law could not do.*" Rom. 8 : 3; by the mixture of law and grace we mean that order of things under which *Israel* was placed in chapter 34. after their breaking the covenant of chapter 24. It was neither all grace nor all law; the law, doubtless, predominated in it. Tabernacle, priesthood, and sacrifice belonged to grace; commandment, ceremonial and judgment belonged to law. Here we find the "guardians and stewards" of Gal 4 : 3.

I. The first step ought to be familiar by this time: read the chapters at least five times.

The Lesson Contents.

II. The chapter-names: XXV.—XXX., Tabernacle Pattern; XXXI., First Tables; XXXII., Golden Calf; XXXIII., Presence Promise; XXXIV., Second Tables; XXXV., Tabernacle Offering; XXXVI.—XXXIX., Tabernacle Fashioned; XL., Tabernacle Glory.

We have seen that while He left the children of Israel, as it were, to themselves for a little, God had Moses up into the mount. And what was the theme of His holy converse there with His servant?—“Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them,” Ex. 25 : 8. Here is God’s heart of love toward men—toward His people. He would be among them. He would even *dwell* among them! Infinite in His Person and Glory—the very heaven of heavens could not contain Him. Yet here He is seeking a *home* among this poor nation of His, but lately come out of vile slavery in Egypt! Surely this is *grace*! God knew this people Israel. He saw their history beforehand; yet He *loved* them. He must by and by deal with them in indignation and severity. See chapter 32. And He must hold aloof from them in holiness for forty days (Deut. 9 : 17, 18). For they must learn that their God is jealous and holy, and that He cannot in any wise have fellowship with iniquity, or clear the guilty. But now, to Moses, He is revealing as much of His *heart* as was yet possible in these blessed patterns of salvation by Christ. This law-covenant just made with the people did not for a moment annul or even touch the great covenant of grace and promise made 400 years before with the father of the faithful. Compare Gen. 15 with Gal. 3 : 17, 18. God’s heart is always set on that first covenant in His dealings with Israel, never on the legal one. So, while the people were resting on their promise of perfect obedience to God, confident of their own goodness (ch. 24), He who knew what was in man, and what an utter failure Israel were about to make, was revealing to Moses in the mount the great patterns of the tabernacle, which speak throughout of the blessed Savior, whose great atonement takes away our sins forever, and brings us into the Father’s presence as favored children, wholly apart from all or any of those works of the law, which all of us

would do, but which none of us can ever do acceptably to God. See Rom. 3 : 20; Gal. 3 : 10-12, 21; Titus 3 : 5; Eph. 2 : 9.

The tabernacle was God's dwelling-place with men.

The Tabernacle and its Types.

As such it was, as a whole, a type of Christ. (See Col. 1 : 19; John 1 : 14. R.V., margin.) If we let the Israelite in the tabernacle represent the Christian in Christ, we shall get many a marvelous lesson in the study of the tabernacle, with its furniture and service. At the entrance stood the brazen altar, or altar of burnt-offering. This tells of Christ the Bearer of Sin, to whom as such the seeking sinner comes first of all. This altar is the cross. Those really in Christ have all come by way of this altar. Next is the laver for cleansing those who would enter within the tabernacle to do the holy service. This laver represents the Word of God (Eph. 5 : 26), in whose blessed water that Christian must constantly wash who would be admitted by God into the exercise of the high office of the holy priesthood, into which every Christian is called (Rev. 1 : 6; 1 Peter 2 : 5). Many Christians so neglect the Word of God that they are unfit for real tabernacle services in God's presence within the veil.

Inside the veil three pieces of furniture met the eye. On the left, the golden candlestick, bearing its seven lamps of sweet, soft lights, sets forth the glorified Christ as our sanctification, supplying to us the blessed oil of the Holy Ghost, through whose illumination we behold our Lord and are transformed into His image (2 Cor. 3 : 18). Then, on the right, the table of showbread reveals Christ holding forth before us the bread of life, which is also Himself. Those who minister in holy things, as all God's people are now called to do, for all are priests (Rev. 1 : 6; 2 Peter 2 : 5), must feed constantly on Him as their only strength. The altar of incense before the veil tells of the delightful work of those admitted to the light and strength of God's presence, and of Him through whom their service is acceptable. It is seen, in Heb. 13 : 15, to

represent Christ, for this altar was not for sacrifice, but for worship, which the incense symbolizes. A beautiful picture of this is seen in Rev. 8 : 3-5, where the service of the true heavenly tabernacle, of which the earthly was but a pattern, is opened for a moment on our view, cf. Rev. 15 : 5; Heb. 8 : 1-5.

Within the second veil stood the ark of the covenant alone—setting forth the wonderful throne of Him who dwelleth between the cherubim (Ps. 99 : 1). While the whole ark speaks of the person of Christ, as in His double nature (the wood and the gold) being Himself the meeting-place of God and men, the top or lid of the ark, called the propitiatory or mercy-seat, must especially and tenderly represent Christ's work of atonement. Inside were the tables of the law, which, all inviolate, are preserved to God's glory in Christ; but man's approach to God is not by means of these, but by the mercy-seat, upon which the sacrificial blood was always sprinkled. The materials, colors and dimensions of the tabernacle also all speak eloquently of Christ; as, for example, the acacia wood, the wood of the wilderness (cf. Isa. 53 : 2), of His human nature; the gold, of His glorious divinity; the fine linen, of His perfect righteousness; the blue, "the color of the firmament," of His being "of heaven"; the scarlet, of His sufferings; and the purple, of His kingly glory.

Space permits merely a hint of these things. There is a mine of priceless gold in the tabernacle. Some such excellent work on it as the Notes of C.H.M., or the first volume of "The Numerical Bible," by F. W. Grant, or the brier but suggestive booklet by George Rodgers, "The Gospel According to Moses," should be consulted, *after* becoming thoroughly acquainted with the chapters in the Word regarding it; for it should ever be a fixed principle with us to master the contents of a passage of Scripture and submit ourselves to God for His enlightenment, ere using that which others, however taught of God, have written.

Exodus 32 contains another of those great, fatal outbursts of human sin, those terrible breakdowns or failures that have marked every occasion where God has trusted anything to human hands

The Terrible Breach.

First, in Eden, the moment God committed responsibility into man's hands, he fell, he sinned, he ruined everything, Gen. 3.

Then, after the flood had cleared the earth for a new trial, Noah himself fails, falling into that sin which signifies departure from God unto the world and the flesh; then his family fails, and finally the race again, most utterly, at Babel, Gen. 11 : 9.

Here, in Exodus 32, the moment the chosen people are placed under the law or testing, they go down, in horrible idolatry.

Then, in Leviticus 9 and 10, the very day the human priesthood is set up in Aaron's family, such terrible sin and sacrilege rush in, as call for God's condign and immediate judgment. Then, by and by, Israel enter 'the land—a new generation. But the book of Judges has as its very key-word, FAILURE; and it goes on till the chosen nation are scattered to the ends of the earth in divine wrath.

When, in due season, kingship was inaugurated, the very first king proved what the flesh is—what *man*, at his best, is: for Saul was the choicest specimen of the flesh in all Israel. See 1 Sam. 10 and 15.

And even when God's king was found, and set upon the throne, and despite his dark, personal failure (see 2 Sam. 11, and 23: 5), God had made his throne victorious throughout the Promised Land, Solomon, his son, brings all to failure and practical ruin.

When, again, upon Israel's temporary rejection as the rulers of the earth, Nebuchadnezzar began the times of the Gentiles, then utter failure is foretold by God to their very first king: though it begins in gold it will end in dust (Dan. 2).

And finally, the ultimate utter ruin of the earthly testimony of the Church of God in the present age is

foreseen even by Paul himself, its great apostle, 2 Tim. 3: 4.

Those poor dreamers who cry up the virtues and character of Adam the First have meagre help from the Word of God's truth. Alas! for the root of this fair talk of sinful flesh lieth in a soil that hath never yet been plowed up by the Holy Ghost in conviction of personal guilt. Those who talk large of the goodness of man have not yet seen the Holy One of Israel. "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," is a confession that sooner or later all the real saints of our God are ready to agree unto from their heart, Rom. 7 : 18.

So in Exodus 32, the heart of man, having another chance, manifests itself. Man, with God in plain sight, "changes the glory of God for the likeness of an ox that eateth grass," Ps. 106 : 19, 20. So Paul says of the apostate race, in Rom. 1 : 21, 23: "Knowing God, they glorified Him not as God, but changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." That is (verse 25), "they exchanged the truth of God for a lie." It was simply this, that the Israelites could not bear the holiness and glory—the real character, of Jehovah their God. Their sinful hearts stood in terror at Him. But they dare not openly deny Him. Nor would they cast themselves as lost and undone upon His mercy, letting Him be the God of infinite glory and majesty, and themselves vile sinners at His feet. So they resort to *idolatry*. That is, they hid their eyes from God's blazing glory on the mount, and set up an image called by His name (Ex. 32 : 5). Then they could do as they would (see Ex. 32 : 6, 25), they could indulge all the lusts of their evil hearts, while professing to be *religious* in it all. It was simply the working of that human heart, which, while unable to cast out the idea of God, still desperately determines to do its own will; and because it cannot escape God-consciousness, dares to turn God into a minister of sin. Idolatry defies the lusts of sin.

But at this juncture Satan comes in. He is the god of all those who will not give up sin, but abide in unbelief of

the glory of God, 2 Cor.: 4 : 4. The human heart thus becomes the shrine of the devil. He sends demons to such men, who hold their hearts for his. See 1 Cor. 10 : 20. And, as to this very scene at Sinai, see Deut. 32 : 17; Ps. 106 : 37. All false religions, were the mask torn off, have as their deity, in the last analysis, the great adversary himself.*

In Exodus 32 we see God laying upon Moses as their mediator His sinning people. Though he failed in his attempted atonement for them (32 : 30-33), for Another than he must atone for sin (Ps. 49 : 8; Rev. 5 : 9), yet he obtained God's sparing mercy for national Israel (32 : 11, 14) and then His accompanying presence (33 : 1-4, 12-17), however. Christ obtained the eternal pardon and fellowship of God for us. Moses is now declared the accepted mediator of the legal covenant (33), by his admission to face-to-face fellowship with God, by granted petitions and by the revealing to him of the divine glory. Thus does Christ prevail for us. The first legal covenant had been sent to the people, on God-fashioned, God-written tables, without a mediator. It was utterly broken. In the renewed covenant the mediator fashions the tables below by his human hands and himself writes the holy law upon them. Though bearing precisely the same words (Ex. 34 : 1, 28), yet in the mediatorial hands, and on the ground of the sacrificial system about to be brought in, they were not shattered, as were the first. In Ex. 34 : 6, 7, we see the real character of this second or mixed form of the law-covenant in the revelation Jehovah gives of Himself. Here law and grace are both seen; but law is uppermost. Not until Calvary can God speak His whole heart of gracious love to sinful man.

* In this awful word we must include all deniers of our Lord's deity, whether heathen or professedly Christian. "No man cometh to the Father, but by Me," said Christ. So that those who refuse to pray in His name, and by His blessed mediation, will one day see that their worship was really offered to a God of their own hearts' fashioning. To reject Christ is to fall at the feet of the one other master of men. There is not a third. "We are of God," says John of those who know that the Son of God is come, "and the whole world lieth in the Wicked One." 1 John 5 : 19, 20.

1. *The tabernacle.* Most thorough and patient study will be abundantly rewarded here, as we have said, and should be entered upon by every Bible student. In the limits left for this lesson even the

**Special Topics
for Study.** directions for work worthy the subject cannot be given. We beg every minister, especially, to note for early and faithful Scripture investigation this wondrous store-house of treasures.

2. *The sin at Sinai.* Its source; its cause; its nature; its gravity; its aggravations, which make it appear worse, the holiness of God, aflame before their eyes, or the sweet purpose of grace for them of which He had just been talking with Moses? Aaron's connection with it—what? Revealing what, as to his strength of character? What high office was God planning above for him, while he was preparing the calf for the people below? Did God, after all, give him the office? Was not that grace? How does Aaron's excuse remind you of Adam's? The results of the sin, what? Contrast the three thousand *saved* in Acts 2:41. Why was not the proffered atonement of Moses accepted? verses 30-35. Study this passage most carefully, also, as well as verses 11-14 of this chapter, as revealing both wonderful depths of devotion in the character of this great servant of God, and remarkable truths concerning the power, method, and limits of intercession.

Moses' vision of the glory, chap. 33. Why asked? or better, why desired? Why was not the *angel's presence* (v. 2) enough for Moses? Why not then the *fellowship* of verse 11? Why not then the *knowledge of God's ways*, of verse 13? for, see Ps. 103:7, as well as verse 17. Why would the revelation of the glory of his God alone satisfy the soul of this saint at this time? Can you think why the scene *promised* in verses 21-23 is not *described*? Have you yet seen the glory of God? Have you begged to be shown it? See Isa. 6; Ezek. 1; Dan. 10; 2 Cor. 12; Rev. 1. We know where to look now for it, 2 Cor. 4:6. May the prayer of Eph. 1:16, 17 be answered in each of our lives!

OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES.

3. *The freewill offering*, chap. 35. Its motives, measure, and lessons for us. Compare with 1 Chron. 29, and Acts 2 : 44, 45; 4 : 32-35.

4. *The literal obedience* in the construction of the tabernacle, and its reward, as shown in chapter 40 : 34-38. Compare 2 Chron. 5 and Acts 5 : 32.



LESSON X.—PART I.

Leviticus -- The Book of Sanctification and Worship.

General Survey. We have seen, in Genesis, God's election of a people for Himself, after the race as a whole had utterly failed. We have also noted their *pilgrim* character in the midst of a world in sin and rebellion, afar from God.

In Exodus, we have traced His redemption of His people from the judgment that fell on the rest of the race (typified in Egypt), and His complete deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and His taking them to Himself, sustaining them in the wilderness by a constant miracle of His grace.

We have just been studying, also, His ways with His people at Sinai; that He revealed Himself there not in outward grace (though grace was behind it all), but in *law*; because the people desired to be on that platform, believing in themselves rather than God. We have marked their rash engagement to fulfil all God's law (Ex. 24), and their terrible failure in this (Ex. 32). Then we saw God placing the people upon Moses, as their representative or mediator, and renewing His covenant in a modified form with Israel (Ex. 34). We then witnessed the construction of the *tabernacle*, God's dwelling-place in their midst; and we have seen that this tabernacle is simply a series of wondrous types of Christ and His work for us. So that Jehovah, when He came, at the completion of these heavenly patterns, into the midst of His people, came really on the basis of Christ's atoning work and His blessed Person, rather than on the basis of that law-covenant the people had so failed to fulfil.

However, we found that the time for the full manifestation of these glorious things that touch our salvation had not yet come; so that God places the people under

those outward restraints and observances that teach them continually of God's holiness and their own sinfulness. There was a way to Him, even under the law, though He was shrouded in darkness behind the veil in the awful holy of holies. That way, as our present lesson will afresh testify, was by *blood* that is, on the basis of *accomplished atonement by the expiatory death of a substitute*. But God kept the people (though He loved them) separate. There was no direct access.*

Now in Leviticus we are to see the people who have been chosen in Genesis and redeemed in Exodus taught to approach their God. They must learn how holy He is—how infinitely removed from themselves; they must have a series of sacrifices or offerings given them, suited to their various needs, of forgiveness, thanksgiving or worship, and also expressive (if they have understanding to perceive it) of His great plan of salvation by His Son. Then the priesthood God is appointing for them must be brought in, and they must learn its work and its sanctity. They must also be given various outward and arbitrary distinctions, to impress constantly upon their mind their separate character and their holy God.

But we are anticipating too much.

The book now before us is an exhaustless mine of precious gold. To the Christian who has come into the spiritual understanding of it, it presents constantly increasing beauties and ever fresh delights. It is so full of Christ—of His Blessed Person, as well as of His priceless work; and its many ceremonies present Him to us in such a variety of aspects, that the faithful heart which loves its Lord is ever constrained to cry out.

The Book of Leviticus.

* The only case of face to face access to God is seen in Moses, in Exodus 33. And it is most instructive here to note that in this chapter God is, as it were, altogether out of covenant with Israel. The Covenant of Ex. 24 has been broken and set aside. The people are under legal judgment. But Moses, who has fallen back upon the promises made to the fathers (32 : 13, 14), is really standing upon grace ground. The contrast this chapter bears to the rest of the book, both before and after it, is striking and beautiful. In chapter 34, when the renewed law-covenant is set up, there is a constraint, even on Moses' part, I think, that is not seen in chapter 24. Study this; it is intensely interesting.

“Oh, the depth of the riches!” “He is the chiefest among ten thousand!” “He is all and in all!” We would naturally expect it to be full of Himself, since He Himself has been made of God our sanctification, 1 Cor. 1 : 30. It was in Him as Head of the new creation that we were chosen—that is the lesson of the book of Genesis. It was through Him we were redeemed, by His precious blood; Eph. 1 : 7; 1 Peter 1 : 18, 19; and so brought up out of the world through baptism into His death (the Red Sea, 1 Cor. 10 : 2); Rom. 6 : 3, to enter the heavenlies and partake in His resurrection life and victory, Eph. 2 : 5, 6; Rom. 6 : 4; Col. 2 : 12—that is the lesson of the book of Exodus. (Let us remember always that the law came in *beside*, Rom. 5 : 20; it was *added*, Gal. 3 : 19. Its provisions are not expressive of any part of our salvation in Christ, which is all grace, Titus 3 : 4-7; but only of certain preparations to salvation, Gal. 3 : 22-25.) Next, it is in Christ Jesus that we have been sanctified, or set apart forever to God, 1 Cor. 1 : 2; that is, in His sacrifice of Himself He forever secured for and to His Father, those in Him, Heb. 10 : 10, 14—this is the lesson of Leviticus. As we know, there are two aspects of our sanctification: one from the standpoint of what Christ has done for us, which is perfect, and is forever finished—this is our *standing*; the other, from the standpoint of what we have permitted the Holy Spirit to accomplish in us, which may be very incomplete—this is our *experience*. It is the former of these of which the book of Hebrews speaks, which in the New Testament corresponds to Leviticus in the Old. They should be read and studied together. In this larger and primary sense of sanctification, Christ is all and in all. So in Leviticus, we shall see offerings, priesthood, ceremonies, feasts, all speaking of Him as the great center of everything, as alone the Bearer of our sin, as opening up access to God, as bringing God and us into blessed fellowship, as the Great Redeemer from the past, the All Sufficiency for the present, and the Securer and Hope of the future.

Part I. — Leviticus I. — VII. The Five Great Offerings.

I. Read most prayerfully, patiently and carefully, at least five times over, these opening chapters. Picture before your mind the priest fulfilling the various directions in each offering. Do not be content until you have so thoroughly mastered the details of these chapters that you could go through with any one of the sacrifices yourself. Indeed, you will find added delight in reading this lesson, if you will imagine yourself one of the priests, and this lesson your book of directions. It is of the utmost importance that we get well before us the particulars concerning each offering, in order not only to the study of the typical meaning now, but to be prepared to understand the frequent and always meaningful references to these offerings in the later books of the Bible. God expects us to read carefully what He has here written for our learning; if we fail to do so, let us not be surprised if we do not find profit or interest in some other parts of the Word. Our Father is not partial to one part of His revelation above another. If you and I are, let us not expect sympathy from Him in it. He has uttered it all. It is all equally holy and precious. Every word of it will abide forever. There are three great steps in coming to understand these types and shadows: mastering the contents; finding the key to it all; then, using the key. Take the first step first. This faithfully done, the rest is simple and easy. Again, let me urge you, *read the chapters over and over, till all their details are familiar.*

II. The chapter names are at once seen: I., Burnt-Offering; II., Meal-Offering; III., Peace-Offering; IV., Sin-Offering; V., Trespass-Offering; VI., VII., Laws of Offerings.

The five great offerings of chapters I.—V. unite to present to us the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ in its five-fold character. In the burnt offering we see Christ offering Himself without blemish unto God (Heb. 9:14) as a sweet-smelling savor (Eph. 5:2), delighting to do His Father's will in the sacrifice of Himself

(Ps. 40 : 6-8; Heb. 10 : 5-7). The flaying, dismembering and washing show His gladly laying open to His Father's searching sight and requirement His whole being. The burning of the whole on the altar signifies God's entire and glad acceptance of Christ's willing offering of Himself, as whatever was burnt on the altar was sent as acceptable up to God. In the meat, or better, *meal* offering (see Revised Version) Christ, seen by the Father as the perfect Man, is set before us. Flour, the earthly fruit, proclaims His real humanity; fine flour, the perfect character of His manhood, as even, harmonious, one with itself throughout; the mingled oil, the Holy Spirit working in His conception and birth (Luke 1 : 35), and the poured oil, the Holy Spirit poured upon Him at His baptism (Luke 3 : 21, 22; Acts 10 : 38). God's memorial thankful, burnt on the altar with the frankincense, shows Christ living His human life for God's glory first, as the chief end of it; though afterward the priests (types of all true Christians Rev 1 : 6) feast on it also (John 6 : 50-58). Since honey symbolizes natural earthly sweets, and leaven always sin (Matt. 13 : 33 is by no means an exception!) both were excluded from the offerings, as Christ partook of neither, but salt, the preserver and purifier, was always to be used, as setting forth the abiding character of Christ's work. The peace offering shows Christ as our peace, the reconciler of God and man, satisfying God's holy claims and bringing us nigh in Himself. (See Eph. 2 : 13-20; Col. 1 : 21, 22.) Of this offering God took the fat, which signifies His delight in the devotion and excellencies of Christ: the priests the shoulder and breast, showing His strength and affections given us as our proper and sustaining portion. The offerer was allowed to feast together with God on this offering, as the prodigal's father said, "Let us eat" (Luke 15 : 23). These three—the burnt, the meal and the peace offering—are "sweet savor offerings" and set forth what Christ is as toward God in all His work; the last two, the sin and the trespass offering, show us what Christ was made for us. (See 2 Cor. 5 : 21; John 1 : 29; Isa. 53 : 6.) In the sin offering we see Him dealing with the question of sin; in the trespass offering with

individual sins. He put away *sin* by the sacrifice of Himself, and bore the *sins* of many (Heb. 9 : 26-28). He dealt with sin in the root (Rom. 6 : 6) in the fruit in the trespass offering (1 Peter 2 : 24). By the laying on of the offerer's hands he became identified with his offering, which was then put in the place of death in his stead. So Christ became one with us (Heb. 2 : 11; 2 Cor. 5 : 21) and was punished in our place to satisfy God's holy and righteous wrath against our sin. As the burnt offering Christ absolutely satisfied and delighted His Father, and the whole burnt on the altar expresses it; as the sin offering His Father's face was turned from Him. He was in the place of judgment. God could not look upon sin. Compare (1) Matt. 27 : 45, 46; (2) 2 Cor. 5 : 21; (3) Hab 1 : 13. So the sin offering* was burnt without the camp, where those unclean, or those under sin's judgment, were relegated. (Cf. Heb. 13 : 11, 12.) But even in the sin offering the fat was burnt on the altar. God delighted in the inner devotion and affections of Christ, which the fat seems to represent, through all His awful visitation of our sin upon Him. It should be noted that the blood of the sin offering alone was taken inside the veil. Only as the sin offering could Christ bring us into God's presence.

The order of the offerings expresses what Christ is to Godward; and then, reversed, how man apprehends Christ. In the burnt offering Christ is seen doing His Father's will; in the meal offering He appears as the perfect Man, the Father's delight; in the peace offering, bringing God and sinful man together; in the sin offering, being made the world's Sin Bearer; in the trespass offering, bearing individual sins. But the sinner first finds Christ as his trespass offering, the bearer of his own particular transgressions—that is salvation; then as his sin offering—that is victory over sin itself; then as his peace offering—that is fellowship; then as his meal offering, the perfect man into whose image the Holy Ghost is ready to fashion him—that is sanctification; and finally in the strength of the Great Burnt Offering he offers his own body as a living sacrifice to God—the highest Christian duty and privilege, Rom. 12 : 1, 2.

Part II. Leviticus VIII.—XV. Priests and Purification.

I. Read the chapters as usual, seven times over. Your appreciation of and delight in these beautiful truths of Leviticus will grow in direct proportion to the conscientious, prayerful attention you bestow on all the details in your reading. If I should have my choice of accomplishing one of two things by this Bible course: either to bring those who follow the course into possession of all the truths of each lesson; or simply to succeed in persuading them *to read over each lesson the required number of times*—I should most unhesitatingly choose the latter. The reason why God's people do not understand the Bible is because they do not read it. The Holy Ghost has come to teach each one of us, John 14:26, and those who receive Him in His blessed anointing are kept from error through His abiding vigilance and enlightening, 1 John 2:20, 26, 27; and guided by Him into all truth, John 16:13, 14—even into the deep things of God, 1 Cor. 2:9-12. If we will faithfully read the Word He will open it to us. For Christians to neglect the Holy Ghost as their teacher and run to human sources as they do is a great sin against the loving, tender Comforter, who yearns to have the unbounded, trustful confidence of every one of us, and our joyful surrender to His direct presence and teaching. In James 4:5, R.V., margin, last reading, this is touchingly set forth. See also John 6:45.

Have you read these chapters over and over, as we have begged? If so, you will have found such delight in the very Word itself, that you will not greatly miss aught we might say. If you have not so read and re-read the lesson, then you are just the one whom we are seeking to persuade of your duty and privilege, by all we are saying. Why will men not see that the very first thing necessary in order to understand and enjoy the Bible is *to read it*? God will not bless the soul of the so-called Bible student who seeks to get at the system of truth taught in the Bible through what other men have written, while slighting both the Word itself, and the personal Holy Ghost who wrote it and has come to open and

explain it. If this Bible course fails to induce you to do the thorough reading and re-reading so constantly urged in it, it has vitally failed with regard to you. "SEEK YE OUT IN THE BOOK OF THE LORD AND READ." Oh, that that word were cried up and down this land till every Christian worker should hear and obey! Then would come the revival that cannot come so long as the present ignorance of God's blessed Word prevails.

II. The chapter-names: VIII., Priestly Consecration; IX., Holy Fire; X., Strange Fire; XI., Clean and Unclean; XII., Natal Cleansing; XIII., Leprosy; XIV., Leper Cleansing; XV., Personal Cleansing.

III. Topic names. Seek to discover the heart of the lesson, and find if the great themes treated do not fall on or about it. We will suggest chapter 10 : 3, first apart from, and then with, its context, as setting forth the great central truth of the section. Go over the chapter names, in the light of this text, and see if it is not so. Make a careful topical outline of the lesson on some such basis.

IV. In chapter 8 we see Aaron at last dressed in the high-priestly robes. All these garments are wonderful types of the character and work of our Great High Priest, and should be studied in detail as to the significance of the materials, colors, patterns, use and prominence. See Ex. 28, and all other Scripture references to any of these garments. We shall not enter upon the exposition of their meaning, except to suggest the general typical character of the chief parts of the dress. The ephod, with its two shoulder-pieces and graven stones (Ex. 28), seems to represent Christ's mediatorial power supporting His people in access to God and fellowship with Him. The breastplate, with its individual names on the precious stones, speaks of the particularly near and dear relation Christ's people bear toward Him, and into which He has brought them with the Father, and in which He constantly sustains them by His power as Mediator (the breastplate hung from the ephod). Happy the Christian who has learned boldly to write *me* in such passages as Heb. 7 : 25 and Rom. 8 : 34! The robe of the ephod, "all of blue," the heavenly color, speaks of Christ as the Man from

heaven, 1 Cor. 15 : 47. The "diadem of holiness," as the forehead plate of gold is called in Ex. 39 : 30 and Lev. 8 : 9, is said in Ex. 28 : 36-38 to signify the bearing by the high priest of all the responsibility for the worship of the people—"Aaron shall bear the iniquity of the holy things." What a source of joy it is for us that upon Christ is all the burden of making our worship and service acceptable to the infinite God with whom we have to do! Heb. 9 : 24; 13 : 15; 1 Peter 2 : 5; 4 : 10, 11; Eph. 1 : 6. It is such knowledge that gives the heart rest and joy, and inspires us to devotion as nothing else can. It is not that we have to work to be accepted; but, finding that we *are* accepted, how can we but work!

Aaron is now anointed before the rest of the priestly family, and before the shedding of blood, as was Christ. His anointing was lavish, as was also Christ's. See Ps. 133 : 2; Acts 10 : 38; John 3 : 34. After the sacrifice the other priests were sprinkled with the same oil. Compare Pentecost after Calvary. The blood-sprinkled ear, hand and foot show heart, service and walk given to God in the power of the cross, 1 Cor. 6 : 19, 20; 1 Peter 1 : 18, 19; 2 Cor. 5 : 14, 15. This is a sweet picture of real consecration; which, while always actuated by gratitude for redemption, as a *motive*, must first be made possible by redemption, as a realized *fact*, Rom. 12 : 1, 2.

The eighth day (chapter 9), is a beautiful outline picture of the whole work of Christ for Israel. In verse 22 we see Aaron giving the people the priestly blessing, after the sacrifice, and then entering into the tabernacle from their sight. But the glory did not appear till Moses (the type of Christ the King, as Aaron of Christ the Priest), comes forth with Aaron to the people. Thus Christ, having accomplished the sacrifice, blessed His people, Luke 24 : 51, and then passed into heaven, the true tabernacle, Heb. 8 : 1, 2. Anon He will come forth as the Great Priest-King, and then will Israel be blessed indeed, and all flesh shall see His glory, Isa. 40 : 3, 4, 15. God speed that day!

The tenth chapter proclaims first God's attitude toward will-worship—it was not fire which was commanded against,

but which was simply *not commanded*. How much such fire is being offered in some churches to-day! Imagine a "Sunday evening sacred concert" in the Pentecostal Church!

The other great truth enforced is, that God's glory is infinitely higher than nature's ties. Compare the equally solemn and even more touching story of Ezekiel 24 : 15-24. Also Luke 9 : 57-62. This is a much needed lesson in these days.

In the double mark of clean animals (chapter 11), is seen the two proof-marks of the real Christian: rumination or meditation in the Word (Ps. 119 : 97) and a divided or separated walk (2 Cor. 6 : 17). Both these characteristics are set forth together in the first Psalm, verses 1 and 2. The clean water-creatures, again, must have both armor for protection from the elements they inhabit, and means to advance through it. "In the world, but not of it," as one has said, and "Pressing onward." Study all these details, as also those of the twelfth chapter, where the utter defilement of human nature at birth is shown, and that the only means of escaping it is by death to it, as figured in the circumcision. "Every child born into this world only increases the sin in the world." Only in the death of Christ, who has died out to the old creation, is there escape from the defilement of nature. (Cf. Col. 2 : 11 with 2 Cor. 5 : 17.) In the diligent investigation demanded in the case of leprosy, we see on the one hand the necessity of diligent scrutiny of all that seems evil among ourselves as the people of God; and on the other, the great care necessary lest we condemn as lepers those not really such. Contrast 1 Cor. 5 : 11 with Gal. 6 : 1. The two birds (the heavenly creatures), in the leper-cleansing ceremony, most beautifully set forth Christ from heaven dying in the flesh (the earthen vessel), 1 Peter 3 : 18 in the power of the Spirit (the running water, John 7 : 37-39), Heb. 9 : 14; thus utterly condemning the old creation throughout ("from the cedar to the hyssop," 1 Kings 4 : 33), and all the glory of earth, "the scarlet," (see Gal. 2 : 20; 6 : 14); and then (in the freed bird) rising and going back to heaven. It is in the realization of all this, as new creatures in Him, that those Christians who be-

come defiled by sin (for the leper-cleansing has reference to God's people, not the world), find their cleansing and restoration. Chapter 15 vividly speaks of that holiness in walk that God must have in His people, as well as their constant liability in this earthly life to defilement. Besides the spiritual teachings of this chapter, it gives in connection with chapters 12, 17-22, the best sanitary code ever written.

We must leave till another week the rest of this precious book.

LESSON X.—PART II.

Part III. Lev. XVI—XXVII. Atonement, Holiness and Glory.

I. Read these chapters the usual number of times.

II. The chapter-names are: XVI., Atonement; XVII., Blood; XVIII., Abominations; XIX., Righteousness; XX., Abomination Judgments; XXI., XXII., Priestly Sanctity (XXI. in person, XXII. in service); XXIII., Feasts; XXIV., Blasphemy; XXV., Jubilee; XXVI., Promise and Punishment; XXVII., Special Vows.

III. Prepare a careful outline of this lesson. The basal thought of the maintenance of God's holiness in His dealings with His people underlies the whole section. Mark all the passages containing the words "I am the Lord," and "be ye holy," and this will be apparent. With this thought as a central theme, see if you cannot readily group the whole body of truth of the lesson about it.

IV. It will be well now to sketch through the truth of the lesson, emphasizing what seems most important in order to the grasping of the book as a whole, and especially dwelling on the Day of Atonement, which, in a real sense, is the key-passage of Leviticus.

General Notes.

We have seen in chapters 1-7 of this precious book the person and work of Christ in the offerings, and in chapters 8-15, the priestly association with Him in service and fellowship of His people. In the second great section of

the book, that before us now, we have the practical side. We are here shown first how we are saved by the atonement of Christ alone (chapter 16) by the precious blood (chapter 17); that therefore God expects us to live holy lives as His people (chapters 18-20) and to keep ourselves clean by His grace for ministry as His servants (chapters 21, 22). We are given in the great feasts (chapter 23) a wonderful panorama of the history of God's people, from the dark hour of Calvary in the passover, to the glorious millennial morning, in the Feast of Tabernacles; while in the next chapter we see that although God keeps the memorials of Israel ever before Him (in the oil and the bread); yet they are found blaspheming His name (1 Thess. 2 : 15). But in the very next chapter we have God reiterating the wonderful prophecy of future blessedness for Israel in the jubilee-year directions. "The land shall not be sold forever, for the land is Mine" (25 : 23). God is always faithful, man always faithless! God will yet have the nation of Israel back in Palestine for the grandest jubilee this world has ever seen. (See Ezek. 36; 37 : 21-28; Jer. 33 : 7-26; 31 : 1-14; Isa. 60, entire; also 40 and 35 entire; also Isa. 65 : 18-25). These passages cannot be made to refer to the past, except by doing violence to the Word of God. There are literally hundreds of other passages which tell of a future time of blessing for the twelve tribes of Israel. God knows where His scattered Israelites are. The memorial light and the twelve loaves were before His face continually for them—kept there, notice; not by the people themselves, but by the high priest. God will yet remember Israel and choose Jerusalem (Zech. 2 : 10-13) through Him of whom Aaron was a feeble type, and all for His own name's sake, not for their righteousness. Ezek. 36. Chapter 26 tells of the blessings Israel could have had long ere this through obedience, and of the five great series of punishments that were to come—alas, have now come—for disobedience. This chapter of woes is a literal outline of the history of Israel. Compare the Old Testament history, and on down to their scattering at the destruction of Jerusalem. The last chapter of Leviticus is simply a reflection of the covenant history of Israel

thus far. They had taken upon themselves a special vow before Moses (Ex. 24 : 7), and being unable to fulfil it, being very much "poorer than Moses' estimation" (compare chapter 27 : 8 with Ex. 32 : 19), they had been thrown back upon Aaron the priest's ministry—one of mercy and grace compared with that of Moses, which stood for absolute righteousness. This truth is beautifully brought out in McIntosh's "Notes on Leviticus."

The great feasts of chapter 23 should be especially considered. They constitute one of the richest dispensational studies in the Bible. The *Passover* is Christ crucified, with its call to holiness of life in the Feast of Unleavened Bread (compare 1 Peter 2 : 24; 2 Cor. 5 : 17). Then, on the morrow after the Sabbath, our "first day of the week," the *Feast of the Firstfruits* shows the resurrection of Christ (see 1 Cor. 15 : 20-23). Then comes the *Feast of Weeks*, the fiftieth day after—called in later times *Pentecost*. We all know what this means (Acts 2 : 1-4). The leavened loaves signify the Church, in itself not good (Rom. 7 : 18), but made acceptable through the sin offering (Lev. 23 : 19). These three feasts were in the first part of the year; the last three in the latter part. The interval corresponds to the present dispensation, the first set of feasts referring to the first coming of Christ, with His death and resurrection, and the establishment of the Church, the heavenly people; while the last set refers to the salvation and blessing of His people, Israel, at the end of the present age. The *Feast of Trumpets* sees them awakened by their future trouble (the great tribulation) to seek God, Hosea 5 : 15; Deut. 30 : 1-3; Isa. 26 : 11; Ezek. 36 : 37. The *Day of Atonement* shows them afflicting their souls on account of their sins against their Messiah (Zech. 12 : 10), and their forgiveness (13 : 1); while the *Feast of Tabernacles* reveals them exulting in the glad kingdom of glory yet to come to them on the earth, Zech 14 : 16; Ps. 147; Jer. 31-33; Isa. 2 : 2-4.

The Great Feasts.

We do well, also, to note again, in Lev. 23 : 2, 3, that the weekly *Sabbath* is the fundamental one of all the "set feasts," given by Jehovah to Israel. We must remember that the Sabbath was given to national Israel (and to them alone) as the seal or token of their national relationship to Jehovah, as His peculiar people. "I gave them *My Sabbaths*." See Ex. 31 : 12-17; Ezek. 20 : 12, 20. How anyone could miss the plain declaration of Ex. 31 : 16, 17, is hard to say. Only that Christians have ever tended to depart from their own high calling, to Israel's lower ground. (See the Epistle to the Galatians entire.) No wonder the Seventh Day Adventists subvert so many professing Christians these days, when the ordinary defence against their claim (a perfectly true one), that the only *Sabbath* revealed in Scripture is the seventh day, is, that the Lord's Day is now the *Sabbath*, because of Christ's rising on that day, and the early Christians meeting on that day, etc. The legalists triumph over such arguments with perfect ease, from the letter of Scripture; for they point to the fourth commandment, and say we must keep that, as well as the other commandments, etc.

Now the only escape from them is Paul's glorious doctrine in Romans 6 : 1-14, and 7 : 1-6: "Ye are *not under the law*. . . . Ye were made *dead to the law* by the body of Christ." "Let no man therefore judge you in respect of . . . a Sabbath day," . . . for Christ hath taken this bond "out of the way, nailing it to His cross," Col. 2 : 16, 14.

The blessed resurrection-day, the first of the week, with its privileges and precious memorials, is on an altogether different basis from Israel's seventh-day obligation, in which was summed up the essence of their legal relationships and responsibilities. It was, as we here see it in Lev. 23 : 3, and all through their history, the touchstone of everything, as regarded their character as God's peculiar people. Note also the passage in Ex. 34 : 21, corresponding to this Leviticus passage, in enumerating the feasts, etc. But note carefully here also with whom this legal, Sabbath-sealed covenant was made. See 34 : 27. It is fin-

ally seen how vital was this Sabbatic seal in God's covenant with Israel, in that they were cast out of their land because of their violation of its provisions. See 2 Chron. 36 : 21; Ezek. 20 : 13, 16, 21, 24.

It is also a startling fact that in the millennial kingdom, when Israel are restored to God's favor, and are dwelling in their land, they will still keep their *Sabbath, which will still be the seventh day*. See Ezek. 46 : 1; 44 : 24; 45 : 17; 46 : 3, 4, etc.

The seventh day is the rest-day of the *Old Creation*, the last age of which the millennial time will be. The eighth day, or the *first of the new week*, is the memorial day of the *New Creation*. Therefore did Christ rise on the first day, for He brought in the New Creation, as its Head and its glory. Therefore do we love the first day, for we are also, being in Christ, *new creatures* (2 Cor. 5 : 17). Israel were on no such ground as this, nor will they be till after the millennial age, at least. Then *all things* will be new, Rev. 21. But for *us*, all things are *already* new (2 Cor. 5 : 17). Let us then beware of departing into legal things—for we have *died* to all that. Glory be to God!

Let those who would put us under the law study chapter 24: 10-23 of our lesson, and remember (Gal. 3: 10; 5: 4), you must choose between *Christ* and the *curse*.

The word atonement in the Hebrew signifies to "make propitiation by expiation"—that is, to satisfy or appease God's holy wrath against sin by suffering to the utmost its penalty. This is what Christ did for us. We first see this idea of atonement—namely, of expiatory sacrifice—in Abel's accepted offering (Gen. 4 : 4; cf. Heb. 11 : 4), then in Noah's altar and offering (Gen. 8 : 20), then in the passover lamb (Ex. 12), where God first announces the fact that it is the shed blood that enables Him to deal with His people in mercy. We find the principle further exhibited in the great offerings of Lev. 1—5, especially in the sin and trespass offerings: The heart of the whole subject is now laid open in this great atonement chapter, Lev. 16.

In every detail of this sixteenth chapter, except that of offering the sin-offering for himself, Aaron is seen as the type of our great High Priest, first in his atoning work in general, and then in the application of it to Israel in particular. The spotless righteousness of Christ in His work is seen in the linen dress of the high priest—linen symbolizing righteousness (Ps. 132 : 9; Rev. 19 : 8; cf. 1 Cor. 1 : 30)—and that Christ does all the work of atonement Himself is seen in the lone priest officiating throughout. See especially verse 17. The goat for the Lord, which was to be slain, and which really made the atonement, because atonement is made only Godward, tells of the shed blood of Christ gaining for us access into the holiest of all (Heb. 10 : 19, 20), on the ground of His full satisfaction to God for our sin. The second goat, led away to an uninhabited, or, better, "a cut-off land," shows us most beautifully the result of the atoning sacrifice of our blessed Savior—our sins put away forever (Heb. 9 : 26), and remembered no more (Heb. 10 : 17, 18; cf. also Isa. 43 : 25 and 38 : 17).

The burning of the body of the first goat without the camp shows Christ in the place of the curse for us (Gal. 3 : 10), enduring the dark fire of God's wrath upon sin, for He was "made sin for us" (2 Cor. 5 : 21), and "bore our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2 : 24), the place of the curse (Gal. 3 : 13), God punished Him instead of us (1 Pet. 3 : 18; 1 Cor. 15 : 3), for He had laid on Him our iniquities (Isa. 53 : 6). His righteous Father hid His face from Him on the cross (Matt. 27 : 46), for God cannot look upon sin (Hab. 1 : 13), and Christ really had sin upon Him there. Though not His own sin by commission, it was indeed His by identification. He had taken our place there. He was treated just as we must have been. He was visited by the awful wrath of an infinitely holy God against sin. Not only death as we think of it, but judicial separation from God's favor, real banishment as an accursed thing from the light of His face into the fearful outer darkness that sin must have, was what Christ bore for us on Calvary. Though but for a little while, indeed, yet His experience of God's wrath

was none the less real and terrible, infinitely beyond all human thought. The darkness about the cross (see Matt. 27 : 45) was but a dim outward suggestion of that awful reality into which Christ went for us. When the first Adam sinned, God could turn to the second Adam that was to be, and, in view of His coming atonement, God could still deal with our race in light and love. But when that fearful hour came, when the sin of the race of the first Adam was reckoned to the second, when Christ was *made sin* (2 Cor. 5 : 21), there was no third Adam to whom God could look, our race went under an awful *eclipse*. All God's light was withdrawn. If Christ had not been an accepted sacrifice on our behalf, that darkness would have lasted *forever*; as, indeed, it will for those who do not have Him, at last (Jude 13). It is only shallow souls that see in the sacrifice of Calvary simply a great example of devotion to high principles, or a wonderful pattern of devoted love. Christ *left* us an example, surely, in His death, as saith the Scripture in 1 Peter 2 : 21; but that same passage tells us that the suffering was for the *purpose* of *saving* us. "Christ suffered *for you, leaving you an example.*" A man crosses a field in the snow, to reach his house: he leaves his footprints, but his purpose was to get home. The example Christ left is secondary; the sacrifice is primary. When men come really face to face with a holy God they see the need of the great sin-offering. (See Ps. 51; Job 42 : 6; Isa. 6 : 5; Luke 5 : 8; 18 : 13.) The two great pillars of the truth are, the person of Christ and the work of Christ—His present divine humanity and His finished work of atonement. Every modern teaching may be tested to purpose by these two questions: "What think ye of Christ—whose Son is He?" and "Must the Son of Man be lifted up?" Judged by this rule, all the modern delusions of Satan, such as Christian Science, Spiritualism, Theosophy and Neo-Buddhism, are seen at once to belong to the pit; for each and all deny that Christ has a real body, Luke 24 : 36-43, and that His death was an expiatory sacrifice, 1 Cor. 15 : 3.

But we must close with a remark about the dispensational bearing of the Day of Atonement. The high priest gone into the sanctuary with the blood—that is, Christ after crucifixion going into the holiest of all in heaven with His own blood, now to appear in the presence of God for us, His Church (Heb. 9 : 12, 24). - But by and by He will come forth again, to pardon Israel, to send away their iniquities forever, according to the new covenant yet to be made with them. (See Heb. 8 : 8-12.) Thus the scapegoat has a peculiar application to Israel. (Compare Zech. 12, and 13, and Micah 7 : 18-20.) All hail the day when Jesus the Great High Priest shall come forth from the heavenly sanctuary! See Heb. 9 : 28, with the context.



LESSON XI.

Numbers -- The Book of Divine Discipline.

Let us labor to keep in mind, as we proceed, all that has gone before. We must not neglect the fact that God ever deals in a most consistent way with His people. He is acting always in view of what He has already revealed to those with whom He is dealing. Let us carefully follow Him now, in His ways with this earthly people, seeking constantly to keep in remembrance all that has preceded.

Introductory.

The Israelitish people are now on a legal basis with God, as we will remember, by their own choice. They have utterly failed to keep their first legal covenant (Ex. 24 and 32). But though God recognizes that they have failed, He still deems it best to let them go on for awhile in a legal way—until "the fulness of the time for *grace* to come," by Christ His Son.

Now we saw in Leviticus how God was teaching the people about their manners in His presence, under this renewed legal covenant. In Exodus they get the law, and the tabernacle is set up in their midst, and its priesthood appointed; and Jehovah comes into the tabernacle to dwell. But it will never do to let the people worship God "as is right in their own eyes." God has them halt at Sinai throughout the whole book of Leviticus, till He tells them just how to approach Him; just how to conduct themselves, in view of their being His peculiar people, among whom He dwells, and what their national life must be, in all its bearings. Then, when all is ready, the priesthood having begun its work, thus establishing a basis for God to dwell in actual relationship with His people, they are ready to set out for their *march through the wilderness*. This march will be narrated in the book we are now beginning.

The Book of Numbers.

The book of Numbers covers almost the whole of the forty years between Egypt and the Promised Land, Num. 1 : 1; 33 : 38. It is a story of failure, wretched failure, on man's part, and of grace, ever-abounding grace, on God's part. The order and service of Israel's camp and march are scarcely arranged (chapters 1-9), when rebellion against God's ways begins to manifest itself, and the development of this spirit of unbelieving disobedience forms one of the most deeply instructive lessons in this book, or, indeed, in the whole Bible. Beginning in fearful forebodings in chapter 10, we see it break out in murmurings, in chapter 11, then into rebellious lust, and open, universal complainings against the Lord, which soon desperately infects even the three leaders of the host, 11 : 11-15 : 12.

We are prepared, with such a beginning, to witness the unbelieving proposal of chapter 13 (compare Deut 1 : 20-22), with its terrible issue at Kadesh Barnea. Unbelief, persisted in, fruits out rapidly into all the final forms of iniquity. It is the tap-root of all sins. So the story rushes right on to the deally climax of appalling wickedness in the Korah rebellion. In tracing the successive downward steps of apostasy, as to their moral order, the Apostle Jude shows the last of them to be the lurid leap into the hideous chaos of sin illustrated by "the gain-saying of Korah." This is the directly Satanic form of rebellion. Sin could go no further than this, so, after its punishment, in the last part of Numbers are chiefly seen the grace of God and His workings in grace. When the people are shown in themselves, as in chapters 20, 21 and 25, it is as wretched transgressors, as usual. But it is through the eyes of Him who speaks by the unwilling prophet of the Gentiles in Numbers 23 : 21, that we, too, must behold the chosen people through all the dark scenes of this book.

"He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob.
Neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel.
The Lord his God is with him,
And the shout of a King is among them."

This overabounding grace of God, which refuses to look upon evil in His people, triumphing over all their failures, must, of course, find all its sources in Christ, and of Him, therefore, the section of the book which immediately follows the story of the utter breakdown of the people most eloquently speaks. Every chapter is full of Him (17-21). The budding rod of chapter 17 speaks of Him as proclaimed by resurrection the Chosen of God (Rom. 1 : 4; Heb. 7, 8; Acts 17 : 31); while chapter 18 reveals Him as fully able to sustain the responsibility of His priesthood. In the red-heifer ordinance of chapter 19, He wondrously appears as the Sanctification of His people's walk through the world; while, as the life-supporting Rock, He is again before us in chapter 20 (cf. Ex. 17). Every Christian knows the beautiful type of the twenty-first chapter in the Uplifted Serpent. It is only natural, after all these figures of the Messiah in His work for Israel, to find in the fourth great prophecy of Balaam, His final triumphant manifestation and reign over the nation for which He has thus done all things; and through Israel, over the nations, Num. 24 : 17-19.

Part I. Numbers 1—X : 10. The Wilderness Order and Service.

I. Read these chapters over and over till they are familiar—some six or seven times, at least. This is the key of everything in Bible study—reading, reading, reading, till the material is thoroughly mastered. Always do this first of all. Those who do this reading faithfully are not out of patience with me for insisting so constantly upon it; those who do not do it may be.

Preparing for the March.

II. The great facts of this section we find to be: The numbering of the warriors of Israel, and the camp-ordering of the various tribes about the tabernacle, with the special place and service of the three great families of the Levites (chapters 1-4). Next we have the cleansing of the camp from all defilement, as being God's host, with the resultant blessing (5, 6). The gifts of the princes of

Israel to the tabernacle on the occasion of its dedication, and the taking by the Lord of the Levites to Himself to attend to the tabernacle ministry follow (7, 8). The special directions for the partaking of the Passover by the ceremonially defiled are next given, 9 : 1-14, and the final preparations for setting forward are seen in the cloud for guiding, and the trumpets for assembling, the host of the Lord (9 : 15—10 : 10).

III. The chapter-names: I., First Numbering; II., Camp; III., Levites' Order; IV., Levites' Service; V., Jealousy; VI., Nazarite; VII., Princes' Gifts; VIII., Levites' Consecration; IX., The Cloud; X., Silver Trumpets.

IV. The key of the book of Numbers is found before three verses are read: "Take ye the sum of all . . . that are able to go forth to war in Israel" (1 : 2, 3). The people found and selected in Genesis, redeemed and delivered in Exodus, and brought, in Leviticus, into fellowship with their God, are now, in Numbers, to be taught what life as His people in the wilderness of this world means: a walk of simple faith and of constant conflict. Numbers will thus be the book of *discipline*. This world is yet the enemy's ground (John 12 : 31; 14 : 30; 1 John 5 : 19). The children of God are aliens here, strangers, whose citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3 : 20, 21, R.V.); and every one who is truly of this world hates them (John 15 : 18-20). Every moment of the Christian's stay in this world is to be one of real or expected conflict (Eph. 6 : 13). That professed Christian who is having no battle is without progress, if not without life. See the whole book of Psalms; Eph. 6 : 10-18; 1 Tim. 6 : 12; 2 Tim. 4 : 7; 1 Cor. 9 : 24-27; Heb. 12 : 1-4; 1 Peter 5 : 8-10; Jude 3, R.V. But remember 2 Cor. 10 : 3-5 in your warfare.

The first thing asked for in Israel's warriors was a certificate of pedigree (Num. 1 : 18); they must be able to prove that they were really children of Israel, or they could not be counted as warriors. And the reason why many people nowadays fail to overcome in the conflict with the world, the flesh and the devil, is that they cannot show their pedigree—they are not sure that they are

the children of God. The real Christian has documents. For this see John 1 : 12; 1 John 3 : 1, 2; 5 : 13. So he is bold for battle against all enemies, 1 John 5 : 4, 5; Rom. 6 : 12-14; 8 : 12-14; 1 John 2 : 14; Rev. 12 : 11.

We next see the four-square camp (four is the world number) in the wilderness, with the tabernacle in the midst—beautiful picture of the Church in the world with Christ in the midst. (Cf. Matt. 18 : 20; John 20 : 19, 26; Rev. 1 : 13; 2 : 1.) The Lord always desires the place of Protector, Counsellor and Leader among His people. So His place must ever be "in the midst." Thus there can be neither divisions, defeats nor dangers. In the perfect ordering of every detail of the camp and march, as well as of the service of Israel, we see exemplified 1 Cor. 14 : 33; while in the fact that the Levites, who, with the priests, are a great type of the Church, have each a several part of the tabernacle work, we see a foreshadowing of 1 Cor. 12 : 4-11. It is not God's will to have all the work of a church done by the preacher or by a few members.

In the fifth chapter we have, first, a most instructive lesson as to the absolute necessity of faithful discipline among God's people—evil must not be tolerated. "Put away the wicked man from among yourselves." 1 Cor. 5 : 13. Second, in the restitution ordinance, we see the duty of our putting right, after confession, all personal wrongs to others. And finally, in the ordinance concerning jealousy, we find the sacred institution of marriage in a most solemn way protected by God. This truth of the sacredness of the marriage relation cannot be too strongly emphasized in these loose days.

The law of the Nazarite, in chapter 6, shows the way of separation to God for all ages : abstinence from even harmless earthly indulgences, seen in the forbidden fruit of the vine; absolute avoidance of all unclean associations, in the restrictions as to the dead (compare 2 Cor. 6 : 14; 7 : 1); and, finally, the secret of counting weak our natural strength, that the strength alone of Christ may rest upon us, seen in the unshaven head. (Compare 1 Cor. 11 : 14; 2 Cor. 12 : 9, 10; Phil. 3 : 4-7). The seventh chapter is so long (next to the longest in the Bible) because God so

delights in the loving gifts of His people to Himself that He must note in detail the giver and the gift in every case. (Compare Luke 21 : 2; 2 Cor. 9 : 7; Heb. 6 : 10; 13 : 16). There is probably also a line of prophetic truth in this chapter. See Mal. 3 : 3, 4. The gift of the Levites, God's peculiar possession (Numbers 3 : 45), to Aaron, the high priest, shows exquisitely the Father's great gift to the Antitype of Aaron. (See John 17 : 2, 6, 9, 10; 6 : 37.) Here we find that the true ground of consecration and service to Christ on our part—*we are already His*. See also 1 Cor. 6 : 19, 20. In the gracious provision of Num. 9 : 1-14, we have a parallel of the sweet truth in 1 John 2 : 1. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father." We are not, through sin, cut off from partaking of Christ. We need but to judge and confess it, 1 John 1 : 9, and we are restored, without a month's—yea, without a moment's, delay. See Psalm 32 : 6, R.V., margin.

One of the most beautiful lessons in the Bible on God's guidance of His people is given in verses 15 to 23 of this ninth chapter. Though the same in the absolute, immediate, constant obedience that is its first condition, the guidance which Christians now have is infinitely better than was Israel's. Theirs was outward, ours inner (John 14 : 16, 17; 16 : 13); theirs general, ours individual and particular (Rom. 8 : 14); theirs necessarily distant, for they dare not yet enter into the immediate presence of the guiding Cloud; but ours is blessedly intimate and sweet, for our Guide, the blessed Holy Spirit, enters our very inmost bosoms, to dwell within us, and direct us even in the most minute details of our daily lives

The silver trumpets of the tenth chapter, probably made from the redemption money, and by whose calls the movements of the camp were to be absolutely directed, are wonderfully typical of the commanding voice of our Redeemer. Oh, that every Christian of us were hearkening always for the trumpet ere marching! And there will be a day that it will be infinitely priceless to have an ear trained to the trumpet sound. (See 1 Thess. 4 : 16; 1 Cor. 15 : 52.)

Part II. Numbers XIII—XVI. Kadesh-Barnea.

The chapter-names of this second section of Numbers may be suggested as follows: X., Marching; XI., Murmuring; XII., Criticising; XIII., Spying; XIV., Rebelling; XV., Divine Faithfulness; XVI., Gainsaying. Surely this is a black list indeed, as *man's* part is concerned!

We have now come to the second great crisis of Israel's life as a nation. The first was at Sinai, where the question was, Will this people follow and serve the holy Lord God? No, they would not. They despised Jehovah and His faithful prophet, they demanded a dumb, bestial idol; and they turned their base lusts loose in heathen abominations. That was Israel as they really were in themselves. That is man as he has been in every age, and is to-day. *We must despair of man.* Till we lose all confidence in the first Adam and the old creation of which he was the earthly head, we shall not be able to put full confidence in the Last Adam, and the new creation of which He is the Heavenly Head. All this beautiful talk in modern literature of the good in human nature is but manifest evidence that Satan is still successfully plying the lie which first brought about man's ruin: "Ye shall be as gods," Gen. 3:5. Belief in themselves is the curse of the lost; utter distrust of themselves, and faith in God, is the sole secret of the bliss of the saints. "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?" is the cry of Isaiah in the very first chapter of his prophecy; that this was the sentiment of no dark misanthrope, but a living truth, is seen in the sixth chapter of his book, where, under the light of the glorious presence of the Holy One of Israel, he himself sinks down crying, "Woe is *me*, for *I* am undone, because *I* am a man of *unclean lips!*" Every great man of God has had to be brought to despair of his kind—himself always included—ere God could greatly use him. We must look only for failure, as to the things of God, in man as man. Where we find aught else than failure we must straightway recognize the grace of God. Oh, that all God's people really *knew* this great truth:

"By the grace of God I am what I am!" We dwell because of its very pre-eminent importance in the study of the Word of God. When Israel had gone down at Sinai—had lost all, and were ready to be consumed, God simply spread the great eagle wings of His grace, and took them up upon *Himself*, Deut. 32:11. Here in Numbers, now, as we have said, we have them face to face with the second great question of their history. Will they obediently enter the land of their inheritance, so faithfully and graciously set before them? No; they will not! They will distrust God's wisdom, doubt His goodness, espy narrowly, and then basely depreciate His blessings, rebel, despise their leaders, defy Jehovah, renounce their calling, and, finally, appoint a captain to return to the land of their lusts and likings. We need this picture. A whole book has intervened since Exodus 32. Already we had begun to think Israel a right good company. Here they are—weeping all night in a passionate fury of mingled unbelief, rebellion, insane terror and murderous rage. Sadly we must lay aside our too readily begotten confidence in vain, fallen man, and turn to God. What will He do? Chasten and discipline such people He must, and the sad announcement of the decreed forty years of wandering is the first word from Him. But, as we have already seen, He follows this directly by a wonderful series of unfoldings of His purposes and plans of grace in the Christ He had appointed, even for this sinning Israel. He takes them up again upon His loving heart and patient hands. "Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His wonderful works to the children of men!" The more deeply we examine the facts of this lesson before us, the more our hearts will marvel at the infinite character of that grace that, where sin abounds, only abounds more exceedingly.

A detailed study of this whole passage concerning Israel's terrible failure should now be made to find the secret sources of it all. A great sin always has deep roots. Look for the roots of this in the growing spirit of unbelief among the people, shown

The Cause of their Failure.

in leaning on man rather than God (10 : 31); in complaining of God's ways with them (11 : 1); lusting after evil things (11 : 4, 5; compare 1 Cor. 10 : 6) because dissatisfied with God's simple but sweet provision (Num. 11 : 7-9); impenitence, even after the judgment of 11 : 1, and the expressed displeasure of the Lord with them (11 : 32, 33; compare verse 20). So universal was this turning in heart away from God that even Moses was infected with it, as we see in 10 : 31, and see still more plainly in his untimely and painful questioning of both God's love and His power, in 11 : 10-15, 21, 22. The spirit of rebellion is sadly seen also in Miriam and Aaron in chapter 12. Altogether, it is wholly evident that they are a stiff-necked and rebellious people, and utterly unfit to enter the promised land, even were there no enemies to be dispossessed. The sending of the spies, chapter 13, originated in the unbelieving fear of the people (Deut. 1 : 21, 22), although approved by Moses and allowed by God. In chapter 14 the natural heart of man shows its real self—black, rebellious, ungrateful, stubborn, godless, murderous. A careful examination of this chapter should be made, to discover the nature and marks of ripened unbelief, for, "they could not enter in because of unbelief," Heb. 3 : 19.

The first two verses of chapter 15 show that God's purposes are to be accomplished through His unchanging faithfulness and grace, despite man's utter failure; for, just as if the sentence of forty years' wilderness wanderings had not been pronounced, the Lord proceeds to give them ordinances to be observed "when ye are come into the land." God's purposes of mercy stand, despite man's sin. He formed them before man was created, and in full view of all men would be and do.

In the very next chapter, however, human iniquity breaks out afresh in the Korah rebellion. Korah and his company despised God's selection of the Levites as the priestly tribe, thus showing in themselves the very essence of sin, which is *lawlessness* (1 John 3 : 4). The modern Korahs are those who are clamoring that all men are sons of God equally (compare Numbers 16 : 3). God being the universal Father; though God's Word says He

is the Father of those who are born again through accepting Christ (John 1:12; Gal. 4:4, 5), and that Christ-rejectors are children of another, whatever their claim (John 8:39-44; 1 John 5:19). Korah denied Aaron; humanitarianism and universalism deny Christ. This claim of Korah, in 16:3, "The whole congregation is holy, every one of them," is simply the exact creed of this Christ-hating, self-exalting world, as blinded and ruled by Satan, its god. The last days will witness the full development of this High-Priest-rejecting self-sufficiency, and then—*judgment*. See Jude 11. "And perished in the gain-saying of Korah."

The striking typical or dispensational lessons of the twelfth chapter should not be overlooked. Because of his Gentile wife, Miriam and Aaron jealously speak against Moses, but the judgment of the Lord upon Miriam (the instigator of her brother, apparently), is averted only through the intercession of him whom she has wronged: though she must be disciplined for a week in the place of the unclean without the camp. Thus has Israel dealt toward Him who is of their flesh, whose Bride from among the Gentiles, has excited their jealousy. But through His own gracious merit and intercession, in whom and for whom Israel have been called and exist, they have been spared, though they are without the camp all through this present dispensation, having lost for the time, their character as a holy nation and their testimony for God.

Part III. Numbers XVII—XXIV. "The Grace that Bringeth Salvation."

I The chapter-names of this section are: XVII., Budding Rod; XVIII., Priestly Power and Portions; XIX., Red Heifer; XX., Smitten Rock; XXI., Brazen Serpent; XXII., XXIII., XXIV., Balaam.

These chapters will repay amply the most painstaking reading and re-reading, which is always the first step in study.

II. The object of Jehovah in the miracle of the budding rod is shown in verses 5 and 10 of the seventeenth chapter. It was thus openly demonstrated before Israel what

**God's
Triumphant Grace.**

was God's mind about Aaron, and that he was fully innocent of the charge of arrogance and presumption, made by Korah in the preceding chapter against Moses and Aaron, and at first supported by the whole congregation (16 : 19). As we have hinted, the budding, blossoming and fruiting of this dead rod is a beautiful type of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When, by and by, He is brought forth by the Father and exhibited to the gaze of the "children of rebellion" (17 : 10) of this earth, their murmurings will be effectually silenced, as Israel's here were not (17 : 12, 13). Then, "Kings shall shut their mouths at Him," Isa. 52 : 13-15; 55 : 4; Phil. 2 : 10, 11; Ps. 2.

The agonized cry of 17 : 12, 13, was answered by the loving provision of 18 : 1-7. Thus our Lord Jesus has been given to bear the whole burden of the heavenly things for us. All our interests before God—what momentous interests!—are in His hands. How fully He is able for them is seen in the great Epistle to the Hebrews. The latter part of this eighteenth chapter shows us that God will see that His chosen servants shall not lack, 1 Cor. 9 : 7-14; and also that He expects His people to give as He has prospered them, 1 Cor. 16 : 2. Not a tithe, but all, is now the Lord's, even we ourselves, through the cross, having been bought with a price, 1 Cor. 6 : 19. We are merely *stewards*, Luke 16 : 1-13; 1 Tim. 6 : 17-19. Of course this is a familiar truth; but how many of us are living in the power of it? Perhaps in nothing are so many Christians unfaithful as in the use of money.

In the beautiful ordinance of chapter 10, we see Christ, on the ground of His death, cleansing through the water of the Word (Eph. 5 : 26), those who are His own, from the daily contamination of contact with the evil of the world. John 13 : 1-10; 17 : 15-17; 1 John 1 : 7. This chapter is one of the most instructive of this whole book, and should be most carefully studied. The law given in this

chapter is appropriately placed in Numbers, rather than Leviticus; for this is the wilderness book, that which describes the walk of the Christian through the world, and it is the cleansing of the walk that is meant here.

Chapter 20 teaches us the most solemn lessons as to the necessity of absolute obedience to God, even by His most favored and intimate servants. Only implicit obedience truly honors God; He can require no less. Grave lessons are here, too, as to the utter vanity of man. We here see about the greatest man of history not only, but the highest of all God's Old Testament saints and servants, of whom the Holy Ghost had but just said, he was "meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (12 : 3), swept away in a storm of pride and passion, into an act of presumptuous disobedience that is really terrible in its character and most fatal in its result. We see also the proof of God's Word that He is no respecter of persons: The gifted prophetess of Israel is buried (20 : 1) without ever seeing the longed-for Canaan; her brother Aaron is likewise called away in the last part of this chapter; while the sentence on the man Moses lies between the other two, in the same chapter. The most favored three on earth, all judicially dealt with, in less than thirty verses!

These verses should be carefully noted. Many people are ready to find fault with God's severity in dealing with Moses for his failure in this twentieth chapter, because they do not understand the real nature of Moses' disobedience. In the eighth verse the Lord tells Moses very explicitly what he is to do: "Take the rod . . . and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes, that it give forth its water. . . . So shalt thou give the congregation and their cattle drink." Now it was not Moses' rod, but *Aaron's rod that budded*, that Moses was commanded to take at this time. This is manifest at once from the next verse: "And Moses took the rod *from before the Lord*, as He commanded him." Moses' rod he quite habitually carried with him (Ex. 4 : 2; 7 : 19, 20; 8 : 16; 9 : 22, 23; 10 : 12, 13;

14, 16, 21; 17 : 5); but the rod that had budded he had laid up in the tabernacle at God's command, "*before the testimony,*" that is, in the holy of holies, directly before the ark of the covenant, Num. 17 : 10. Moses, then, rightly understood God to mean the rod that was "*before Him,*" and took that rod, though, as the sequel shows, he carried his own rod with him, as usual. Now there were two great reasons for the taking of Aaron's instead of Moses' rod at this time—the one a practical reason, the other a typical one. In the seventeenth chapter (verse 10) God called this rod of Aaron's a "token against the children of rebellion," to "make an end of their murmurings against Him." It was for this use the Lord designed it to be brought forth, by Moses in this twentieth chapter; for, the people are seen in verses 2-5 most violently complaining against the ways of God. The sight of this rod, with its miraculous bloom and fruitage, would remind the people of the terrible consequences of Korah's rebellion, and of the elect efficacy for them of the Aaronic priesthood. Thus it would at once warn and win them. But the typical reason for the use at this time of the priestly rod instead of the governmental—that of Moses—is seen immediately when we consider of whom this Rock in the wilderness speaks: "They drank of a spiritual Rock which followed them, and that Rock was Christ," 1 Cor. 10 : 4. Now Christ became the source of living water to His people only through being smitten for them. So we find in Exodus 17 : 6, where the Rock is first spoken of, that Moses is commanded to *smite* the Rock. The character of this smiting is at once revealed in the preceding verse, where Moses is told to take *his rod, wherewith he smote the river,* with which to smite the Rock. Now that rod was the rod of judgment, Ex. 7 : 19, 20. It stands for God's punishment of sin, His judicial dealing with iniquity. So when this rod smites the Rock, it shows us Christ bruised for our iniquities, wounded for our transgressions: it is the *crucified Christ* that is typified by the smitten Rock. But here in Numbers the Rock stands for the *Risen Christ*. For Christ must not be smitten a second time. "The death that He died, He died, . . . once for all;" "Nor

yet that He should offer Himself often, . . . else must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once, at the consummation of the ages, hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more," Rom 6:9, 10. Heb 9:25, 26. So the command was to take the rod which represented the Priesthood in resurrection power, the dead rod that had sprung forth into life by a miracle, and, holding it out before the people, to "*Speak* to the Rock before their eyes." What a mighty lesson this would have been to the people! They would have compared it with the former *smiting* of the Rock, and learned a wondrous truth as to the efficacy of sacrifice, and of the sweet grace of God, and His great plan of salvation and blessing! How it teaches our hearts, as we think of it, of the simplicity and ease of securing the water of the life for our thirsty souls, since the crucified Christ has been raised up as our Great Priest with God: all that is necessary now is simply to *speak* to our Rock, and the rivers of blessing flow at once.

But Moses, the meekest, humblest, most faithful of all the saints of his day—how terribly does he now fail to honor his God! First it is, "Ye rebels!" Here we see him haughtily leaving his servant's lowliness, to assume divine prerogatives. Next, "Must *we* bring water out of this rock?" Here he has taken his stand in himself, as the fellow and not the instrument of God; this was pride and presumption. And then, with the blindness that disobedience always instantly brings, he raises *his own rod*, despising that of Aaron, and smites twice that Rock which spoke of the already smitten and now Risen Redeemer. The root of it all is seen in verse 12 "Because ye believed not in Me." He had more faith in the rod he had used to prostrate Egypt, and that which had once brought floods from the Rock, than in that beautiful rod of bloom and fruit, which spoke of something wholly beyond human power, and must be used not by force but by mere petition. Oh, that the deep, deep lessons that are here might sink into our hearts!

That God honored His servant who did not honor Him is wonderful, but just like God: "Water came forth abundantly." But that God should speak in secret to His disobedient servants the bitter words that shut them out of Canaan is also just like God. He is no respecter of persons. He "will be sanctified in them that come nigh unto Him," Lev. 10 : 3.

It may be noted, as a suggestive thought, that Moses, as the representative of the law, standing, as he does, for righteousness rather than grace (John 1 : 17), could enter far more easily and fully into the meaning of the Smitten Rock than into that of the Rock of grace, which, on the ground of accomplished satisfaction of a broken law, is now filled with stores of grace given freely for the asking. "The law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

In the resistance of Edom to Israel's progress in the latter part of chapter 20, we see anew the opposition of the flesh, which Edom and Amalek typify, to the new life in us, Gal. 5 : 17; Rom. 7 : 7-24; 8 : 7, 8.

The great type in the brazen serpent of Christ crucifi-

needs no other word than a reference to
The Serpent. John 3 : 14 and Isa. 45 : 22. Christ was really made a *curse* for us, Gal. 3 : 13; or, as it is in 2 Cor. 5 : 21, "He was *made sin*"—an awful thought, but the truth of atonement can stop nowhere short of that. Christ had to become, by God's decree, at the cross, *just what we were*. The serpent is the type of sin, and the cursed state into which sin has brought us. The serpent was cursed "from among" all cattle—a thing banished, abhorred. See Gen. 3 : 14, R.V., margin. So our blessed Lord was accursed, cast out, forsaken of God, judged a *sinner*, and so *punished—in our place*. Glory to His name for His fathomless grace!

Someone has called attention to the fact that Israel, after that lesson of God's ways in the serpent of brass, seem to have entered into something of the meaning of *grace*; for their murmurings cease now, and they march on in joyful victory to the banks of the Jordan.

The history of Balaam parallels that of Judas Iscariot

Balaam. See 2 Peter 2 : 15; Jude, verse 11, and for his final awful device to get the coveted rewards from Balak, compare Rev. 2 : 14, with chapter 25 : 1, 2, of our lesson. Deut. 23 : 5 explains how God managed this mysteriously enlightened and gifted, but really godless, gold-lusting and self-willed man. When a man will not accept the plainly expressed will of God as final, but keeps seeking permission to do his own will, he may get that permission to his own perdition, and yet, (how solemn!) to the fulfilling of God's purpose and to the praise of His glory. The four wondrous prophecies Balaam uttered should be carefully studied; the last one is one of the great prophetic utterances of the Bible. These prophecies outline the history of Israel, as connected with that of the Gentile powers, from the moment of their utterance down to the very time of the end, the second coming of Christ being figured in 24 : 17, and even the end of Antichrist, seen in 24 : 24. Such passages written ages before the developments they foretell began to come to pass, are an incontrovertible proof of the divine character of the book which we usually call the Bible, but the real name of which is *the Word of God*. There is no line of study in this Word more convincing of its absolute authority as a revelation of the mind and will of God than is prophecy.

Part IV. Numbers XXV—XXXVI. After the Forty Years.

The chapter-names are: XXV., Phinehas; XXVI., Second Numbering; XXVII., Daughters' Claim; XXVIII., XXIX., Sweet Savor; XXX., Vows; XXXI., Midianites; XXXII., East of Jordan; XXXIII., Journeyings; XXXIV., The Land; XXXV., Cities of Refuge; XXXVI., Daughters' Reward.

In the twenty-fifth chapter we have the terrible lapse into heathen abominations of this new generation of Israelites. They are better, perhaps than their fathers, but are they not a sad failure as to their worthiness to represent the holy Jehovah God. Some time, doubt-

The Israel who at last entered the land.

less, elapsed between chapters 24 and 25. In the interval Balaam's covetous heart has overcome him. Back from the far East, his home, he comes, with his hellishly conceived stumbling-block for Israel, which he divulges to Balak, in return for his yellow gold. See Rev. 2 : 14; 2 Peter 2 : 15. But, though the wiles of Satan are here more effective against God's people than his opposition in chapters 21-24 had been (how often is it so!), he yet fails to overcome the mighty grace that works in their behalf, and the evil is fully overcome. The healthy hate of Phinehas for sin is a quality sadly rare in our days. He could not get used to abominations. Nor could Christ, Ps. 45 : 7. God holds very high such real holy abhorrence of iniquity. Indeed, we cannot have a real love of God, without having an uncompromising hatred of sin. This chapter should be meditated upon most carefully.

The second numbering of Israel (chapter 26) reveals the sad unfruitfulness of desert life—life out of God's plan and fellowship. There were 603,550 warriors in the first chapter; now, after forty years, but 601,730. A comparison of the tribal numbers then and now reveals the fact that some of the tribes then weakest are now the strongest, while the reverse is true of the others. We see beneath these facts the relative faithfulness to God of the various tribes; for multiplied seed is one of God's rewards of obedience in His earthly people Israel. Chapter 26 : 53-54 shows the law of their inheritance to be really the same as ours, both now and in the future—"To him that hath shall be given." (Cf. Matt. 13 : 12.) God's faithfulness to His Word, in judgment as well as mercy, is seen in verses 64 and 65 of this chapter.

The granted claim of the daughters of Zelophehad in chapter 27 was a fine triumph of the sincere faith that gets great things from God—just because, reckoning on nothing but God Himself, it makes bold to ask great things of Him, simply because He is a great and gracious God. Read chapter 36 in connection with this.

That Joshua was the fit successor of Moses is seen in his humbly ministering to Moses (Ex. 24 : 13; Num. 11 : 28; cf. Elisha, 2 Kings 3 : 11); in his constant fellowship

with Moses and God (Ex. 24 : 13; 32 : 17; 33 : 11); in his proved ability as a leader (Ex. 17 : 8-13); in his faithfulness as one of the spies (Num. 14 : 6-10); in his having the Holy Ghost (Num. 27 : 18); and, above all, in his being chosen by God, who knoweth the heart. His subsequent career, we shall see, will verify the wisdom of God's choice. Second Chronicles 16 : 9, gives us light as to God's method in the selection of His men.

Moses, the type of Christ in person, and Aaron, the type of Christ in His sacrificial work, were now to give way to Joshua, the type, as one has said, of Christ by the Spirit, after His resurrection and ascension, working in His people to bring them into the promised heritage of blessing (Eph. 1 : 3; 2 Peter 1 : 3; Heb. 4; Matt. 11 : 29, 30). Eleazar, is the type of Christ in His priestly work on high, representing, interceding for, and sanctifying, His own. Thus is explained Eleazar's precedence over Joshua, "the Lord the Spirit's work below, being subordinate to the Lord Christ's personal operation above" (2 Cor. 3 : 17, 18). If we add the name and work of Phinehas to those of Aaron and Eleazar, we have the full type of the priestly work of Christ. Phinehas supplies the idea of Christ's disciplinary and judicial dealing with His people. (See Num. 25 and 31; Joshua 22; 1 Cor. 11 : 30-32; 1 Thess. 4 : 6; 1 Cor. 5 : 1-8.) The probable meanings of these three names are suggestive of the typical character of each: Aaron is "fruitfulness" (cf. John 12 : 24; Isa. 53 : 10, 11); Eleazar, "God helper" (cf. 1 John 2 : 1, R.V., marg); and Phinehas, "brazen mouth," *i.e.*, unyielding (cf. Col. 3 : 24, 25).

In Num. 28, 29, we hear God rehearsing the importance of the offerings and feasts as to their relation to Himself. Chapter 28 : 2 is the key-verse of the section. Israel needed this reminder; so do we. All our work and worship must be *toward God*, of a "sweet savor" nature, to be acceptable (Col. 3 : 17, 23; Phil. 4 : 18; Heb. 13 : 15, 16). Israel, doubtless, in the long wilderness life, had fallen into a perfunctory way of offering these sacrifices. They needed to be warned of their real character—*sacrifices to Jehovah*. Oh, that Christians were all thus conscious in their worship! John 4 : 23, 24.

Chapter 30 is a beautiful dispensational study. Israel vowed at Sinai; God, her Father and Husband, permitted it; she has utterly failed; and Jesus has taken her vow upon Himself, with her iniquity. Study this carefully.

In chapter 31 Phinehas was sent instead of Joshua, against the Midianites, because the question was not one of conquest, but of extermination of permitted evil among God's people. (See chapter 25). Alas, that our Phinehas has also often such work to do. See above as to the peculiar character of Phinehas.

In chapter 32 we have the sad failure of the two and a half tribes to enter their inheritance. Trouble will come of their choice, as we soon shall see. Of whom does chapter 32 : 1 remind you? Gen. 13 : 10, 11.

Chapter 33 is a simple, but very sorrowful commentary on unbelief—but whither? And with what fruitage? Are not many Christians living in Num. 33? See Heb. 4 : 1-3; 1 Cor. 3 : 1-4. Verses 50-56 of this chapter should be thoroughly studied, as preparing for the books that follow, especially Joshua and Judges. And these verses have a deep meaning for us Christians as well. See the last verse of John's first epistle.

In chapter 34 God marks out the land He would have had every one of His people in. Alas, that some chose to have their treasure, and so their hearts, on the wrong side of Jordan! Are all Christians claiming their full inheritance in Christ to-day, as outlined in the Epistle to the Ephesians?

We will leave the consideration of the cities of refuge till we come to Joshua 20, when we shall learn more fully of them. Suffice it here to say that they are most beautifully illustrative of Christ as our Refuge and Salvation. Even their names are startlingly suggestive, as we shall see in Joshua. That they have also a deeper typical significance we shall also find.

The key thought of the book of Numbers is: *The walk of the people of God in the world and their failures overcome by His grace.*

The Keys of the Book.

The key-word is, from God's viewpoint, *Discipline*; from ours *Walking and Warring*.

LESSON XII.—Part I.

Deuteronomy -- The Book of Preparation for the Land.

At last the people chosen in Genesis, redeemed and delivered from the world in 'Exodus, taught how to worship and walk before their God in Leviticus, and tested and disciplined forty years in Numbers, are *standing on the border of their great inheritance*—the wondrous LAND OF THE LORD: granted by God's sure word of promise to Abraham and his seed, nearly five centuries before.

Introductory.

They are ready to enter now—after all the years of anticipation and hope. The closing chapters of Numbers found them caraped by the Jordan, waiting to go over into the goodly land itself.

But now comes this book of Deuteronomy, solemn and long, right across their path, like that Angel who contested their father's entrance into this very land, long before (Gen. 32).

As we shall see, God is placing before His people, in this book of Deuteronomy, the *conditions* of their occupancy and holding this land. We shall see all these conditions sum themselves up into one great word: OBEDIENCE.

For Israel, as we well remember, came, at Sinai, under a *legal* relation toward God. And God must hold them responsible for their engagement to fulfil His law. They are entering Canaan, as a people *under law*: their remaining in the land must depend on their *keeping* that law. If they disobey, they shall be cast out of the land, that is all.

If God have, in the future, some other and better way, the way of *grace*, by which they can be brought back into the land, and given it *forever*, that is another thing. Only

they must be dealt with at this time on a legal basis. Grace has not yet openly come.*

The outward principle upon which God is giving them the law at this time is, that their blessing in it, as also their holding of it, is conditioned upon the the people's fulfilling the commands and provisions of the Mosaic law.

The difference between this arrangement and that in the patriarchal period, and that, again, under which Christians are placed in the present dispensation, should be carefully noted.

The days of the patriarchs were days of *promise*. Nothing was fully realized. They did not possess the land, but were definitely told that they should not, in their lifetime, possess it. But *personally* they had God's fellowship and presence, in a very blessed and intimate way. This was because they were not under law. Though not in the same place as Christians (as we shall note) yet they walked in God's open, acknowledged *favor*. There was no *keeping them at a distance*, as Israel after Sinai were kept. It was the dispensation of *divine promise*: the *Seed* was coming, on whose account, God said, I am blessing you freely. So these patriarchs walked and talked in real freedom with God, in view of *what He said He would do, by and by*.

But after Sinai, though God loved men just as much

*Of course, in a real sense, God was at this time also dealing with them in grace and mercy, or they could not have entered the land at all; for they had failed all along. Moreover, as Joshua tells us, they were at this time uncircumcised (Josh. 5 : 2-9), and were really yet under "the reproach of Egypt" in God's sight. Yet He kept dealing with them as if they had a legal standing with Him. He went on in patience with them, till the law showed all that was in them, and they crucified their Deliverer. Then God did away with the law (Col. 2 : 14; Eph. 2 : 15). He even does utterly away for awhile with the distinction between this chosen people Israel and the rest of the race, until He reveals the principle of grace, that is, the way grace works, in saving and blessing those who have no hope, no promises, those who are strangers, aliens, dogs, sinners of the Gentiles. Then, with this lesson shown them, He will turn back finally (when Gentile Christendom has been spewed out as faithless and apostate) to the remnant of His people Israel, who will have found out their sin, and sought God by the Spirit of grace (Zech. 12 : 10). Then at last will God make His new covenant with Israel (see Jer. 31 : 31-34; Ezek. 36. etc.). Christ, the true seed of Abraham, by whom and in whom alone the promises to Abraham will be realized (Gal. 3), will at last be received by poor Israel. Then it will be "life from the dead." (Rom. 11). Then they will get their land forever, and they shall be established by God's grace, apart from their own responsibility and works, as the true Church, the Body of Christ, is to-day

as ever, He must put them at a distance, till they learn His holiness, and realize His majesty. Before He sends His Son, men must see their *need* of Him and His atoning and reconciling work. In this dispensation of law, God does not let the people come freely *nigh*, as in Abraham's days; as in Gen. 18, for instance. And instead of blessing the people altogether on the ground of *promise*, that is, altogether in view of Christ's coming work, He says, "If you *obey My law*, I will bless you." Obedience *first*, then blessing, is the order under the law. There is nothing for the people to fall back on, except their own obedience now. They may indeed remember that they are God's chosen people, according to His covenant with the fathers; but the law has come in since those days, and they are under it. So Moses insists, in Deuteronomy, on their *obedience* as the condition of everything, as they are about to enter their inheritance.

Now the position of the *Christian* is entirely different. It is of *absolute* importance that we understand this. Thousands upon thousands of Christians to-day are in bondage because they do not see the *essential* difference between our position and that of Israel under the law.

Now, Israel depended upon *their own* obedience to get their blessings in the land. Christians get their blessings because *Christ* obeyed *in their stead*. This gives them *rest of heart*, so that they have leisure to love God *for His own sake*, and learn to *delight* in His will.

But there are hardly any Christians who *dare believe* this. That is, they cannot apprehend such GRACE as this. They think, *of course*, that their blessings depend upon their faithfulness, their earnestness, their consecration, etc.

But this is not to be *under grace* (where God says we are, Rom. 4 : 14), but under law; that is, under responsibility to *do*, in order to *have*, which is the order of the law, not that of grace. Grace says, "*You have been blessed already*, in Christ Jesus, with *all spiritual blessings*," Eph. 1 : 3. The only obedience that pleases God now, is the *obedience of FAITH*, which enters boldly in, and *appropriates* these things that Christ's obedience unto death has secured for us.

Now I know someone will read these words who will say: "Yes; but we must '*do our part*,' ere we can claim or enjoy these spiritual blessings." The which shows that such a person is, at heart, a miserable legalist to this day; believing neither that Christ is the *end* of the law, nor that *His* work has really made these heavenly things actually *ours*. This is the hellish insult that unbelief ever flings into the face of God, that His Word is not good for the exact *face* of it.

The primary reason Christians to-day are living such unhappy, such empty, such weak and fruitless lives, is not (I dare to say it), that they are "not consecrated," "not surrendered," "not self-denying," "not obedient," not this and that and the other that the thousand and one preachers of legal holiness are complaining—not these at all: the trouble, the one *great* trouble, is, *Christians do not BELIEVE* that they are free from the law, in Christ Jesus; and that they *already have* the glorious blessings they are seeking after, and need only *claim* them, to enjoy them. People dare not believe that *Christ has done all the obeying and fulfilling for them*, and that "their part" is simply to enter in and enjoy the infinite spoils of Christ's victory.

Someone needs to die for this great truth in their own day, as Paul died for it once, and all the martyrs since. God bring it back to the Church, this glorious truth of GRACE! "By the obedience of the ONE, the many are made righteous," and are blessed FOR HIS SAKE alone, Rom. 5; Eph. 3.

In the application, then, to ourselves of these Deuteronomy lessons, the aim should be to discover the great principle underlying each specific command, and apply it faithfully in our own cases, bearing always in mind our position *in Christ*, as set forth in the Epistles of Paul and especially in that to the Ephesians. This position is simply that we *died* in Christ, then were quickened in Him, and with Him were raised up and seated in the heavenly places in Him; where, as a real *fact*, every child of God now is, in God's sight and reckoning, whether by his own reckoning and consequent experience or not. This position, in the mystical body of the Risen Christ (Eph.

1 : 22; 5 : 30; 1 Cor. 12 : 27), is the only platform from which a Christian can consider aright the truths of the Word of God. If we try to lay this Moosaic law upon ourselves as it was laid upon Israel, we shall get into bondage to it, and thus fall away from the doctrine of grace, Gal. 5 : 1-4. But if we remember that we have been made dead to the law as our husband and master, through Christ's death, Rom. 7 : 1-4; and are thus wholly freed, in Christ, from its bondage, Col. 2 : 14, 16; Gal. 4 : 3-5; we are then ready to find in these chapters of Deuteronomy the spirit of the law, which is *love*, Gal. 5 : 6, Rom. 13 : 8-10; 7 : 6; and we discover, with the delight of loving, happy children of our gracious Father, most blessed revelations, in all this law, of His sweet will, in which we have learned, and to which we gladly yield our members—yea, our whole selves, Rom. 6 : 13; 12 : 1. Then is "fulfilled in us" *not* fulfilled by us), the ordinance of the law, by the indwelling Holy Spirit. See carefully, Rom. 8 : 4, with the context. Blessed be God!

We shall find this book to consist of a series of great addresses to the people by their faithful leader. Moses, forbidden by the governmental decree of God to enter the Promised Land, is about to leave the plains of Moab for "the top of Pisgah," and ere he goes, he pleads, in the name of Jehovah, with the people of God's choice and his own tender love, for their future thorough loyalty to God. With this situation in mind, the book becomes possessed of a solemn, thrilling and pathetic interest resembling that which attends the last discourses of our Lord, as recorded in John 13-17. Just as no portion of the Bible touches so tenderly as do these pre-passion utterances, the very heart-strings of the real Christian, begetting a real loving longing to obey his Lord, so no book of the Old Testament seems to have had such subtle, tender power to lead into heart-obedience to God those of Israel who really knew Jehovah, as had this book of Deuteronomy. It is worthy of note that each of the answers of our Lord to the adversary in the wilderness were chosen from this precious book. When He would stand

in perfect heart-fidelity to His Father, He retreated into the fastnesses of the book which stands for just that in the canon of Scripture. Compare Matt. 4 : 4, 7 and 10, with Deut. 8 : 3; 6 : 6, 13, 14, 16.†

Rightly read, also, as we shall see, this book has a remarkably sweet, simple power for us who are not under the law as were Israel. Chapter 6: 4, 5, and 10: 12, 13, will show us why this is so. It is for the loving devotion of the heart that Jehovah is pleading in these great appeals of the law-giver, and not for the mere literal observance of times, seasons and ceremonies; and those Israelites who really learned its lessons were those who opened loyal hearts to the truth till they could cry with David, "Oh, how *love* I thy law!" And just so it is those Christians who have most fully entered in to the blessed freedom with which Christ hath set them free, that will become most devoted to this precious book of Deuteronomy; for therein is most wonderfully revealed the character and will of their God, and it is for knowledge of these that such Christians are ever seeking. "If a man love Me, he will keep (lit., "guard as a treasure") My word." John 14 : 23. What the loving servant desires to know most of all, is the will of the Master.

The necessity of this book of Deuteronomy as a long plea for obedience on Israel's part is significantly set forth at the very opening of the book. In chapter 1 : 2 we read: "It is eleven days' journey from Horeb . . . unto Kadesh-Barnea," which, as we remember, is on the border of Canaan. The very next verses read: "And it came to pass in the fortieth year . . . that Moses spoke unto the children of Israel . . . beyond Jordan, in the land of Moab"—and then follows Deuteronomy. Forty years to make an eleven days' journey! Here again at the very beginning is the key of the book. It is to cure the awful spirit of disobedience that has so poisoned and cursed Israel heretofore, and has cost them so dear, that the

† It was also, as one has remarked, because our Lord had taken the place of man under the law, in our behalf, that He meets the adversary in the book of obedience, the book of Deuteronomy. He could challenge and defeat Satan by the words of that very book which demanded perfect obedience to God.

Holy Ghost is now inspiring Moses to utter the yearning, tender, thrilling words of this book.

We shall be compelled sadly to note the very temporary results produced by its pleadings and warnings. It did have some effect. In comparative obedience and faithfulness the people will enter the land, and, under Joshua's godly leadership, will proceed well on toward possessing it; but the seeds of sin that begin to shoot in the book of Joshua, grow to rankness in Judges, and bear their fruit of destruction under the monarchy. So that, even while pleading with the people to obey their God, Moses keeps speaking prophetically, throughout the book, of the folly, disobedience, failure and punishment so soon and so sure to come. See 4 : 27, 28; 8 : 19, 20; 28; 29 : 22-29; 30 : 1, 2; 32 : 15-37. Moses knew in the Holy Spirit, the people with whom he was dealing, that they were *flesh*, and he had learned to have no confidence in men. Besides, God has opened his eyes to the future of Israel. See chapter 31 : 21, 27-29. May we learn that same lesson of despairing of all that is human! It will not be until Israel are fully repentant and restored as an "all righteous" nation (Isa. 60 : 21), at the "end of the days" Hosea 3 : 5; Heb.), and the new covenant has set its seal upon and has its answer in their *hearts* (Jer. 31 : 31-34), that they will really and finally fulfill the sweet precepts of this great book of Deuteronomy. God speed that day!

Part I. Deuteronomy I—XI. Obedience; the Call of the Past; the Duty of the Present; the Key of the Future.

We feel a real delight in urging the student to *repeated readings* of these wondrous chapters. No other portion of Scripture, we believe, has been more evidently intended of God to bring the spirits of His people into submissive, loving acceptance of the righteousness, holiness and truth of His claims to their obedience and worship. We have found no passage whose continuous reading is more peculiarly sanctifying. We would ask that it be read again and again. If this is done, thoughtfully and prayerfully; there will be little left of teaching for us to do, as the

chapters will have thus become the *precious possession* of the diligent reader, and will be yielding their spiritual treasures independently of any help other than that of the Author's own.

Indeed, there is a sense in which such notes as those we are giving in these lessons are less needed in Deuteronomy than in any of the four books we have already studied. For the words of Deuteronomy are so plain, so practical, and its plan so simple, that anyone who will read it over faithfully will see at once its meaning and find in his heart its spiritual power. The last part, indeed, especially chapters 29 to 34, may need some especial study, that we may see their dispensational bearing; otherwise, all is exceedingly plain in this book.

We would suggest the following chapter-names, reminding the student again that such titles are simply a makeshift for purposes of mastery, reflection and reference. We should be outgrowing these names continually; sometimes in the way of such thorough mastery of the material of the passage or book, as enables us to dispense with the artificial means we have used to secure it, as the scaffolding is taken down when the building is completed; and sometimes, again, in the way of discovery of deeper lines of truth in the chapters before us, so that the old names are seen no longer really to express what we now find to be the central or important truth or theme of the passage. I., II., III., Forty Years' Review; IV., Forget Not; V., Sinai Second (cf. Ex. 19, 20); VI., Hear, O Israel; VII., No Compromise; VIII., Good Land; IX., Not of Works; X., Whole Requirement; XI., Power for Possession.

Of course it will be utterly impossible, in the small compass of this lesson, to accomplish anything like a complete setting forth of the multitude of priceless spiritual lessons contained in these chapters. Nor will it be best to take up a few and omit others. We shall, instead, try briefly to describe their general character, and then to define the proper attitude and method to adopt in their study; trusting that thus many men may be led to enter on the appropriation of the treasures of this great book.

General Notes.

The book of Deuteronomy is one long, varied plea for hearty obedience to God, based on the two grand motives of love and fear. (Cf. chapter 10 : 12.) Arguments for future thorough faithfulness to God are drawn from their past history (1-3), in which, though they have been perverse, God has been constantly kind and provident; arguments, also from God's dealings in judgment with the disobedient (1 : 34-46; 3 : 23-29; 4 : 1-4, 25-30, etc); from the greatness and goodness of God Himself (4 : 6-24, 39; 7 : 9-11; 10 : 17-21); from their separate character as God's people (7 : 6, 7); from the delightfulness and ease of the service of God (12 : 7, 20-22); from the excellence of the land into which they are about to come (3 : 6-18); from the certainty of rapid and easy conquest and prolonged occupation, through careful obedience (11 : 8, 9; 5 : 33); and from the guarantee, to obedience, of indefinite multiplication and unlimited prowess and prosperity, 6 : 3; 7 : 13-15, 25. These are some of the pleas; many others are set forth and many other references may be found than those given. Search out all these various reasons for obeying God; you will find few better spiritual exercises.

We have endeavored to suggest the great lesson of each chapter in the chapter-names. These chapters are full of the richest practical lessons for the spiritual life of the individual, as well as for that of the church and home, and these should be the most thoroughly searched out and appropriated. For example, where could be found a more blessed illustration of the fact that God loves to have men turn from themselves and their own merits to the Great Mediator He has set forth, than in Deut. 5 : 23-31? And a more thorough warning as to the necessity of family godliness than in 6 : 6-9? And where a more searching charge as to the necessity of a separate, watchful and warring walk than in chapter 7? See 2 Cor. 6 : 14; 7 : 1, and Eph. 6 : 10-18. Or where is there a finer sermon on the text: "By grace ye are saved . . . not of works," than chapter 9? Or where, once again, a more trenchant setting forth of the truth that our power over our enemies depends upon our walk of obedience than in chapter 11? See especially verses 8, 22-25. These chapters have a wonderful

power to bring the heart into sympathy with God's standards of holiness, and thus are priceless in their practical value. Go most thoroughly into them for this reason.

In the first section of this lesson, chapters 1-4, the history of Israel in the wilderness during the forty years is traced by Moses, to inspire the people with gratitude and loving reverence toward the God who has dealt righteously, and yet so tenderly with them. It is the same argument pleaded by Paul in the Epistle to the Romans. There, after reviewing, in the first part of his letter, what God has done for us in Christ Jesus—how, in spite of our universal sin and utter unworthiness, our gracious God has fully and freely provided everything possible pertaining to our salvation, the apostle cries: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice . . . to God!" adding as a self-evident fact, "which is your reasonable service." Moses pleads for obedience; he must, for he is the law-giver; Paul pleads for loving consecration; he must, for he is the grace-preacher; but the foundation of their pleas is the same—"the mercies of God." It must always be so. God never gets into man's debt; it is ever the reverse. It will be so to all eternity, for it will still be grace, in the dispensations that stretch before us, in the plan of God: "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in kindness toward us, in Christ Jesus," Eph. 2:7.

The source, nature, power and penalty of the law, the "words which the Lord spake" (5:22), are set forth as the next strongest of the motives to obedience to God, in the second section of our lesson, chapters 5-11. The fear of the Lord must go along with love for Him, to inspire to full loyalty the human heart. Of course God's grace is always the most effective plea, and is set forth first, in the sketch of the people's history, as we have just seen; but full recognition of God's righteousness and authority must be mingled with that of His grace, to lead the soul into real holiness, and, it should be remembered, God has the right to command us, even if He has not revealed His love for us, and had not offered any reward for our obedi-

ence. Really, the fear of God is, after all, the basal motive, and we should commit ourselves to obey God, whether we ever realize His love in our experience as we desire or not. His condescending kindness appears in the manner in which He constantly puts to the front His love for us, and His goodness to us, as the chief plea for our loyal devotion to Him.

Part II. Deuteronomy XII—XXVI. Laws for the Land.

I. Read the chapters at least four times through, each time at one sitting, if possible. We beg you, do not omit to do this, as, after all, it is this attentive, earnest, patient reading of God's Word that most of all honors Him, and brings largest results.

II. The chapter-names: XII., Joyful Obedience; XIII., No Other Gods; XIV., Peculiar People; XV., Mercy and Charity; XVI., Universal Feasts; XVII., Judgment—King; XVIII., Great Prophet; XIX., Manslaughter—Murder; XX., Warfare; XXI., Innocent Blood; XXII.—XXV., Moral Regulations; (XXII., Against Inhumanity; XXIII., Against Sacrilege; XXIV., XXV., Against Selfishness); XXVI., Consecration.

III. Chapters 1-11 of Deuteronomy set forth obedience to God as the great fundamental principle of the life of His people. Chapters 12-26, the present lesson, apply this principle to details. The first is the foundation, the second the superstructure, while the last section, chapters 27-34, is, as we shall duly discover, the watch-tower above the whole, from which Israel's future of disobedience, punishment, final repentance, and fulness of blessing, is prophetically discovered.

The key of this present section, as one has said, may well be seen in the very first verse (12:1): "These are the statutes and the judgments which ye shall observe to do in the land." Israel were going now into a new and wonderful experience; they were entering the land of divine promise and blessing; and, since therein everything would depend on their constant and intelligent obedience to the

mund and will of the God who was giving them the land, and who alone could sustain them in it, it was necessary that Moses should now give them a detailed exposition of the law, which should set forth clearly and simply its great principles, and illustrate and emphasize them in such a manner that they should take living hold of the people. So, the way having been prepared in the former chapters by the review of the people's history, and the consideration of the character of their God and His law, and of their consequent obligation to obey Him, the law-giver now takes up the exposition of the Levitical code, basing all his claims upon the people's recognized relationship to Jehovah their God. See 12 : 1, 4, 31; 13 : 3; 14 : 1, 2, 21; 16 : 21, 22; 17 : 1; 18 : 12-14; 19 : 9; 20 : 1, 4, 18; 21 : 8, 9; 22 : 5; 23 : 5, 14, 18; 24 : 4, 18; 25 : 13-15; the whole of chapter 26. Upon examining these passages it will be seen at once that the great plea is: "Ye are My people; I love you; I have chosen and blessed you thus far simply because I have loved you. I am in the midst of you; I will protect and bless you constantly—*I am your God!* All that I am commanding you is for your good. Therefore love Me and obey My voice. Be My people indeed, as I am your God indeed." Could anything be more infinitely, exquisitely tender and touching! Count, in this lesson, the number of times the expression, "the Lord thy God," or its equivalent, is used. The same plea precisely, is made by the Holy Ghost toward us, in 2 Cor. 6 : 11—7 : 1; Eph. 4 : 1-6, 20-24, 30; 5 : 1-4; 1 Cor. 6 : 15-20; Rom. 12 : 1, 2; 1 John 2 : 15, 16; 1 Thess. 4 : 3, 8. To the heart that has been broken for sin and healed by God's grace in Christ Jesus, no thought cries out so overwhelmingly for holiness as this: "I am of God—God is my loving Father; He is holy—my sinning grieves His loving heart:—*I cannot—I will not sin!*" This is the normal working of the command, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," in the subject heart. See Lev. 19 : 2; 1 Peter 1 : 16. And the active power of this text in the heart at the moment of temptation, is just one of the very truest tests of our regeneration. See 1 John 2 : 29; 3 : 9.

In running through this lesson we see that God's obe-

(dient children will have abundance in His fellowship and service to keep their hearts rejoicing (chapter 12; compare Phil. 4 : 4; Heb. 13 : 15); that, inasmuch as this is so, and because of this, that He is alone worthy of worship, He can brook no rival (chapter 13). There can be no holy opponent of God, so, as being sinful, all that draws us from Him must be cut off. (Compare Matt. 5 : 29, 30; 2 Cor. 6 : 16; 7 : 1; 1 John 5 : 21). Thus, since God's people are His and His alone, they are to maintain a walk in this world that befits them—as such, as regards separation from all evil (chapter 14); and they are, as children of their heavenly Father, to exhibit generous unselfishness and charity in all their actions toward their fellows (chapter 15. Compare 1 Peter 1 : 14-17, and Luke 6 : 27-36). They are also, as His peculiar people, to have constant and loving fellowship on earth, frequently and joyfully meeting to join together in their praise and worship toward Him, and this they must not forget to do (chapter 16. Compare Heb. 10 : 25). The neglect of public worship in these days, it should be noted, is a terrible omen of spiritual decay. That there must be discipline among God's people is declared in chapter 17. Paul's tones of thunder in 1 Cor. 5 : 13, should rouse many a church to cleanse itself of evil, lest it bring upon itself the dread sword of Rev. 2 : 16. In the twelfth verse of this seventeenth chapter is a warning that should be meditated upon carefully, and prayerfully compared with Deut. 19 : 17-21, and Heb. 6 : 4-8; 10 : 28, 29. The conduct of a king after God's mind is sketched at the close of this chapter, and should be carefully marked, as preparing for later study of Israel's history. The essence of a call to the ministry is seen in its effects in 18 : 6. (Compare 2 Cor. 5 : 14, 20.)

In the latter part of this eighteenth chapter (verses 9-22) God's Great Prophet, the Lord Jesus Christ (compare Acts 3 : 22, 23) is set forth as the only One to whom to hearken in all things, amid all the din of legions of darkness—the enchanters, sorcerers, soothsayers, fortune-tellers, necromancers, wizards, consultants with familiar spirits, black-art diviners of every description. Oh, that all professing Christians might prayerfully ponder Deut. 18 : 10-

22! In the light of these searching words it is amazing that anyone who pretends to bow to the Word of God should follow after the hellish abominations of Spiritualism, as many are doing in these days. If we want to know God's mind about the modern seance, let us compare with this passage Isa. 8 : 19, 20; Lev. 19 : 31; 20 : 6; and study the dark story of 1 Sam. 28 in the light of 1 Chron. 10 : 13. It is a direct insult to Jesus Christ, whom God has bidden us hear, as the One who speaks from Him to man (Matt. 17 : 5), to resort for consultation to the unclean demons that infest the air of our earth, and it is scarcely less disloyalty to Him to have fellowship with the unclean people who seek such God-forbidden consultations. It may be well, in this connection, to mention the fact that all the modern esoteric teachings, like Theosophy, Revived Buddhism and Christian Science, are offshoots of Oriental Occultism, which is simply and confessedly demonic in its origin. "Doctrines of demons," as Paul calls such errors in 1 Tim. 4 : 1, is a phrase that means exactly what it says. The female founder of Christian Science is an ex-Spiritualistic medium; and any who will take the pains to examine a little into mediumship, both as revealed in the Bible, and as confessed openly by many Spiritualists to-day, will find that it is simply the yielding of the body of the medium to the visits, possession and inspiration of the unclean spirits, or demons, which under Satan's leadership, haunt the air and rule this world. No wonder all these devilish doctrines deny the Person and the Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ; and no wonder, as the passage before us (Deut. 18 : 12) declares, "Whosoever doeth these things (consults with familiar spirits, 18 : 11), is an abomination unto the Lord; and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them (the nations of Canaan) out from before thee." According to this passage one of the most horrible dangers now threatening our country is the rapid spread of just such abominations as are described in verses 10 and 11 of this chapter. Oh, that Christians would separate utterly from all such things! Some time ago, in one of our large cities, at a parlor Bible class in a wealthy Christian home, the writer

spoke a word of warning against the patronage by children of God, of the entertainments of magicians and black-art people that are becoming so common in these days, and which are all allied directly to Satan and are carried on often by direct demonic wisdom and agency. To our astonishment, a number of professedly Christian women exclaimed: "Why, we always go to those shows and take our children!" Over the forehead of every wizard and magician is written, "*abomination to Jehovah.*"

LESSON XII. Part II.—(Continued)

In our last lesson we closed with noting in chapter 18 the blessed promise of a Greater Prophet than Moses for Israel, to whom they were to hearken, when He should come, in all things. We also saw the solemn warnings God gave the people against turning aside to any false prophets or teachers, especially such as would bring to their help the direct power of Satanic or demonic agency. We now proceed to chapter 19, and on.

In the first verse of chapter 19 we see (what we have been constantly noting, probably, in our reading of this book of Deuteronomy), that the instructions to the people given throughout this book by Moses have reference to the life of Israel *in the land of their inheritance*. Here we see a distinction between this book and Leviticus and Numbers. In these latter, the people were looked at, for the most part, as in the wilderness, on pilgrimage, and not at rest. Consequently, in the ordinances as to their approach to God, in these books, we see God's side insisted on—His holiness, majesty, etc. The people are not permitted any special liberty of access, or enjoyment of the presence of God.

But in Deuteronomy there is kept constantly before us the people's side. Israel is going to inherit, to enjoy, to be blessed. There is, accordingly, continual reference to their welfare in their land, in this book of Deuteronomy. Of course all is conditioned on Israel's faithfulness and obedience: for they are under law. But the prevailing strain of the book is *blessing for them*.

Consequently, because in Deuteronomy they are considered as in possession of the land, and enjoying it, their duties in view of their blessings, are emphasized. They are again and again commanded to be "altogether joyful," and were to "rejoice in their God," who gave them all these blessings, continually. See, for example, Deut. 12:12, 18; 14:26; 16:11, 14, 15; and note especially chapter 26, where the attitude of heart and soul God asked of Israel in the land of their inheritance is especially set forth. See verses 10 and 11, especially.

Now the whole spirit of this is different from that of Leviticus, and especially from that of Numbers, where the people are *wandering nowhere*, under God's *disfavor*, and kept afar off. Read the ninetieth Psalm, written by Moses in the wandering days, and note the difference between it and Deuteronomy. In Deuteronomy God is talking to Israel as possessed of their land, and under His favor therein. Only they are to meet their responsibilities, in the law; otherwise, they shall be cast out of it.

Now the highest duty of these Israelites was, not the mere carrying out of the letter of these precepts, but to exhibit the *spirit* of loving obedience. They were to be *thankful—really* thankful. They were to be *glad, really* glad, and full of joy. For why should they not be joyful, in the best land on earth, and with such a God as Jehovah was as their God? They ought to be "altogether joyful," and to love their God with *all their heart*.

And it was just here they failed. This *loving, praising, rejoicing*, which God asked, the narrow heart of man, full of self and sin, would not, could not render. "Neither gave thanks" was the record of the apostate race as a whole, in their departure from God ere Israel was chosen (Rom 1:21); and Israel will follow in the same path of hardness. But let us most carefully note, as we study Deuteronomy, that it is a *heart-book*: that is, it asks of Israel *real* obedience, *heart-loyalty* to their God, and *heart-love* and thanksgiving. God could ask no less.

But Moses has to insert up the sad confession of Deut. 29, as we shall see, in finally rehearsing to them the covenant they are now under, as they enter the land; "Jeho-

vah hath not given you a heart to know, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." And with a burdened heart he utters their sure future to this privileged but self-willed people. See Deut. 31 : 24-29.

But they had to be tested under the law, that grace might come in upon their failure, and give them blessing in God's sure mercies. See Rom. 11, especially verses 28-32. The Lord hasten that day of *grace* for Israel!

The provision of the cities of refuge, noted in 19 : 1-3, was of course a most kind thought of God for the unfortunate individual who should unintentionally kill another. We shall see, also, when we get to Joshua 20, where these cities were finally appointed, the beautiful types they contain.

The National Effect of Murder.

But mark solemnly that there were those who were *not* to be sheltered from the executioner's hand, in 19 : 11-13. Compare this passage very carefully with the remarkable ordinance of 21 : 1-9. These are most significant lessons as to God's reckoning concerning a sin that is frightfully on the increase these days—the sin of taking human life. In Numbers 35 : 31, and 33, a parallel passage with Deut. 19 : 1-13, we have these ominous words: "Ye shall take no ransom for the life of a manslayer who is guilty of death (that is, for one guilty of murder in the first degree); but *he shall surely be put to death*. For blood, it polluteh the land: and no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed therein, *but by the blood of him that shed it*." This seals the doom of every land of Christendom. Every one of the so-called Christian nations is defiled with the blood of hundreds of unavenged slain. This law concerning human blood, though given here to Israel, is a general one. It is one of the fundamental principles of God's covenant with the whole race after the flood. See Gen. 9 : 5, 6. Under this covenant the race as a whole still are; and according to it they shall be judged. The rainbow, the token of that covenant, will be round about the throne when God begins to call the present world to judgment. See Rev. 4 : 3. Now in Israel,

if the murderer was discovered, he was to be executed; if not discovered, note how carefully the guilt of the blood of the murdered person had to be confessed and put away by sacrifice, Deut. 21 : 1-9. The city nearest the place where the corpse was found had to assume the responsibility, and get the guilt put away. Otherwise there would be divine wrath on the whole land.

Now how, in view of this, seem to you the maudlin dreams of these people of peace who tell you of the "progress of man," and of the "gradual improvement of the race," that it is "getting on into ever higher favor with God," etc.? Either God or they must be accounted false. In the United States, for instance, there are about 15,000 murders every year, and less than 1,000 executions! Every land of Christendom is *doomed*, by the one fact of its unpurged human blood alone, to say nothing of all the other crimes.

God has but *one* standard of governmental righteousness for nations on earth. You will find in Isaiah 24 what will by and by happen on this earth, instead of the perfumed lies of the vendors of the evolution poison put forth from the press and often from the pulpit of our day. See also Isa. 26 : 21.

Deuteronomy 20 is a fine passage for our conflict, as seen in Eph. 6 : 10-18, as well as for Israel's in their earthly land. "Immanuel" is the saints' battle-cry. The Lord is with us; we must not fear. Note how one fearful, doubting soul affects the rest, Deut. 20 : 8.

How many children, in these days of ours (described by Paul in 2 Tim. 3 : 1-9—note especially verse 2) would perish, under the solemn ordinance of Deut. 21 : 18-21. A disobedient, rebellious child toward his parents is an abomination in God's sight.

In Deut. 21 : 22, 23, when compared with Gal. 3 : 10-13 and John 19 : 31, we have a most precious lesson, though infinitely searching, and really overwhelming, when truly believed. For the reason Christ was thus *accursed*—hung up between heaven and earth, as though worthy of neither and cast out, execrated, by both—was because He was bearing *our* sin, 2 Cor. 5 : 21. May this thought always

have the effect on us which it had upon Paul! 2 Cor. 5 : 14, 15.

In all these chapters of Deuteronomy we see God teaching Israel that blessed *love* which is the real and the only fulfilling of the law (Rom. 13 : 8-10). Search through the lesson with this in mind. We remember the kind provisions of the "year of release," and of the leniency toward the poor, and toward owned servants (Chap. 15). Did you note, also, the unexpected directions in 20 : 5-7? And in verse 19? Also in 22 : 6, 7? See also 23 : 7 and 10 : 19. How humanity and generosity are taught in all these things. See also 23 : 15, 16. How many farmers to-day would seriously object to the provisions of 23 : 24, 25, as well as to that in 24 : 19-21! And how many other than farmers would be condemned—are condemned, by the law in their *hearts*—by the solemn words of 24 : 14, 15! Oh, for the days when righteousness and love shall reign on this earth! But it will not be till the Righteous *One* shall come back to judge iniquity and establish equity: do not fancy otherwise, but read Scripture about it.

The loveliness of life in the land of the Lord is seen all through these chapters. What a wonderful and delightful existence the chosen people would have had under the conditions God describes here. Even the poorest were to have a good lot, 24 : 17-22. When the Lord brings Israel back to their land and gives them as a righteous nation (Isa. 60 : 21) to dwell forever there, these good things will all be done by them. God speed the day! (See Ezek. 36 and 40-48); also Jer. 31 : 23-40; Zeph. 3 : 12-20; Zech. 14 : 20, 21; Jer. 30 : 18-22. "No word from God shall be void of power," said Gabriel to Mary in Luke 1 : 37. And though these laws were weak through the flesh, in Israel, in these former days, God will yet have in Israel full glory through these very laws. They will keep them to the letter, when, as a purged, redeemed and regenerated people they are at last restored to Palestine and their Messiah is among them. All such Old Testament passages as Isaiah 32 : 1-8, 15-18; 33 : 17-24, and 35, and those we have cited above, belong to the millennial glory that shall

come to Israel. They do not refer at all to the church, but to those whom God, in their contents and contexts, refers them—to restored Israel, the earthly people. Whatever spiritual application we may make of them, we must remember that to Israel they primarily refer, and not to the church; and to Israel they will be finally fulfilled.

Chapter 26 : 16-19 should be carefully marked in all our Bibles as a beautiful consecration covenant. We may study it with great profit along with 1 Cor 6 : 19, 20.

Part III. Deuteronomy XXVII-XXXIV. The Prophetic Outlook for Israel.

Aside from our duty to read and reread the chapters now before us because they are God's Word, and we owe it to Him to bestow upon them the most faithful attention till we *possess* their contents, there is the added incentive that here we have some of the most marvelous and magnificent passages of all literature (chapters 32 and 33). Let them, then, be read most thoroughly.

The chapter-names are: XXVII., Twelve Curses; XXVIII., Obedience and Disobedience, XXIX., Second Covenant; XXX., Final Restoration; XXXI., Three Charges; XXXII., Moses' Song; XXXIII., Moses' Blessing; XXXIV., Pisgah.

Eight chapters only are before us in this lesson, but they are freighted with truth of the very deepest importance to one who would know the whole counsel of God. The general character of the whole section is prophetic, as we have hinted. For this reason some would pass it over slightly, as dull and unintelligible. But what folly! The study of prophecy is one of the most valuable means of edification God has given His people. Through prophecy God at once proves Himself the only Infinite, Omniscient One and makes His humble children wise beyond their age and earthly education. (See Isa 41 : 21-24; 42 : 8-9; Ps 119 : 98-100; Dan 9 : 1, 2.) Those Christians who neglect the study of the prophecies of the Bible, whether through ignorance of their importance or doubt of it; or through shrinking at their apparent difficulty; or, still worse, through unbelief concerning their literalness and the reality of their fulfilment, will one day stand face to

face with the Author of these prophecies, who may well ask them to account for their treatment of His Word, after such plain statements have been made by Him as that in 2 Tim. 3:16, 17: "All Scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable." Or that in 2 Peter 1:19. "We have the Word of prophecy, . . . whereunto ye do well that ye take heed."

A large part of the Word of God is given to prophecy. Till a man has a key that unlocks the prophetic Word, so that, without the wretched modern device of "spiritualizing" the prophecies, and apart from the still more satanic method of "criticizing" difficulties away, the scheme of the ages, as revealed in these wonderful utterances, lies plain and simple before him—till then there must be darkness and uncertainty in the study of the Word of God. For not until we know God's dispensational plan, as revealed by the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, are we able to "divide aright the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). And until we can do this, we have need, as in this passage Paul hints, to be ashamed, though we may be satisfied enough with our state. As regards comprehending the meaning of the prophecies of the Bible, it will be sufficient simply to refer to Luke 24:25, and quote the words of another, himself a great expounder of prophetic truth: "There has never been any difficulty in understanding the prophecies, if men could but have *believed* them; it is in that point that they have failed."

In the plastered and engraved stones of chapter 27 we see the law's permanency of character and authority set forth; while in the altar alongside, Christ is seen as the remedy for failure. But that grace is not yet fully come is shown in the absence of the blessings, curses only being given here. The law is not of grace, and can only curse. (See Gal. 3:10-13, 18.) These twelve curses cover representative cases, and, in the secret character of those offences here warned against, we are made to feel the all-searching nature and power of God's holy law. Surely infinite wisdom is everywhere manifest in the pages of this blessed Word!

The twenty-eighth of Deuteronomy—a most remarkable chapter!—traces first (verses 1-14), what Israel might in the past have been through obedience; and is yet to be in the millennial age to come. (Cf. Isa 60-62; Zech 14:8-21; Jer. 31:1-9; Ps. 147, 149; 67. Deut. 30:1-10; Rom. 11:25-31.) The last part of the chapter (verses 15-68) prophesies the results of disobedience and furnishes us an outline again, as did Lev 26, of the history of Israel from the days of their early apostasy in the land up to the present time, and on to that last seven years of Jacob's unparalleled trouble yet to come (Jer. 30:7; Dan. 9:27; 12:1, Matt. 24:21; Rev. 13). Verses 58-68 point especially to this past time, while 47-49 relate evidently to the Roman devastation in A D 70. That even verse 68 will yet be literally fulfilled is seen in Isaiah 27:12, 13; 11:11, 15; Zech. 10:10. We must cease this doubting God's Word. These chapters are not mere rhetoric, but they are the weighed, tried, true utterances of the Living God. See Psalm 12:6; 18:30. Infidels and mockers may carp and laugh but the Word of God shall stand and shall be fulfilled to the last letter. Let us simply believe it. Thus shall we truly understand it, Matt. 11:25, 26; and thus shall we enter into its blessings, John 11:40; Hob. 11.

Chapter 29 witnesses the setting forth by God of that new covenant, "beside that of Sinai," which, although at this time establishing Israel as God's people (verse 13), according to His word to Abraham, through all ages (verses 14, 15), yet did not for the present bring with it the opened and obedient heart, eye and ear (verse 4), which alone can bring the blessings of the covenants of God into experience, for either nation or individual. It is not until chapter 30, which looks forward to the yet future repentance (verses 1, 2) and restoration (verses 3, 5) of poor, wandering, outcast Israel, that God has promised to give them the circumcised heart, upon which He will write His law unto everlasting, loving obedience. Then the new covenant will be announced in full, and its marvelous prom-

ises entered upon. (See Jer. 31 : 31-34; Heb. 8 : 7-12; Ezek. 30 : 28-38.)

Moses' charges to the people and Joshua, and the Lord's charge to Joshua, in chapter 31, are each built on one great fact, and have each one great command: "The Lord is with you," and, therefore, "Be strong." In view of God's constant presence, fear and weakness in God's people are as baseless as they are wicked.

The great song of Moses in chapter 32 again declares, from the view-point of the yet future apostasy of Israel, the nation's history. It recounts first God's goodness to them (verses 6-14), and their ungrateful, idolatrous wickedness (verses 15-18); the divine retributive retaliation, in setting them aside and choosing the Gentile Church (verses 19-21), then in visiting their iniquities upon them in con-dign judgments till their spirit is brought utterly down (verses 22-38); and, finally, revealing Himself as their only Deliverer. God will rescue, redeem and bless Israel and their land, and through them all the nations of earth (verses 39-43). In this song, as well as in the tribal blessings of chapter 33, there are mines of riches for the careful, prayerful student who believes that God's Word means just what it says. Into this latter chapter space will not permit us to go, except to note that, like Gen. 49, this chapter looks forward to the time of the end. This is seen all through the chapter, for the great blessings described here have by no means been fulfilled yet to these tribes of Israel.

And now, would that we were able to write of the lonely, tender scene on Pisgah; but we are not. Even God says little of it, and our words may be few. That unabated strength and undimmed eye are a commentary on Isaiah 40 : 31, and that journey up Mount Nebo on Hab. 1 : 13. Let us fear sin as never before, if the greatest of all the prophets must suffer thus for only one. But God buried His servant and comforted him with Himself; and by and by Moses, too, entered the good land (Matt. 17 : 3). The character of Moses should be resorted to again and again by every student of the Word of God. Only two other lives possess like interest to one who really *knows the ways of God*.

LESSON XIII.

Review of the Pentateuch.

We need to go *over and over* the Word of God. Some time ago a friend of mine asked a man to read a copy of the New Testament. "Ah," said the man, "I read that several years ago. Give me something new." This is the folly of the human heart—to neglect the oracles of the living God, or pass them lightly over.

No one has ever exhausted the meaning of a single verse of Scripture. Like its Author, the Bible is fathomless and boundless in depth and wisdom.

If you faithfully perform the work of reviewing these five books we have studied, you will see more in them, and probably get much more out of them than when you read them first. Mr. Spurgeon, shortly before his death, said, "If the Lord should say to me, when I get to heaven, 'My child, I want you to preach for Me for all eternity,' I should reply, 'Lord, if Thou wilt give me the Bible to preach from, I am ready to begin.'"

Such is the opinion of this blessed Book of God that *God's true servants* of every age have expressed. May it be ours! It was our blessed Lord's, when He was among us.

The present review is not, of course, in any sense *final*. When we have gone over the later history of Israel, and seen God's ways with them, we can review this opening part of the Bible again, in the light of our additional knowledge. Then, when we have completed the New Testament also, we will be ready to look at these books of Moses with new intelligence and delight. For the proper study of the New Testament, instead of leading us away from the Old, leads us back into its blessed pastures, with ever increasing wonder and profit.

But now for the review. It will take largely the form of final mastery of the contents of the books, though we

should go deeper and deeper into its spiritual teachings all the time.

I. Make a *cursory* reading of the entire Pentateuch, at a single sitting, once every day for three days. This is by no means as difficult a task as it seems, and will be found immensely profitable, not only in increasing and fixing our familiarity with the contents of these books, which of course is our chief aim in it, but for intellectual stimulation, and for the training of the faculties of observation and attention, it can hardly be surpassed. As you know, there are several ways of reading the Bible. There is the first reading of a new passage, in which natural interest is a great factor, of course; then there is the more attentive and particular second reading, to master the contents; then the successive re-readings to get the details—to complete the mastery; then the topical reading—reading as it were by paragraphs or subjects, since, though we are by this time familiar with the contents of the chapters before us, we must stand off in this way to consider their general character and meaning, and their relationship to each other and the whole book. Then, finally, we have this cursory reading which we are now asking you to do. Begin at the first of Genesis. Start down the chapter, just as rapidly as you find your eye can follow it and yet mark the contents. Do not stop to read minutely, or to consider points of interest that may arise. *Go rapidly through.* With a pencil you may mark in the margin, for future study, the passages where you halt or stumble, and those which kindle new interest, but *go on.* You can read through the first five books of the Bible in this way in from an hour and a half to three hours. And when you have done so several times, you will find how really familiar you have become with this great section of Scripture. And you will also find a most delightful quickening of your mental powers, while nothing is better for sloth of spirit and heart than such work with the Word of God. A man who will go right through the Pentateuch in this way will not be lazy for the rest of that day at least. (He may possibly be just a bit *weary*, but it will be in a good cause.)

II. Review the Pentateuch next by the *chapter-names* you have chosen. By this time you may be able to repeat from memory a good many of the chapter-names. Master them all. If you do this patiently, you will soon acquire wonderful facility both in naming, locating and remembering Bible passages.

III. A *topical* review of these books is next. See Lessons I, II., for examples in Genesis. Or take Exodus: *Bondage, Moses, Plagues, Exodus, Sinai, Sin, Tabernacle*—these names cover the book. Treat each book likewise.

IV. Now the *key-thought* of each book should be carefully written out, and the statement of it revised until it is accurate and comprehensive.

V. And next, of course, the *key-word* of each book. Much time should be given to both the preceding task and this one. No hasty conclusions should be admitted; for your future use of a book will depend quite largely on what you now make it out to mean as a whole.

VI. Study the progressive unfolding God makes of Himself in these five books.

1. His revelation to His servants: What was revealed to Enoch beyond Adam? Cf. Jude 14. To Noah beyond these? What new things to Abraham? What to Moses beyond all before him? Compare Num. 12 : 7, 8; Deut 24 : 10, 11, as a basis.

2. In His declarations concerning Himself? In general, God does not directly declare His attributes in Genesis, but lets them be inferred from His words and deeds, for Genesis is the primer of the Bible. In Exodus, He explains His actions by His attributes, as in 20 : 5 and 34 : 6, 7, but there is yet more of event than of doctrine. In Leviticus the *character* of the holy Lord God is the center of everything. Cf. 18-20. In Numbers He is *proving* His revealed holy character by His actions. See 11-16; 21. 25. In Deuteronomy He pleads with His people to obey the God they now know, or may know.

The proper study of the *character of God* is the highest study possible; it was to reveal God they were given. Jesus even died to "bring us to God," 1 Peter 3 : 18. If through your study of the Word of God you do not be-

come acquainted with *the God of the Word*, you have deeply, darkly failed indeed!

3. In His dealings with men in general, through the five dispensations thus far?

First, the age of *innocence*, from man's creation to his fall—of unknown length.

Second, the age of *unrestraint*, from the fall to the flood—over 1,500 years.

Third, the age of *human government*, from the flood to the call of Abraham—nearly 500 years.

Fourth, the *patriarchal* age, or the age of *promise*, from the call of Abraham to the Exodus from Egypt—nearly 500 years.

Fifth, the *Israelitish* age, or, the age of *Israel's testing*, from the Exodus to the final restoration of Israel in the future. This age has several divisions; in the first of which, the testing under the Mosaic law, we now are, in our study.

VII. The gradual opening up before us of *God's great plan of salvation*, in these five books, should be carefully considered. This, of course, is inseparably connected with the revelation of *the Lord Jesus Christ*. For God's plan of salvation is absolutely bound up in *Christ*.

The human race, in God's sight, are *lost*, from their *fall*, in the third of Genesis, to their *judgment*, in the twentieth of Revelation. Though God goes on dealing with them, in longsuffering, to let them see their own state, yet He at once turned, in the garden, from the seed of Adam—that is, our human race by nature—to the seed of the woman, that is, Christ: for He is the only seed of the woman that ever has been (Isa. 7 : 14, and, perhaps, Jer. 31 : 22).

Now from the first direct hint of the plan of salvation by Christ, in Genesis 3 : 15, we should trace the steady development of instruction as to that plan, onward through the Pentateuch. You will do well to write out in your note book a list of those Scriptures which you see have special reference to this great theme: making one list of the direct *prophecies* of Christ, like Gen. 3 : 15; Num. 24 : 17 Deut. 18 : 15-19; another list of the *persons* typical of

Christ, as Adam, Isaac, Joseph, Moses; another of the *objects* typical of Christ or His work, as the light, of Gen. 1 : 3; the clothing of skins, of Gen. 3; the ark; Abel's sacrifice, as also Noah's in Gen 8 : 20; Abraham's in Gen 22, the Passover lamb, in Ex. 12; and all the offerings; another list of the *events* typical of various phases of the plan of salvation by Christ, as the Creation, typical of New Creation; the deluge, with the preservation of the chosen family in the ark; the offering of Isaac; the Red Sea passage, still another list of the *examples* of salvation or blessing by *faith*, as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham (especially Gen 15 and 22). Israel escaping from Egypt. (Consult here Heb. 11; Rom. 4, etc.)

These are but suggestions. Please follow them up. It is better for you to *do the work*, than to read something someone else has done. No work in the gold or diamond fields ever began to pay as this digging in the fields of God's priceless exhaustless Word will pay. Read Ps. 119 : 162



LESSON XIV.

Joshua: The Book of Possession.

We have before us now a book of great delight to the spiritual Christian. All through the Christian centuries Joshua has yielded priceless treasures to those saints who have been "overcomers" (Rev. 2, 3). For those who have been content merely to "get to heaven," this book has not, perhaps, presented any special attractions; but those who have been *warrior-saints*, who were determined to "reign with Christ" at whatever cost (Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 2:26, 27), have ever found a very fortress of strength in this wonderful book. No book is more full of encouragement, wisdom and invigoration for the spiritual soldier. This land to be possessed, these deadly enemies the conditions of successful occupation, the Jordan-crossing, the successive conflicts, the division of the land—all these things are of intense interest to the instructed Christian mind. New and deeper meanings are ever unfolded from these simple stories to those who have learned their true position in the risen Christ, and what their own real conflict is and feel their need of instruction and equipment for it. It is our humble hope that some may be led through these lessons to recognize these spiritual treasures in the book of Joshua, and to enter upon their appropriation; if our study fails to bring this result, we have failed indeed!

The key-word of Deuteronomy is, as we have seen, *Obedience*. Its great object we have seen to be the preparation of the chosen, redeemed and disciplined people of God to enter upon their inheritance, to conquer it, and, through constant faithfulness, to hold it perpetually as the head of the nations. (Deut. 26:18, 19; 11:8, 22-25; 28:1-14; 32:46, 47.) Deuteronomy concludes the first Pentateuch, of which there are four in the Old Testament; Joshua begins the second. The first five books see

the people chosen and established (Deut. 29 : 12, 13) as the people of God: outwardly on the basis of the legal covenant, but really on the basis of God's covenant of promise with Abraham. (Gen. 15 and 17; cf. Deut. 29 : 13, and Gal. 3 : 15-18.) Under the second great division of the Bible, which includes the twelve books following Deuteronomy, the trial of Israel in the land under the legal covenant is given, with its result—utter failure. The pentateuchal structure of this division is seen when we remember the Hebrew arrangement, that Ruth is an appendix to Judges; the book of the Kings is the name for the books of Samuel and Kings; the book of the Captivity includes Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther, and the Chronicles stands as one double book. In Joshua we shall find the nation on the whole obedient to God, though the seeds of the failure so apparent in Judges will be discovered. Israel, as one has said, must be shown to be not only ungodly, as in Ex. 32, but without strength (Rom. 5 : 6); not only guilty, but helpless, unable to obey God's holy law in their own power. Till man learns both these lessons, God cannot come to him in grace.

The book of Joshua will be found very rich in spiritual and typical truth, because there is a realm of promise granted to the Christian corresponding to the land of Canaan as given to Israel. In the book of Ephesians, which sets forth the church's inheritance, and corresponds to the book of Joshua, this realm is called "the heavenly places." (See Eph. 1 : 20; 2 : 5, 6.) To be in Christ is to be in this realm: that is, every real believer now is already in "the heavenly places." In Eph. 1 : 3 are seen our possessions there—that which is already ours and is to be entered on by faith. Compare 2 Peter 1 : 3, 4, and Joshua 1 : 3. The law of possession is seen in Matt. 9 : 29—"According to your faith be it unto you." The secret of getting these wonderful things into our experience is to believe that they all are already ours in fact, in the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we are. When, as did Israel, we fully believe that our Canaan really belongs to us—*hath* been, not will be, granted to us, we are ready to march forward with victorious faith to take possession.

The knowledge and constant realization in experience, of this our standing in Christ, is absolutely necessary, if we would have any real liberty or joy in the study of these Old Testament Scriptures. It is, alas, rather the exception than the rule, in these days, to find Christians whose lives fit the heavenly places where God puts them, Eph. 2 : 6. Not that their failure to realize their position, possessions, and privileges, changes at all these blessed facts. Thank God, no! Christ has forever secured all things for us by His own finished work. But it is to be feared that Paul would class the most of the Church to-day as Galatians and say, "I am perplexed about you." Gal. 4 : 20. Whence all this observing of "days, months, seasons, years" (Gal. 4 : 10), in modern Christendom, if this be not true, that they are desiring to be "again under bondage"? See Gal. 4 : 9, 21. The fact, for example, that so many Christians are being carried right away by the specious but subtle doctrines of the Seventh Day Adventists, saying that they have no answer for their arguments, simply shows afresh the terrible ignorance that prevails everywhere nowadays concerning the great truths of *grace*. It is to be gravely doubted if the majority of Christians to-day know *experimentally* what that word *grace* means. And yet it is the key-word of Church truth. In our judgment, the most evident mark of final apostasy in Christendom now is this well-nigh universal departure from the Pauline gospel of the free, thorough-going, all-comprehending GRACE OF GOD. Titus 2 : 11; 3 : 4, 5. Eph. 2 : 5, 8; Rom. 3 : 23-25; Gal. 2 : 21; Rom. 5 : 20, 21. We decrie, and rightly, the church fairs, the church fetes, the church pantomimes, the church circuses of our day—Philistine abominations, every one of them, but do we recognize that deeper than all this external worldliness and at the very root of it all, is the heart-departure from the doctrine of the free, abounding grace of God the faith once for all delivered unto the saints? In Rom. 11 : 22, the solemn warning given to Gentile Christendom is this: "Toward thee, God's goodness, IF *thou continue in His GOODNESS*; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." To abide in the doctrines and experience of the goodness or grace

of God, is the sole condition here. But Christendom is full to-day of the utmost confusion on this exact point. We must learn to divide aright the Word of Truth, not for our own sake only, but that we may give the proper portion of food, in due season, to the household of the Lord. See Matt. 24 : 45; 2 Tim. 2 : 15.

The separate and distinct callings of Israel and the Church must be thoroughly apprehended, in order to our right application of the different parts of Scripture (especially of the Old Testament) and our definite grasping, by appropriating faith, of those things given peculiarly to believers of the present dispensation. If some such simple examination of the Word of God on this great subject as the excellent little book by the late Dr. Brooks, of St. Louis, "Israel and the Church," were carefully read by every earnest Bible student, much of the difficulty of explaining the deeper spiritual lessons of such a book as Joshua would be removed. In 1 Cor. 10 : 11; is set forth a great principle of Biblical interpretation, which, though ignored by many, and even ridiculed by others, has, nevertheless, furnished untold riches to those who have humbly and believingly approached, by its direction, the examination of the material of the Old Testament. The passage is: "Now all these things happened unto them for types [literal margin]; and they were written for our admonition." To one who, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, is willing to lay aside all prejudice on the one hand, and all fantastic imaginings on the other, the study of the types of Scripture yields unspeakable delight and profit. Israel are the earthly people of God, and the Church of the present dispensation His heavenly people. We might expect to find much in the inheritance and history of the former typical of those of the latter. Such is, without doubt, the case. Paul, in his epistles, especially in those to the Galatians and Hebrews, affords us striking examples of this typology. Indeed, he shows, in Gal. 4 : 21, that some knowledge of the types was to be looked for and appealed to in such a weak, wavering church as that at Galatia, verses 22-30. Nothing, moreover, I believe, so wakens and holds the interest of Christians in the Old Tes-

tament as the personal discovery of the riches placed there for them in the form of type and shadow.

As we have above stated, the Epistle to the Ephesians is to the Church what the book of Joshua was to Israel. The Church, the body of Christ (Eph. 1:23; 5:30), has been brought up out of its Egypt, the world (2:1-3), having been quickened in Christ, its Head (2:5). It has been brought up through and out of its Jordan (the grave of Christ, Rom. 6:3, 4) and has been raised up with Christ (Eph. 2:6) into that realm of spiritual life and power described five times in Ephesians as "the heavenly places" (1:3, 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 4:12, R.V.). This is the Christian's Canaan of inheritance; his proper sphere (Eph. 2:6), where his Joshua or Princely Leader is (Eph. 1:20-23; Heb. 12:2—Greek); where his present real possessions are (Eph. 1:3); where his desperate enemies are (Eph. 6:12), and in which sphere God has determined through His dealings with the Church to make known His wisdom to those high ones of evil who are yet allowed the freedom of the same realm, and the dominion in it, under Satan, its prince and theirs, over all but the trusting saints. (Eph. 2:1; 6:12; John 14:30; Matt. 12:24, 26.) How alone the saints are able to resist their domination is seen in Eph. 6:10-20. These hosts of darkness are the real Canaanites to the Christian. But, just as faith conquers the world (1 John 5:4), because it enters into the victory Jesus gained for us (John 16:33), and looking on ahead sees the world condemned in the judgment and punished; so also it is faith that gets the victory over the legions of Satan (1 Peter 5:8, 9; James 4:7), that faith which, without presuming to attempt personal battle, simply enters into the victory Christ has secured for us—first, through His wilderness victory (Matt. 4:1-11, etc.); then through His cross (Heb. 2:14, 15; Col. 2:15)—using Goliath's own sword to vanquish him' (see 1 Sam. 17:51); and, finally, through His ascension. His session (Eph. 1:21, 22, and likely Ps. 68:17, 18), and His watchful and effective intercession (Heb. 7:25; compare Luke 22:31, 32). Into all this faith triumphantly enters, and, of course, gets the victory everywhere; and

it keeps looking on expectantly to the final complete overthrow of its enemies, and their expulsion from the heavenly places, in the tribulation period to come (Rev. 12; Isa. 24 : 21); and to their binding in the abyss at the inauguration of the millennium (Rev. 20 : 1-3; Isa. 24 : 22); and on to their final and eternal relegation to the place prepared for them (Rev. 20 : 10; Matt. 25 : 41).

Part I. Joshua I-V. Over Jordan.

I. Read the chapters most attentively at least seven times. Let the spirit of the events take full hold of you as you read. Let the story become a living experience to you—just as if you were one of the participators.

II. The chapter-names: I., "*Be Strong*", II., *Rahab*; III., *Jordan*; IV., *Memorials*; V., *Gilgal*.

III. In the "therefore" of chapter 1 : 2, we see that legality, or our own efforts (represented by Moses), must die in us ere we can possess the inheritance that is ours. See Heb. 4 : 10. The reason why many Christians do not get into the fulness of their inheritance in Christ is because, in some way or other, they are still looking to Moses, that is, to their own fair doings to get them in. But Moses could not even enter Canaan himself, to say nothing of bringing in anyone else. And Israel had to wait till Moses was out of the way, ere they could enter the land, under their new leader. Moses stands to us for the law, Joshua for Christ, when we consider this matter of entering upon our promised possession. It may be that we are still trusting to our good resolves, or to our consecration, to get us into the enjoyment of what we see some Christians experience—if so, Moses is yet alive with us: we cannot go over Jordan. It may be that we are still thinking of our prayers, our earnestness, our Bible study, our faith, our zeal—it is all Moses, Moses, with us yet. Let us mark well these opening verses of this great book which is to bring the people into Canaan: "*Now it came to pass after the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, saying, Moses My servant is dead; now THEREFORE arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people.*" Now this is the

first great lesson we must learn, that Joshua, not Moses, leads the the people into the land. Joshua's name means,

Salvation of Jehovah. or "Jehovah Salvation" and its New Testament form is Jesus. See Matt. 1:21. Oh, that all Christians would simply trust their faithful Joshua, leaning only upon Him, following only Him! How quickly would He lead them all into the full realization in experience of what He has so wondrously purchased for us by His cross! May Moses die now with each of us, that we may know none else hereafter as our Leader but Joshua

Concerning the possession of Canaan, note the authority for it, God's command, verse 2; the attitude for it, "arise," verse 2; the path to it, "over Jordan," verse 2; the extent of it, "all the land," verse 4; the method of it, occupation, verse 3; encouragement for it, invincibility, verse 5; incitement to it, the promise of success, verse 6; the great double secret of it, constant use of and literal obedience to the Word of God, verses 7 and 8; the all-inclusive pledge of possession, the constant presence of God, verse 9. Apply all these things to yourself, in view of Eph. 1:3.

Rahab, in chapter 2, is an apt illustration of an alarmed and repentant sinner saved by grace, through promise, relying on the scarlet sign because of the declared Word. (Cf. Ex. 12:13; Eph. 1:7.) Again, she is a type of those from among the Gentiles who will repent through God's final dealings with Israel, will entreat Israel well, and be saved from the judgment that will attend their final salvation and restoration to their land at the setting up of the millennial kingdom. (See Matt. 25:31-46; Zech. 14:3, 4, 12, 16; Joel 3:1, 2, 12.) This is not the final judgment, which is after the millennium. (See Rev. 20:4, 5, 11-15.) The expression "My brethren," of Matt. 25:40, relates not to Christians (who will have been caught up before this, cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-18), but to the faithful remnant of Israel at the close of the great tribulation, when Jesus returns to earth with His already raptured Church (Zech. 14:5; 1 Thess. 3:13) to judge the nations, save Israel, and take the kingdom. Both the second and sixth:

chapters of Joshua seem to be typical of the setting up of the kingdom—the second chapter of salvation of those who are found at that time penitent, and the sixth of the utter destruction, accomplished through redeemed Israel, of those still rebellious. (See Ps. 149; Jer. 51 : 20-24; Isa. 60 : 12-14; Zech. 12 : 6; Isa. 63 : 1-6; 2 Thess. 1 : 7-10.)

In the third chapter we have a great picture of our salvation through Christ and of our present standing in Him. Represented by the ark, we see Christ going on before His people into the Jordan or sin-judgment or death; and thus the waters of judgment are rolled back, so that His people pass over unharmed. The twelve stones of memorial (chapter 4) in the midst of Jordan show us the cross, where Jesus has been for us; while those on the bank, the resurrection side, set forth where Christ's people now are in Him. (See Eph. 2 : 5, 6.) It is not by experience that we pass over Jordan—we have already passed over in Christ's death and resurrection, as is seen in Rom. 6 : 3, 4 and Col. 2 : 12, and by faith we are to enter upon the walk that befits our position. (See Eph. 4 : 1; Col. 3 : 1-5.) It is this fact of our position in Christ that terrifies our enemies. (Compare Josh. 5 : 1, with Col. 2 : 15; Heb. 2 : 14, 15; Jas. 4 : 7.)

The position of God's people on the Canaan or resurrection side of Jordan is of course followed by a renewal of the circumcised, or separated and mortified life. (Compare Col. 3 : 1, 5, with Joshua 5 : 2-9.) It was because Israel had been brought into Canaan that they were now called to take the mark of God's separate people. See Gen. 17 : 10, 11. They had been brought over Jordan all uncircumcised (Josh. 5 : 4-7), contrary to the law, so to speak, which was grace, all grace on God's part. Now that grace had come, consecration was called for. Compare Rom. 12 : 1, 2. When this position of separation to Him is taken God rolls away the reproach of Egyptian or worldly bondage, and owns and blesses us as His people. (Compare Joshua 5 : 9, with 2 Cor. 6 : 17, 18.) We often hear earnest teachers of the higher life call upon Christians to consecrate themselves to God fully, and thus "get

into Canaan." What they should say, if they would use the type aright, would be, "Since now, in Christ, you are already in Canaan ("the heavenly places") come to Gilgal for circumcision, or full consent, for yourself, to that death to self and the old creation which circumcision represents." Study carefully Col. 2 : 11, 12, 20; 3 : 1-11.

The old corn of Canaan is the ascended Christ, as "the produce of the heavenly realm," in which we are, ministered directly to us now by the Holy Ghost. Those who enter into the experience of their position in Christ feed no longer on the manna, which represents Christ as supporting our life while we yet "know Him not" as regards any intimate fellowship (cf. Deut. 8 : 3, 16 and John 14 : 3). But they now feast upon the risen Christ Himself, 2 Cor. 3 : 18; 1 Jno. 1 : 3; Jno. 6 : 50-58. The foundation of such a life of fellowship, or the first step into it, is to reckon true the fact of our standing in Christ, as described in the first three chapters of Ephesians. The last three chapters, which describe our fitting walk, are founded on the first three, which reveal our calling. If positional truth, rather than the duties of attainment, were taught first to the saints, infinitely more satisfactory results would follow the efforts of many Christian workers, we are persuaded. We should note most carefully this fact that Israel were *brought into Canaan*, all uncircumcised and unworthy as they were, before they were asked to take the circumcised, separated position as the people of God, or enter upon their warfare. So we, as Christians, have been already brought by Christ Jesus our Head, in His death and resurrection, into the "heavenly places," and given "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Peter 1 : 3). And it is always on the ground of where we already are, and what we already are, and what we already have, that the Holy Spirit pleads with us for our whole-hearted recognition and acceptance of the blessed privileges and responsibilities of "the calling wherewith we are called." Paul does not ask a thing of the saints in Ephesians 1-3, but just to listen while he proclaims that wondrous series of great and eternal *facts* concerning them; and not until he has completed this catalogue of *realities* about them, does he ask them to do

anything at all. And when he does open his plea for their high walk as saints, everything is based on the revelation before given of their high character and destiny as saints: "I therefore . . . beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called" (Eph. 4 : 1, R.V.). Let us cease laying down first to the saints long lists of "conditions" of entering into the blessed life in Christ; and instead, as the primal preparation for leading them into the experience of this life, show them what their position, possessions and privileges in Christ already are. Thus shall we truly "conspire with the Holy Ghost," and thus shall we have much more, and much more abiding, fruit of our labors among the people of God.

In Joshua 5 : 10 we see that the new position Israel had now taken as the consecrated people of Jehovah, now living at last in their land, free from the old reproach of Egypt, did not keep them from remembering with fresh gratitude and delight, the dear old Passover ordinance, which spoke of their first deliverance from bondage, with its unique and man-humblng memorial, the blood of the slain lamb. We fear that some good brethren, who have entered into blessed personal religious experiences, have overlooked this lesson entirely, or have not grasped its real meaning for us. For what can this careful keeping of the Passover at this time more strongly teach us, than that, through all subsequent stages of our spiritual history, we are never to forget the initial one, our deliverance from the guilt of sin through the blood of the Lamb that was slain; and we are carefully to obey the word of our Lord as to that feast which is eaten "in remembrance of Him"? We dare not neglect the Lord's Supper, as do some, but must keep on thus "showing the Lord's death *till He come.*" It was shocking and painful indeed, some time ago, to hear the leader of a great popular evangelizing movement, in answer to the question, "Why do not the members of your organization observe the Lord's Supper?" say, "Because of its abuse by many we have dealt with it as Hezekiah did with the brazen serpent when it began to be an idolatrous snare. We have called it 'Nehush-tan.'" Scarcely less shallow, and to us still more hardy,

is the plea made by some that they have, in their spiritual experience, gotten beyond this outward ordinance.

Part II. Joshua VI-XII. Conquering the Enemies in Canaan.

I. Read the chapters repeatedly and most attentively; the oftener the better. Master the contents, thus, first of all. Why shouldn't you? Have you better business on hand? What is it?

II. The chapter-names: VI., Jericho; VII., Achan; VIII., Ai; IX., Gibeonites; X., Southern Kings; XI., Northern Kings; XII., Thirty-one Kings.

III. There are many excellent surface lessons in these chapters which we trust will be found and appreciated duly. We shall not attempt to speak of these in detail, but shall simply indicate several of them, along with a few suggestions of the deeper lines of truth that appear all through this book of Joshua.

Jericho, "the fragrant place," represents our spiritual enemies as entrenched in that which is sweet and dear to the natural heart of man. Its fall before Israel is the first step in the conquest of the land of inheritance. Spiritually, its fall signifies to us the utter wreck nature and the world become in the eye of the soul that has accepted for itself its position as dead and buried in Christ, and raised up with Him to walk in newness of life in the heavenly places. (Rom. 6 : 3, 4; Col. 2 : 12, 13 and 20; Eph. 2 : 5, 6.) To the consecrated soul who has really come into the definite place of entire separation from sin, the world, and all else to Jesus only (Phil. 3 : 3; 2 Cor. 5 : 17, 15, 9; Gal. 6 : 14), this world and all that is in it is not only seen as utterly alien to God and doomed to pass away (1 John 2 : 15-17), but it is known and judged as the kingdom and camp of the hosts of darkness, in their desperate fight against God and His Christ—yea, as having yet fully on its unrepentant head the guilt of the murder of the Son of God, and therefore doomed to speedy and utter destruction (2 Pet. 3 : 7-10; 1 Cor. 2 : 6-8); however fair appearances may be (1 Thess. 5 : 3; Luke 17 : 26-30, 2 Peter 3 : 3, 4; Jude 14, 15) So, by faith, the world

has already fallen for the Christian who has found his all in Christ, and in seeing it by faith as already judged, he has already overcome it: "This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith." (1 John 5 : 4, R.V.) Perhaps there is no better example of the method of the triumph of faith in the Bible than this conquest of Jericho. Trace carefully the elements in the victory, with Heb 11 : 30 before you.

The manner of the destruction of Jericho is, likely, prophetic of the judgments yet to come on the world, as shown in the seven seals, seven trumpets and seven vials of the book of Revelation. It should be noted that these will also be visited in connection with the final establishment of Israel in their land, as was the fall of Jericho with their first entering into Canaan.

Though Jericho was fallen, as typical of the whole, yet there remained the individual forces and strongholds of the enemy to be conquered. Ai ("heap of ruins"), over against Bethel ("the house of God"), is the first one. The defeat of chapter 7 is easily traced back to failure to inquire of God, who would have at once discovered Achan, but who lets His people find out their weakness if they neglect Him. Contrast Joshua's confident going ahead in his own wisdom in 7 : 2, with the humble question of 5 : 14. At Jericho he waited on God and succeeded; at Ai all was failure, and the reason is easily apparent. Self-confidence was first; and so, neglect of prayer; then verse 2, self-energy; next, verse 3, human wisdom and subtle fleshly sloth. No wonder we have utter defeat in vs. 4 and 5. But when Joshua's wretched, unbelieving groaning is exchanged for submission to divine illumination as to the concealed cause of the defeat, and thorough judgment of the weakening sin, Ai is easily taken in chap. 8 though not without a commanded feigning of flight, as a reminder of former folly and to humble pride. Achan is, of course a most striking example of the awful power for evil one sinner may have (Eccl. 9 : 18), especially among the people of God. And one indulged sin is weakening the life of many a child of God to-day, as one permitted sinner is ruining the progress of many a church. If you and I

are not getting the victory over some little town of Ai in our lives, let us bring our whole being before God for searching and our Achan will be discovered, Phil. 3 : 15. But when he is found, judge him mercilessly, as did Israel in this story. We need not fear to be most thorough in our dealing with sin in our lives. See Heb. 12 : 4-13. Achan's family, as well as himself, were destroyed, as they had doubtless all been privy to the evil. The forbidden things had been hidden, confessed Achan, in 7 : 21, "in the midst of the tent."

The lack of the unasked counsel of the Lord (Josh. 9 : 14). led to the unhappy and ultimately grievous alliance with the Gibeonites; just as many a Christian husband or Christian wife, through their own action, unguided by God (because God has not been asked to guide) have become so entangled in an unequal yoke, sometimes in partnerships with the ungodly and sometimes in marriages with them, that they cannot righteously extricate themselves. (See 2 Cor. 6 : 14, 15.)

In the great southern alliance of chap. 10, under Adonizedek ("lord of righteousness") we see the stand Satan makes in that self-goodness, which is the worst foe of every one of us. Out of this root grows heart pride. The best of saints have been beset by this stubborn king; but our Joshua is his better, thank God! Contrast Rom. 10 : 3 and Phil. 3 : 9. In the final northern confederation, in chap. 11, we discover in its leader Jabin, whose name means "seeing," or "discerning," the other and even more subtle of our two deadliest spiritual dangers, self-wisdom. Our Joshua conquers this enemy also, as our Greater Joshua can and will gladly do for us. (See 2 Cor. 10 : 3-5.)

Of course the great miracle of chapter 10 : 12-14 literally occurred. The Bible is the Word of God. Hell has risen up in these last days, in the person of certain theological "scholars" who deny the miraculous in Scripture. Let us not listen to their profane prattling. God will judge them shortly. There is no way of compromise. Real Christians must break absolutely with this "scholarly" infidelity that attacks the accuracy and authority

of the Word of the Living God. We need not fear God Himself will by and by vindicate His Word. Let us accept His Word in the simple-hearted faith of His true saints. How wonderful the proof of God's love and power for His people, in these mighty interventions on their behalf. At Jericho, He directly wrought, in answer to their faith, on earth; now, in causing the sun and moon to stand still, He shows his willingness to put *all* His power at the disposal of those who trust Him. Just as our Lord said, "All power is given unto Me, in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore"—relying on that power; for "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do, shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do" (Matt. 28 : 19; John 14 : 12). Our faithful God is just as ready to respond to faith as ever. Note the beautiful illustration of the method of real faith, in Josh. 10 : 12: "Joshua spake to Jehovah, and he said, Sun, stand thou still." That is he addressed the creature through the Creator. He "*commanded* Jehovah concerning the work of His hands," Isa. 45 : 11. This is the marvelous office of real faith. It is creative, omnipotent. God has put all His infinite power at the disposal of faith. "*All things* are possible to him that believeth." "Whosoever shall say . . . and shall not doubt in his heart, but believe that *what he saith* cometh to pass, he shall have it," Mark 11 : 23.

The twelfth chapter has a mine of truth in it when its names are understood. (See 1 Cor. 10 : 11.) We cannot enter upon them here. There is a great field of deep truth in these things which is largely unexplored as yet. We would commend it to the earnest spiritual reader. "All Scripture," saith the Holy Ghost, "is profitable," 2 Tim. 3 : 16. Mr. Grant's *Numerical Bible* may be consulted here with profit; also A. B. Simpson's book of deeply suggestive sermons on Joshua.

Part III. Joshua XIII -XXII. The Division of the Land.

I. Do not fail to read these chapters several times, over and over. Otherwise they will not get hold of you.

But if faithfully read and re-read they will yield large results.

II. The chapter-names are: XIII., Partition Commanded; XIV., Caleb, XV., Judah; XVI., Ephraim; XVII, XVIII., XIX., Seven Tribes; XX., Refuge Cities; XXI., Levites' Cities; XXII., Witness Altar.

III. The tribal locations should be mastered. Consult the map in the back of your Bible. Begin at the north and the tribal initials spell "Nazi-med-bjs"—whatever that spells! But use it for memorizing. It will be noticed that the first part of this word suggests "Nazareth," and these four tribes were located in the northern part of Palestine, where Nazareth was. The middle syllable, "med," is the Latin abbreviation for "middle," and these three tribes were in the middle of the land. For the last three we need no device, as we remember that Judah was in the south, with Benjamin and Simeon on the northeast and southwest respectively. It is often well to use such simple contrivances to help memory get hold of a subject.

How truly could our Lord Jesus say unto His Church—to each of us, just what He said to Joshua in 13 : 1. May God help us to hear His voice promising, as in 13 : 6. that He will drive out our foes for us, if we only boldly stake out our claim. God has given us *all* spiritual blessings, Eph. 1 : 3. The heavenly places are our realm, not Satan's. We have the right to every kind of victory, joy, grace, fruitfulness, blessing; let us have courage to claim and enjoy these things.

Compare Caleb's spirit in Josh. 14 : 6-15 with that displayed in 17 : 14-18. Find in such a spirit as the latter the beginnings of the failures noted in 13 : 13; 15 : 63; 16 : 10; 17 : 12, 13 ("strong," yet so faithless!); trace its development in the word "slack" of 18 : 3; and see its fruit in 24 : 23. The book of Judges is one long narrative of failure; hunt for its seeds in Joshua. The faithfulness of God and the faithlessness of man—the book of Joshua adds another amen to this proposition, which the book of Genesis first sets forth, and which is supported right through the Bible

first tribal failure noted: "As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out, but the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Judah at Jerusalem." Here two great points should be noted: First, it was Judah, the tribe of praise, as its name means, that failed to drive out their enemies; and second, it was the Jebusites, the most tenacious and desperate enemies of all, as their position in the land and their history signify, that Judah failed to overcome and expel. To the spiritual mind this will be all that will be needed as a hint in tracing out the other failures. If the spirit of praise breaks down and suffers the enemy to hold Jerusalem, the stronghold of the country, the very city which God had "chosen to set His name there," failure along all other lines is to be expected. And such we find. See 16 : 10; 17 : 12, 13; 18 : 3. and all the book of Judges. As to Judah's further tribal responsibility and failure, see Judges 1 : 1-3, 19.

The boundaries of the various tribes all have their typical meanings. Everything the Word of God tells us about this land of Canaan seems alive with spiritual significance to the subject heart and the opened understanding. Take the first tribe whose boundaries are defined—Judah. "Judah lay southernmost of all the tribes, bounded on the south by the land of Edom and the wilderness of Zin; on the east by the Salt or Dead Sea; on the west by the Great Sea or Mediterranean; and only on the north by Israelitish territory. . . . How good is it thus to realize that one can face the world of the natural man: (Edom), the wilderness condition, the awful lake of judgment (of which the Dead Sea, with the river of death, the Jordan, flowing unceasingly into it without overflow or escape again, is a true and terribly real type) the sea of instability and distress (the Mediterranean, type of the restless nations of earth)—can face all these and give praise' in view of all!" (Grant.)

Joshua's portion (Josh 19 : 49, 50) "in the midst" of Israel (R.V.), beautifully illustrates the place that our Great Joshua, who has brought us into our Canaan, desires among us. See Matt 18 : 20; Luke 24 : 36; John 20 :

19. 26; Rev. 1:13; 2:1; 5:6. And the name of Joshua's city, "which he asked" was Timnath-Serah, and means "abundant portion." Let us gladly give Jesus not only His place, but His portion. Note, in verse 50, "He built the city and dwelt therein"—Joshua did all when the place was once given him: so will our Joshua.

The meanings of the names of the cities of refuge, in chap. 20, are beautifully suggestive. They are: Kedesh, "holiness"; Shechem, "strength"; Hebron, "communion"; Bezer, "fortification"; Ramoth, "exaltation"; Golan, "joy." Who that knows his Master does not see Him in these things? Doubtless the cities of refuge have a direct typical reference to the Israelitish remnant's future shelter from the avenger in the days of the end, as is hinted in Isa. 26:20, 21; Zech. 14:4, 5, and perhaps also in Rev. 12:14; but that there is an exquisite spiritual application for us who have "fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us" (Heb. 6:18) who can doubt?

The trouble with the two and one-half tribes in chap. 22 of our lesson was to be expected. If we choose to live below or short of our position and privileges, as these tribes had done, we will readily be misunderstood by those who are living the Canaan life. And no wonder. There is good ground for general suspicion of a Christian's motives, if he is not ready to enter into the life of full devotion to Christ. Then how pitiful that one of God's children should have to wear a "badge" to show that he is of God's people. This "altar of witness" corresponds wonderfully, when studied, to the emblematic pins and ribbons and rings worn by so many Christians in these days to set forth their religious beliefs or service. The only badge, as one has said, given us by Christ is seen in John 13:35. Such outward things are signs of spiritual weakness rather than of strength. Already as we see in this chapter, the tribes who left the land of Canaan are unsatisfied, and no man can give them the land itself! They appear miserably weak and unconfident. God save us from such foolish things as this!

Part IV. Joshua XXIII, XXIV. Charge and Covenant.

I. Read and re-read these two chapters till they are wholly familiar.

II. The chapter-names: XXIII., Joshua's Charge; XXIV., Shechem Covenant.

III. Joshua's pleadings and warnings in chapters 23 and 24 remind us vividly of those of Moses in the closing chapters of the book of Deuteronomy. There are the same arguments and the same end, and the same utter lack of "confidence in the flesh," and the same prophecy of future failure, that we saw in Moses' great addresses to Israel. Sadly we are compelled to note the strong self-confidence that still lives and rules in this people. That hasty and confident "we will" of 24:18 is seen by Joshua's clear eye to be the utterance of sinful, idol-loving hearts, and the stern rebuff of the next verse is faithfully given: "Ye cannot serve the LORD, for He is a holy God." But, just as at Sinai, the people persist in staying under law—they must still "try," they will make a new "promise." So they again become "witnesses against themselves" (verse 22), and the name of the place where this renewed covenant of works is made is now significantly given—"So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem." Shechem means "shoulder," "burden," or "service." They have taken upon themselves that which only Another and Greater can fulfill. So they must fail again. They must learn their utter weakness. The book of Judges must succeed Joshua now and the key-word of Judges we shall find to be *failure*. That the very first demand of this new covenant was to put away "strange gods," shows how shallow was the people's present godliness in possessing, all unjudged, such gods, and at once prophesies sure future failure, which the beautiful thirty-first verse only augments: "And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua." How far-reaching and how short-reaching is the influence of a faithful man of God! And that thirty-first verse may be applied with absolute ac-

curacy to the results of the labors of every one of the great servants of God in his day and generation. The people of God served Him while His servant was with them; but directly he and his influence and that of his immediate successors were gone, away they went after their idols. It is not that the grace of God faileth, but that that grace, bestowed, is found vain, because of sinful man's rejection of it. See, carefully, 1 Cor. 15 : 10; 2 Cor. 6 : 1.

We need to note, here, in 24 : 31, what has ever been true of God's people, that the vigor of their faith, and their consequent fidelity to their God, is largely—almost wholly—dependent on what they see or know of God's actual working among them. Compare with Josh. 24 : 31; Judges 2 : 7, 10. Those who had seen and known God's great work for them are measurably faithful; but the new generation comes up in ignorance (through their parents' neglect, no doubt, to fulfil Deut. 4 : 9; 6 : 6, 7; Ps. 78 : 5; 7, etc.), and drifts right off from God. Perhaps the saddest fact of the many sad facts of this unbelieving day of ours, is the practical ignorance that exists among the present generation, of the mighty works of God—the young of our day have not seen a great revival; they do not know what God can do. God send us such an awakening as will show them His real power! Nothing else (except Christ's second coming) will recover faith and devotion to the Church of Christ, but such a revival as will reveal God again among us.

IV. The life and character of Joshua should be most carefully studied. Proceed according to the directions given in Lesson II. Trace his career from the earliest mention of him in Exodus 17. Put earnest, prayerful study upon this man and his mission. Especially consider his experience in Joshua 5 : 13-15. Compare it with that of Moses in Exodus 3 : 4. and with that of Job in Job 42. of Isaiah in Isaiah 6, and that of Jeremiah (1), Ezekiel (1), Daniel (10), Paul (Acts 9), and John (Rev. 1). Did ever man do great things for God till he had first thus met his God, as it were face to face? What are the results of thus having "the vision of God" in each of these cases?

Who thought he was "Captain" in Joshua 5:13? What does he call himself in the next verse? Why? Note the steady development of Joshua's faith, boldness, fidelity, steadfastness, wisdom and power. Just what is the difference between the man in 7:6-8, and 10:12, 13? Count how often God has to say "Fear not" to Joshua. Why? Did Joshua learn the lesson? See 10:19 and 25, or instance

The great secret of Joshua's life, as that of every other real man of God, is seen in 11:15. Read it. And note that he had his mind made up, 24:15. Have you yours thus made up? "As for me and my house," said he, "*we will serve the Lord.*" Note 2 Chron. 16:9.



LESSON XV.

Judges: The Book of Israel's Failure in the Land.

The key-thought of Joshua we found to be, a land granted by grace, through promise, to be occupied by conquest, through faith. God might easily have visited His condign judgment on the inhabitants of Canaan, as upon Sodom, before Israel came into the land, and have thus given His people an inheritance undisputed by any foe, wholly free of all prior occupants. Two great reasons are at once apparent why He did not do so. First, Israel were the holy, the peculiar people of Jehovah (Deut. 7). To maintain that character as an earthly nation involved necessarily the attitude of entire separation from, and consequent hostility to, every nation not owning the authority of Jehovah, just as for the individual Christian nowadays a godly walk in Christ absolutely involves the enmity and persecution of the world, because of his separation from it, (2 Tim. 3 : 12; 1 Thess. 3 : 3; Acts 14 : 22; John 15 : 18-21; 1 Peter 2 : 11, 12; 4 : 1-5; 1 John 3 : 12, 13; John 16 : 33; 1 John 5 : 4). Inasmuch as sin is here, only in the attitude of warring against it can real deliverance from it be maintained. This is the admitted experience of every spiritual person, as well as the express teaching of the Word of God (Heb. 12 : 1-4; James 4 : 7); though against some kinds of sin the military tactics of the Holy Ghost are instant flight (1 Cor. 6 : 18; 10 : 14; 1 Tim. 6 : 11; 2 Tim. 2 : 22). But when we remember that it is thus in the midst of a world of sin that we really come to discover our peculiar, separate character as the people of God, and are trained in practical living holiness, we see the one deep reason why God does not bring at once the consummation of Rev. 20 : 10-15. A great mani-

festation of character is going steadily on through these ages of sin and strife. The wicked are being allowed to prove themselves such; the righteous are likewise showing their real heart-choice of holiness by a voluntary separation, at the severest cost, from all iniquity. The first reason, then, that these Canaanites were left in the land was practically to prove to Israel that their entirely separate character as the people of God necessarily involved the godless world's enmity. The second reason was to teach the people how to carry on the warfare that should be so necessary all through their history in maintaining their place as the seat of the theocracy, till Shiloh should come, to whom the obedience of the people should be (Judges 3 : 2; Gen 49 : 10; Num. 24 : 17-19). These things take on practical importance for us immediately when we read Eph. 6 : 10-18, and see that our present inheritance is also full of deadly Canaanites.

This book of Judges we have called "The Book of Failure." It is a sadly appropriate name, as we shall find. It is one long story of the persistent departure from God of the people for whom He had done so much and promised to do so much more. Utterly ignoring their calling as the people of God, and the sure blessings promised to obedience to Him, they wander from Him to the sin they love with a perpetual wandering. Neither warnings, chastenings, nor godly examples avail; and the book ends with two pictures of the iniquity of the times than which there are no darker in the Word of God. The last words of Judges are "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." What a revelation as to the Israel of God!

The book contains many exceedingly valuable lessons for Christians in these days—lessons not so pleasant, perhaps, as those of the book of Joshua yet none the less needed. If Joshua shows in type the position, calling and privileges of the Church of Christ, and the manner of their realization in experience, Judges figuratively depicts, and with startling truth, the Church's terrible unfaithfulness to her calling, through all her history thus far. No spiritual mind, familiar with the pages of church history,

can fail to find most searching pictures of present things in the book before us. Let us enter upon its study with a careful, yet candid heart, begging for "the anointing that teacheth," (1 John 2 : 27). Surely we need men now like Daniel, who recognized his people's sin (Dan. 9); and also like those of Issachar who came to David at Hebron in 1 Chron. 12 : 32: "Men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.

The method of God with His desperately treacherous and backsliding people Israel during these times we shall find to be exactly the same He has employed with His precisely similar people of the Christian Church in the present dispensation. He first permits Israel's bondage to the sin they allow or follow, according to the law of John 8 : 34. R.V.. which is an excellent *text* for the book of Judges: "Every one that committeth sin is the bond-servant of sin." Their slavery at ~~last~~ brings the wretched nation to cry to Him for deliverance; though, be it sadly noted, they do not cry for restoration to the pristine times of Joshua, but only for present relief. God then raises up some *man of faith*, through whom He sets them free, that they may heartily repent and return fully to Him—which they never fully do. Just so the Church, distressed by her enemies, has cried for help in her trouble, and time and again through the centuries, God has sent some man of His own choosing to bring her some succor; but she has never with one heart cried to Him to restore the grace and testimony of the Pentecostal days. And for just the same reason in both cases: the backsliding people of God have ever shunned the complete separation and consecration that a full return to Him must always involve. This is too sad to write, but too true to omit. That many in these days are ready to deny present apostasy, and boastfully point to the great Christian "movements" and societies and man-invented methods of our generation is even sadder still, and reveals a spiritual deadness and blindness that proclaim the Laodicean stage upon us. See Rev. 3 : 14-18.

Part I. Judges I—XXI. The History.

The best plan will be to take the whole book for the first lesson, thoroughly to master its contents and construction; then to study its lessons later. Indeed, this is the ideal plan with any book of the Bible, for only after the material has been surveyed as a whole can the particular lessons be studied in their full relations and meaning.

I. Read seven times over, or once every day for a week, this book of Judges. This need not be regarded as a severe task. In from one to two hours it can be done with ease; and many people spend more than that time over their daily newspaper these days. We beg you again, do not neglect this fundamental work. Nothing will pay as great dividends as reading the Bible.

II. The chapter-names of the book of Judges: I, Failure; II, Disappointment—(God's disappointment in His people, and the people's in their hopes), III, Othniel; Fhud-Shamgar, IV., V., Deborah-Barak; VI, VII, VIII, Gideon; IX., Abimilech, X, Seven Gods, XI, XII, Jephthah; XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, Samson; XVII, Micah, XVIII., Danites; XIX, Benjamite Wickedness, XX, Benjamite Punishment; XXI., Benjamite Wives.

III. Go over to yourself these stories of Judges till their details are familiar. Then get some friend to listen while you narrate in order the events of the whole book. You will find this a delightful and profitable exercise, and as you do it, the history and lessons of the book will fairly glow before you.

IV. Fix in memory the various bondages and the names of the successive judges, using, if need be, some simple arrangement as that of forming the names or initials into a word or sentence.

V. Note the *general plan* of the book of Judges. 1. The general statement of Israel's failure to conquer the land, their apostasy from Jehovah, and His method of dealing with their persistent wickedness: chapters 1-3:4. 2. The narrative of the judges: 3:5—16. 3. Two tales of the times, revealing the real moral condition of the people during these years, 17-21.

Part II. Spiritual Lessons of the Book.

It should ever be our aim in the study of the Word to get at those lessons or truths that instruct and feed the spiritual life. Mere acquisition of the facts of the Bible, however necessary, will never satisfy the heart-hunger of the child of God, or enable him to minister real blessing to others. There must be spiritual understanding, application and appropriation. These things only the Holy Spirit can give; but the Holy Spirit is ever ready to open up the Word to the earnest seeker, when He is humbly relied upon. It is our privilege not only, but our duty, to be taught of Him; indeed, there can be no reading or study of the Word of God that is truly acceptable to God, except in the Holy Ghost. And just here is the damning error of the rationalistic critics; they neglect the Holy Spirit and "lean upon their own understanding." Does anyone know a "higher critic" who is baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire? This question would be laughed out of court by many of these "thinkers," but to the Spirit-taught saint of God, it is the only question at issue, and its answer settles everything, regarding any would-be teacher of the oracles of God.

I. First, let us look at the more general spiritual lessons—those which concern the great fundamental themes.

1 Study carefully the desperate wickedness of the human heart, as set forth in Judges a. Its independence of God, turning quickly from Him to lean upon other help. See, e.g., 1 : 3, 24; 2 : 11-13, 17, 19; 3 : 5-7; 8 : 27, 33-35; 10 : 6; 17-18. Idolatry must always follow departure from God, for the creature must seek dependence somewhere. Note the recurrence of the phrase "forsook the Lord." 2 : 12, etc. This is ever the first step toward all iniquity. b. Its ingratitude, 2 : 10, 17, 19; 3 : 7; 4 : 1; 6 : 1, 10; 8 : 33-35; 10 : 6; 13 : 1. c. Its folly: seeking the peoples and the gods that were doomed by Jehovah, and against which they had been warned. Read in this light the passages that tell of their sins. d. Its incurable stubbornness: persisting in iniquity after each chastening, just as before, 2 : 3 : 1-7; 4 : 1; 6 : 1, etc. e. Its real love of sin: the

only explanation of the story of the Judges. Study if it is not so. f. Its universal depravity; utterly unfaithful toward God and man. Illustrated particularly in the two awful narratives of chapters 17-21.

2. *The Longsuffering of God.* It is in His dealings with His own rebellious people, whom He has crowned with His best blessings and upon whom He has lavished His tender love, that the infinite patience of God is ever best studied. The book of Judges, consequently, is an excellent place to discover the forbearance of our God. a. His patient waiting at Gilgal, through the years of Israel's increasing unfaithfulness, for their fulfilment of their covenant with Him, 2 : 1. b. The unwavering tenderness of His manner and words toward them, when at last their failure is apparent, 2 : 13. c. His pity for their sin-begotten wretchedness, 2 : 18; 10 : 16. d. His constant readiness to respond to the least sign of penitence in them, 3 : 9, 15; 4 : 3-7; 6 : 6-12; 10 : 15, 16. e. His ever-repeated though never-appreciated mercies in delivering them from their enemies. f. The infinite holy yearning of every message to them, through all their sin, 2 : 1-3; 6 : 8-10; 10 : 11, 12. Pore over these things; it will draw you nearer God.

3. *The Inflexible Law of Indulged Sin: Slavery.* "And the children of Israel forsook the Lord and served," 2 : 13; John 8 : 34. Note 1. Sin's varied, attractive and delusive aspects, as illustrated in the different forms of idolatry and iniquity of the various nations round about Israel. 2. Sin's common character, as shown in its one absolute consequence—the bondage of the sinner. 3. The hopelessness of sin's bondage, as illustrated in Israel's helplessness when given over to her mercies. Sin brings a bondage from which only God can redeem.

4. *The Resources of God's Government and Providence.* a. Of His government, as seen in His ready use of the godless nations to fulfil His purpose of chastening Israel; and of Israel again, and even of the forces of nature, to punish these nations, when Israel's attitude toward Him permitted Him to favor His people once more. b. Of His providence, as seen in the readiness and apparent ease with which He brings forth His chosen deliverers, when

The time is ripe. Study this carefully. Also His perfect management of the details of each deliverance to the accomplishment of His purpose.

These lines of study will be found very helpful to faith. Faith in God grows as we come to know God. "The people that know their God shall be strong and do exploits." Dan. 11 : 32. And it is in considering thus God's "wonderful works to the children of men" that our hearts learn, almost unconsciously, to take hold on Him for themselves. And this is faith.

5. We may note here, again, God's great method of blessing His people: *the choosing and-enduing with faith* and power some *individual*, who becomes the leader of the whole people, to victory and blessing. This is ever God's way. We may expect it to the end. We need to be watchful and obedient here: watchful, lest we be deceived as to whom God is really appointing as a leader of His people; and obedient in recognizing and helping those really approved of God.

II. We shall find this book of Judges full of practical spiritual lessons, or those directly applicable to our everyday lives as Christians. We will notice a few, hoping to suggest lines that will be followed out more fully than we can present them here.

In Judges 1 : 1, God's designation of Judah, whose name means "Praise," as the one into whose hands the land was delivered, teaches us what many Christians are beginning to realize (the Pentecostal Church all knew it) that the spirit of praise is that which gets the victory all along the line in our lives in the heavenly places. (See Ps. 50 : 23. R.V., marg.: 34 : 1; 18 : 3; 148 : 14; 71 : 14; Jer. 17 : 14; 2 Chron. 20 : 21. 22; Isa. 61 : 3; Luke 24 : 53; Acts 2 : 47; Rom. 5 : 2. 3, 11, R.V., marg.; Eph. 5 : 18-20; Phil. 4 : 4; Col. 2 : 7; 3 : 16. 17; 1 Thess. 5 : 16-18; Heb. 13 : 15; 1 Cor. 15 : 58; Isa. 64 : 5.)

But the failure of Judah is already foreseen in the third verse, where we see him leaning for help on Simeon, his brother, whom God had not mentioned at all. Brief success, and then dire failure follow. Verse 19, in its first part sees Judah relying on God and victorious, but in the

latter half of the verse self-strength does not prevail, and God is not mentioned; while the obstacles, the "chariots of iron," are prominent. That Jehovah was not over-matched by these little chariots, see Ps. 46:8, 9. But Judah got his eyes off God upon the difficulties, so "they could not" drive out their enemies. Unbelief brings spiritual paralysis always. See Matt. 14:30; 17:14-20; Heb. 3:19. And it hinders God's power from working in our behalf. See Mark 6:5, 6. "Looking unto Jesus is the conquering attitude of the soul." The successive failures of Benjamin, Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher and Naphtali follow, while in Dan's case advance is turned into retreat. Praise failing, universal unbelief sets in, and total failure follows.

The touching scenes of chapter 2:1-5, shows how faithful God is—tarrying all these years at Gilgal, for the people He loved to prove their fidelity to Him! Compare Joshua 5:2-9. And we see here also how faithless is man. The people cry hysterically, but are really impenitent, for note verse 11: "The children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord." "True repentance means to do so no more." Many think that tears always signify real penitence, but this is far from true. There is a sorrow that worketh naught but death. See 2 Cor. 7:10.

The neglect of the oft-repeated command of the Lord to the parents of Israel carefully to instruct their children in His law, His ways, and His past works in their behalf, is seen in its legitimate fruit in Judges 2:10-13. Study this passage in the light of Ex. 12:25-27; 13:8, 14-16; Deut. 6:6-9, 20-25; 11:19-21.

The vital connection between thorough self-judgment and restoration to God's favor and help is seen again and again in this book. "He judged Israel; and he went out to war, and the Lord delivered," is what we read of Othniel, the first judge, in chapter 3:10. Trace this throughout Judges. Compare Joshua 7; 1 Sam. 7; 2 Chron. 30-32.

Trace illustrations of God's delight in the use of "the weak things to confound the mighty" (1 Cor. 1:26-29) in the stories of left-handed Ehud (chap. 3); the four

women, Deborah and Jael of chap. 4, and their unnamed sisters of chaps. 9 : 53 and 13; humble Gideon (chap 6); the ox-goad of Shamgar; Gideon's little pitcher-armed band, and the jaw-bone used by Samson. Arrange these in your Bible opposite that passage in Corinthians, for a Bible reading. Find in the career of Abimilech (chaps. 9, 10) an example of the complementary truth that God will abase the self-exalted, Luke 18 : 14; James 4 : 6; Prov. 16 : 5; 18 : 12. And compare Judges 9 : 56, 57 with Gal. 6 : 7.

One of the most direct and striking Bible illustrations of a Bible text in the whole Word is discovered on comparing Judges 8 : 1-3 and 12 : 1-6, and then turning to Proverbs 15 : 1. Why should preachers have difficulty in securing homiletical material, when the Book is full of such as this? But do not forget to *apply* this illustration, while noting its aptness.

How many dear children of God are like Gideon in *misinterpreting their experience*. See Judges 8 : 22-27. He nobly refused the crown (vs. 22, 23); but he thought apparently that God's asking him to offer sacrifice (at the beginning of his career, in chap. 6 : 25-27), meant that he was to be the priest of the people; so he made the ephod (8 : 27) that became such a snare to Israel, and defeated, largely, the good his life had done. How often Satan thus destroys the fruit of a noble career, by leading it into blind fanaticism. Let us ever test our course by the Word. Gideon was no *Levite*. See Ex. 28; Lev. 8; Num. 16.

Note most carefully and prayerfully the connection of the Holy Ghost with the work of the servants of God, all through this book of Judges. Othniel—"the Spirit of the Lord came upon him," 3 : 10; Gideon—"the Spirit of the Lord clothed Himself with him." 6 : 34. Heb; Jephthah—"the Spirit of the Lord came upon him." 11 : 29; Samson—"the Spirit of the Lord began to move him," 13 : 25; "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him," 14 : 6; 15 : 14; everywhere we see the secret of the power of these men to have been

The Holy Spirit in Judges.

the enduement of the Holy Spirit. If Israel's heroes needed the Holy Spirit to lead that earthly people to earthly victory, how much more do the leaders of the heavenly people, the Church, need the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire to lead her to victory against the hosts of darkness that swarm the heavenly places to oppose her every move (Eph. 6 : 10-18). To try to preach the gospel without Holy Ghost power is not only folly, but presumptuous disobedience, after the command Eph. 5 : 18; the promises of Luke 11 : 13; John 7 : 38, 39, and the examples of Matt. 3 : 15-17, and Luke 24 : 49; Acts 1 : 12-14; 2 : 4.

Finally, the sad story of Samson should be most deeply pondered by every one of us, as the great Bible **Samson.** example of the abuse and loss of the power of God, by one who had known it in wonderful fulness in his life and service.

What marvelous advantages he had! Parental and natal circumstances like those of the great Baptist. Compare Judges 13 and Luke 1; especially verses 5 and 25 of the one, with 15 and 80 of the other. Early experience of God's presence, blessing and power, 13 : 24, 25. Constant divine interposition and deliverance. Yet he began to fail as soon as he began his work, and his life went out in a dungeon, the prisoner of the very foes over which he had once had such overcoming power. And the reason of it all is right on the surface. Samson himself reveals the secret of all his life in his vehement words of unreason to his expostulating father in 14 : 3: "Get her for me; *for she pleaseth ME well.*" His life was selfish; his will was not laid down; he never chose to say as John did, "I must decrease," John 3 : 30; he would not deny *himself*, and take up his cross, that God might be glorified fully in him. And so self *increased*, till finally he left utterly the place of separation (16 : 19, 20) with which he had been long out of sympathy; and "the Lord departed from him." Oh, sad consummation! irreparable loss! unutterable shame! Next to the loss of heaven most dreadful! May the words of Paul enter the core of our hearts: "I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest, by any

means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected." See 1 Cor. 9:24-27, R.V.

Note the deadly results of Samson's self-indulgence, in their dark, ominous order, in chapter 16, after the Lord's departure from him: 1. Self-confidence, "I will go out," etc., verse 20. 2. Delusion—self-ignorance, "He wist not," etc. verse 20. 3. Captivity, "The Philistines laid hold on him," verse 21. 4. Blindness—darkness, "And put out his eyes," verse 21. 5. Degradation, "And they brought him *down* to Gaza (the place where he *had* had victory, 16:1-3), verse 21. 6. Bondage, "And bound him with fetters of brass," verse 21. 7. Drudgery, "And he did grind in the prison-house," verse 21. This is the spiritual history of every backslider.

Thank God for the *hope* writ for such wandering souls in that "howbeit" of verse 22! But oh, the *dishonor to God* that such lives mean! See verses 23-25. How the Philistines cry, "Our god, our god, hath delivered Samson into our hand!" Dagon gets the glory when God's servants fall.

Part III. The Lives of the Judges.

The lives of the judges should be most carefully traced, as far as possible according to the directions in Lesson II. Note at least the following, respecting every one: 1. Tribal and family connections. 2. Probable early character. 3. Call. How did God first appeal to each? What objections were met and what obstacles overcome by Him in the calling of each? 4. Preparation—the method taken by God with each. 5. Work. Through what did they all do their work? (Heb. 11:32-34). How thoroughly did each accomplish his people's deliverance? Note the strong point and the weak point of each. 6. Failures. Discover the peculiar failure of these leaders, where failure to realize most fully God's plan is noted, and find to what the failure is due in each case. Always seek for the "seeds of things" in a biography. 7. The great lesson taught by the whole life—what does the man's history stand for as a whole?

In the last division of the book—chapters 17-21—the Holy Spirit is revealing the inner life of the people during the period of the judges, that we may know the actual measure of iniquity that prevailed among them, and the deep reasons for all this long story of defeat and disgrace; and that we may be ready for the sweet lessons of the book of Rûth, which is to speak of Christ and better things. The story of Micah and the Danites shows in detail the lapse of the people into *idolatry*—the breaking of the *first* table of the law or their duties toward *God*; while the horrible history of the rest of the book (19-21) shows into what utter vileness of *iniquity* they had fallen, as regards the *second* table, their duties toward *man*. Surely man is a failure under all conditions, and that is the key-word of Judges—"FAILURE."

God is steadily showing us, as we proceed through the Bible, that our salvation must come wholly from *Him*; unless He intervene, in *sovereign, unmingled* GRACE, there is no hope for this race of ours. God's holiness and man's sinfulness are the great double lessons of the Old Testament.



LESSON XVI.

Ruth: The Book of Recovery by a Kinsman-Redeemer.

We have seen, in our study of the Scriptures thus far, that God's constant way with our race is to let them try what they can do first, ere He bring in His own blessed plans of grace for the helpless.

Introductory.

Now in a very real sense none of God's plans are fully brought out in the Old Testament. Not until Christ Himself came, and was rejected, and man had thus utterly failed, and proved himself absolutely, hopelessly, *bad*—not until then was there a clear field for God to bring forth His blessed plans of *grace*, which center in *Christ*.

Now Israel has *failed*, in the book of Judges, as we have seen, to *possess their inheritance*. They failed in the wilderness to obey God's law, and to get thus a standing in righteousness before God. But God went on with them, to let them prove to the full their real character: He took them into Canaan.

Then, when they utterly break down, as Judges shows they did, God brings in this beautiful book of *Ruth*, to reveal His own plans, in *type*, that we may see His grace, above all Israel's sin.

By a Great *Redeemer*, who is a *Kinsman* of the nation (typified in Boaz), Israel is to be restored: though not until they have come into the *Moabitish* state (as set forth in *Ruth*).

The first and last sentences of this book show how truly it is the connecting link between Judges and First Samuel: "And it came to pass in the days when the judges judged." . . . "And Jesse begat David." Between the utter failure of Israel as pictured in the book of Judges, and the kingdom glory of Israel under David in

the books of Samuel, lies this little book of Ruth, combining wondrously, in its four short chapters, valuable history, exquisite narrative, interesting and profitable biography, excellent spiritual instruction, and remarkable typical lessons.

It is properly viewed as a supplement to the book of Judges. Probably Samuel was the human author of both. But it matters comparatively little which of His human pens the Holy Ghost used in writing any book of the Bible: He is the sole *Author of all*.

Part I. The Story.

1. Read Ruth ten times. If possible, do this at one or two sittings. This will give you a wondrous grasp of the book, which you will never lose, and it will open to you as in no other way, very much of the blessed truth hidden in the story, preparing you also for deeper things. Do not omit, then, to do this. You can easily accomplish it in two or three hours, or less. You see we have to keep thrumming away on this string. Men have a marvelous facility for *avoiding* the Word of God. Even while they think they are studying it they are really neglecting it. They are reading *about* it, or reading some book that has references *to* it, which they look up, or studying lessons *in* it that have been prepared by someone, or even examining some little arbitrary portion *of* it, as, for example, the international Sunday school lesson: but none of these things is really *studying the Bible*. If you will read Ruth ten times to-day and twice daily hereafter, for a week, carefully and prayerfully, you will have the foundation laid for such knowledge of the book as will prove of wonderful future profit to yourself and others. You will know the book better than any one of your acquaintance does, and the Holy Spirit will honor your devotion to the Word of God with most precious openings into the very truth itself, the deep things of God.

2. The next step is to name the chapters. With Ruth as the central figure this is easy. In the first chapter we have her great life-decision; in the second, seeking in Boaz's fields for sustenance; in the third, seeking Boaz's person for rest; in the fourth, her redemption, marriage

and fruitfulness. So we have: I., Choosing; II., Gleaning; III., Seeking; IV., Satisfaction. You may perhaps find better names than these. Do so; and then drill by means of them until the book is wholly your own. Be sure always to select names about which you can easily group the facts of every chapter.

3. It will be well now to go over to yourself the story in detail, until you omit no item whatever. Then you have the contents.

Part II. The Characters in Ruth, and their Lessons.

1. *Elimelech*. All we know of him we find in the first few verses of the book. And yet we have enough to reveal the man to us.

We are attracted at once by his name, which means "My Mighty One is King." But the very first thing we are told of him belies his name. No sooner does a season of testing come, than his heart fails to trust the Mighty One, and he runs off to Moab to avoid being thrown on God alone in the time of trial. Unbelief, then, or spiritual heart-failure, was the source of his declension. He takes his family with him, too—that is the contagion of unbelief. Apparently, however, they were not unwilling companions. It should be noted that it is to Moab that they go. Not to Edom, which would mean to the indulgence of the flesh, nor to Egypt, the godless world outright, nor yet to Philistia, the open, desperate and constant enemy of Israel, but to Moab, the place of mere profession, as we have seen. A name to live, a form of godliness, with neither the life nor the power, is where a soul generally comes when it leaves the place of praise in the time of testing.

The self-delusion of the backslider is next evident. In the first verse we read that this man "went to sojourn" in Moab; in verse 2, and that he and the family "continued there"; while verse 4 tells us that they "dwelled there about ten years." They did not intend to stay in Moab, but they did stay. Once out of the place of praise and blessing it loses its hold on us. We gradually be-

come reconciled to lower ground. The spiritual inertia that steals over the backslider is something awful. Many professing Christians are to-day living in complacency on a plane that once they would have abhorred. Moab soon becomes good enough to the heart that has consented to leave Canaan. Not that such people are happy—one can never be happy below the highest point of Christian experience he has ever known—but they are content, and there is a vast difference between the two: When once a soul grows satisfied to stay in Moab, it is only a mighty miracle of God's grace or providence that will reach it for Canaan again.

Such a miracle was wrought, as we shall see, in Naomi's case, but Elimelech sinks down in Moab. Such is the case, we fear, with many Christians to-day. See 1 Cor. 11 : 29-32 and John 15 : 2. Though they may finally be saved, yet their earthly career ends prematurely, and as for their heavenly reward—alas! See 1 Cor. 3 : 15; 5 : 5; Rev. 3 : 11; Luke 19 : 24-26.

2. *Mahlon* and *Chilion*. Weakling sons of decaying parents. Their very names are significant: Mahlon, "sick," and Chilion "pining." Growing up out of Canaan, in a home out of fellowship with Jehovah (there was hardly a family altar there!), marrying out of the covenant and against the law (Deut. 23 : 3), less than one decade sees them both beneath the sod of Moab, fittingly buried in the land to which they had become conformed. They are a startling warning to backslidden parents to-day.

3. *Naomi*. Her name means "Pleasantness." But she is anything but that in this first chapter. Probably she was sweet enough when she dwelt in Bethlehem; she will be loving and kind when she gets back there. See chapters 2-4. But in Moab she is unpleasant, even to repulsiveness. And the reason is simple and plain: she is out of fellowship with God. She is soured. Those who have known and lost God's favor are often as ugly without as they are unhappy within. We cannot expect the name "Naomi" to fit her long in Moab, and she knows she has lost that name. See 1 : 20, 21.

The first step in her deliverance from her Moabitish state

is seen in verse 3: She was left." God in mercy will often tear idols away that we do not give up, and pull up roots that we still thrust into the soil of this earth. But this first bereavement did not avail, for we see the woman, instead of hastening back to Bethlehem, getting her sons married to Moabitish women! (Who can doubt she did it? For she is a confirmed match-maker, with marriage quite uppermost in her mind. See 1 : 9, 10-13; 2 : 2; 3 : 1-4, 16-18. How many, alas, are like her!) But God is too faithful to let her alone (see Ps. 119 : 75), and the sons she clings to are taken, and again we read, "the woman was left" (verse 5).

The first words of the next verse are, "Then she arose." Her afflictions had at last cut her loose from Moab, while the same verse tells of a timely message from Canaan of the blessed plenty there. God arranges things wonderfully, in His dealings with His children, Rom. 8 : 28.

Study very carefully Naomi's opportunity in verse 7: She had a chance to save her two daughters-in-law. But note her utter inappreciation and neglect of it, verses 8 and 9; her only hope for these poor heathen women being that they may get married again! Even their own offer to go with her (verse 10), meets with no response, but, instead, the astonishing question, "Why will ye go with me?" The men of the nations in millennial times will have an answer for such a question: "Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favor of the Lord. . . . In those days ten men shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you!" Zech. 8 : 22, 23. But the only motive Naomi can see for her daughters' coming to Canaan is, husbands! verses 11-13. And the hope of these from her having now failed, they had better go back. Oh, the purblindness of the soul away from God! In verse 15 Naomi openly insists that Ruth go back to her heathen idolatry. Backsliders do not make very good soul-savers. "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation: then will I teach transgressors Thy way," Ps. 51 : 12, 13.

And now appears another element of Naomi's spiritual state, which is very characteristic of the backslider, fault-finding with God. Not only is her testimony for God lost, but she is ready to murmur against Him. See verses 13, 20, 21: "The hand of the Lord is gone forth against me"; "The Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me"; "I went out full and the Lord hath brought me home again empty." (She ought to have blessed God for His mercy in bringing her back at all!); "The Lord hath testified against me and the Almighty hath afflicted me." Such a God as she did have anyhow! Yet He was all goodness; it was she that had gone wrong. Hard thoughts of God always come from a heart darkened by unbelief.

Well, grace finally got Naomi back to Bethlehem. Once there she is quite another person, as we noted above. Yet it is Ruth, and not Naomi, whose gentle graces make this story so sweet.

4. *Ruth.* Make a most thorough study of her character; it is a most delightful and refreshing one. You will also find many lessons in her story, and some that do not lie on the surface.

First, we see her tender heart—she is in tears, 1:9. But Orpah is weeping also, and her heart is not tender at all, her feelings only are touched. More than tears are necessary to prove one's heart right.

Next we have the declaration of both these women to go with Naomi, 1:10. But more than tears and fine words must be found with the upright.

We now see them in another fit of weeping, 1:14. This time in real apparent sympathy for Naomi's desolate condition. And then, while Ruth stands with bowed head and calm, quiet face, Orpah turns again to Naomi, and with much emotion kisses her—but it is a farewell kiss, for she turns back to Moab after it, leaving Naomi and Ruth standing in the way. Not that she is heartless, but it is the only natural thing for her to do. Her heart is in Moab—to Moab she returns. She has never chosen Israel as her people or Jehovah as her God. Her natural feelings had, indeed, for the moment overcome her, and drawn her along with Naomi toward Canaan, but she did

not really want to go there, in her innermost heart. She was not tired of Moab; its gods still had power over her real self. Even Naomi's blunted discernment saw this: "Thy sister is gone back to her gods," she tells Ruth. "They went out from us, but they were not of us," writes John of such as follow a little way with the saints and then turn back, 1 John 2 : 19.

Here we have the two great types of professors: "Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her," 1 : 14. Judas kissed his Master, but John clave unto Him. Not that Orpah is as black just here as Judas, but it is practically the same story. In 2 Tim. 4 : 10 we have it again: "Demas forsook me, having loved this present age." Lot's wife looked back, we read in Gen. 19 : 26; Peter tells us the real nature of those who finally apostatize, in 2 Pet. 2 : 22; and their doom, in Heb. 10 : 39. It is hard to carry a Moabitish heart into Canaan. Ruth's heart left Moab long before her feet. Let us meditate deeply here. Hell is full of people who were once touched and tender, but whose hearts were never really cut loose from sin and the world. "Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord," Heb. 12 : 14.

The secret of Ruth's history, of course, is seen in that word *clave*, and in the phrase of verse 18, "Steadfastly minded." Make a most careful study of her wonderful declaration of purpose in verses 16, 17. Weigh carefully each of her six I wills, noting what each involved, what each cost. Do this slowly and thoroughly—do not omit it. Now do we wonder that God chose Ruth, and honored her with a high place in His Word and in the ancestry of Jesus? With all her heart, Ruth chose Him. "Them that honor me, I will honor." Of course, God's grace had been working on her heart in Moab; all was due to the sovereign grace of God. But grace had wrought also with Orpah. Orpah had resisted and rejected that grace, and "gone back unto her people and unto her gods" (verse 15). Ruth had renounced absolutely everything for Naomi's people and her God. She knew not much about Jehovah. It had been a weak testimony the Israelitish family into which she had married had given

for Him; but she had gotten a little of the truth—enough to set her sincere soul all athirst, and she will sell all to find God and be reckoned as one of His people.

Beloved reader, God will do anything for the sincere soul. There is a sweet word hidden off in the book of Lamentations, a precious book that, because of its title, its position, or its general contents, is little read just now. Our age is too shallow to enjoy such reading. It will be read with earnestness enough shortly, when the persecuted and repenting remnant of Israel have on their hands the task of finding the God who will seem to have hidden His face from them forever. The text is in the third chapter, twenty-fifth verse: "The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him."

Very many people are seeking blessings of the Lord, but so few are seeking Himself. It takes a thoroughly sincere soul to seek God. And this is just what Ruth was doing. She gives up all for God—to find and know God, and be one of His people. So God is good to her; He withholds nothing from her. He was highly pleased with her. He has nothing but good to tell us of her.

Oh, to learn this lesson well! Study Ruth's character in connection with that of two New Testament Gentiles: the Ethiopian Eunuch and Cornelius the Centurion, Acts 8 and 10. The thirty-third verse of Acts 10 gives us a picture of the inmost spirit of a really sincere person before God. Are we thus sincere? Beloved, if we are not, let us no longer wonder if God withholds Himself from us. We are withholding ourselves from Him.

Here, then, in her through sincerity of heart toward God, we find the first and fundamental element of her character, and that which makes all her other graces possible. From this came her fixedness of purpose, verses 14-18. The double-minded are unstable in all their ways, James 1:6-8; but there is no fickleness with those who with single heart, purpose in the Holy Ghost. Study carefully 2 Cor. 1:17-21.

From this root also came her exquisite simplicity and modesty. This is the book of Ruth, but less than nine verses comprise all she says in it. She never speaks un-

less spoken to; and then it is just as brief as possible. In the first chapter she speaks but once; and in the last not at all; though she is the central figure all through.

From this sincerity of heart sprang, too, the sweet purity of purpose that made the delicate scene of the third chapter beautiful rather than repulsive to manly, honest, thorough-going Boaz. "To the pure all things are pure." instinctively Boaz knew what the Bethlehem people had observed, that Ruth was "a virtuous woman," chap. 3 : 11.

But deeper than all is her heart-humility. Sincerity is really the natural life of a humble heart. Humility is the deepest of the graces; and Ruth was blessedly humble. See her voluntary offer to glean—the mark of poverty, 2 : 2; her attitude and language to Boaz, in 2 : 10, 13; her waiting on and for Naomi, 2 : 18; her simple and prompt obedience, 3 : 5—what an exquisite answer! Surely the word, "The Lord giveth grace to the humble," James 4 : 6, is exemplified in her case. Throughout the book she seems to be the servant, the unimportant one, the one who feels herself nothing, ever shrinking back from notice; yet she is the theme of the book—put forward by the Holy Ghost Himself to a high place indeed. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

5. *Boaz*. Great, strong, noble, generous, gracious, frank, he wins our hearts at once. As a man, a very prince. As a master, one of a thousand—coming afield with a "Jehovah be with you" to the lowliest laborer. There was never a strike among his hands, it has been well said. As a lover, wise, appreciative, careful, and lavish, full and free. Study him most carefully in this character. Note also his godliness. In what do you mark this?

Part III. The Typical Truth.

We can only suggest here. There is a rich vein for working in this direction.

Naomi seems to represent Israel, in their national character, now out of their land and in unbelief and utter backsliding. Their testimony for God, typified in Elimelech, is dead; their natural hopes, as shown in Mahlon and

Chilion, have become weak and sickly, and will die utterly, ere they are finally restored to their land forever, for they must despair of all that is human before the salvation of the Lord will be revealed to them. In Ruth and Orpah are seen the two classes of the nation that will be plainly discovered when there comes, as will shortly come, the great test of returning out of the place of mere profession, where as a nation they have been during these centuries, to their own land, and to their national testimony for God. One great part of Israel will cling to Moabitish, or quasi-godly but real worldly hopes; and the other part, the godly remnant, spoken of throughout Scripture; will cleave to their national traditions, hopes, Scriptures, worship and destiny, and will go back to the land of Palestine with their nation to find their God. This will occur just before or in the great tribulation, which is soon to come; but its beginnings are everywhere apparent already. In the great Zionist movement among the Jews of to-day, we see both Ruth and Orpah standing out with Naomi: Ruth in the so-called "orthodox" Jews, who are earnestly and honestly seeking God's favor, and would fain be brought into their land to find Jehovah and be His people again; and Orpah in the "rationalistic" Jews, who are being drawn indeed a little way along with those who are seeking the true Israelitish hopes, but whose hearts are really quite worldly and wicked, and who will leave Naomi, or their national hopes as such, very shortly, and openly go back to Moab, to a godless, apostate, and finally horribly idolatrous state. For, when the Antichrist comes, they will not only accept him (John 5 : 43), but will make an open covenant with him (Dan. 11 : 27; Isa. 28 : 14, 15).

Not that these apostate Jews will refuse to return to Palestine; they may, and probably largely will, do that. But it will be in a spiritual state that will be well represented by the word Moabitish. And from that state they will refuse to come, to ally themselves with Israel's pure national character and hopes, as shown in Naomi. And thus they will be exactly set forth in Orpah.

With Ruth, the godly seed," it will, thank God, be far different. This remnant will, after their return to their land, begin to seek to glean in the fields of Boaz, who of course typifies Christ. That is, they will begin prayerfully to search through the Scriptures for those particular promises which are left to them. For it will be only gleanings that will be left them, when the Church is gone and its blessings, and the great promises to restored Israel are not theirs, because as a nation they are yet unbelieving. Thus, unknowingly, they will be seeking for help in Jesus' fields, who will then have raptured His Church, and be ready to be revealed to Israel, when they shall seek Him with all their heart, Hosea 5 : 15—6 : 1-3; Jer. 29 : 12-14; Zech. 12 : 10—13 : 1. Israel's Boaz will by and by reveal Himself to them (as to whom will He not, if He is sought?); and finally, the nearer kinsman, which is the law, having been proven unable to redeem them, He will show that He has taken their whole case upon Himself, and then He will take them forever to Himself. Then shall be fulfilled of Israel such passages as Isaiah 62 : 4, 5: "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. . . . And as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." Or Hosea 2 : 16, 19, 20: "And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou (Israel) shalt call Me Ishi," (My Husband), "and shalt call Me no more Baali (My Master). "And I will betroth thee unto Me forever," etc. And then the prophesied fruitfulness of Israel shall come, Ruth 4 : 13-17; Isa. 54, 55, 60, 62; Jer. 31—33, etc. Thus we may well call Ruth the Book of Restoration.

The story should be most carefully studied in the typical light. Scripture is full of most wonderful prophetic pictures. We must not neglect, but learn and enter into these things, if we would find all God's counsel.

Part IV. The Spiritual Application for us.

Besides its typical character as revealing Israel, after the terrible failure of Judges, as finally restored to their land, hopes and Messiah through the faithful remnant, the book of Ruth has a rich current of illustrative instruction for us; the Church, both as a body and as individuals.

After the great choice which makes Christ our Savior and God's people our people, as is so beautifully pictured in chapter 1, comes the seeking of sustenance from the fields or pastures of the Word (John 10 : 9), both to sustain our own spiritual lives and to bless others. In this second stage, which is generally more one of service than of fellowship, and which the second chapter of Ruth portrays, Christ manifests Himself betimes to His toiling servant, as did Boaz to Ruth (John 14 : 21), and feeds the hungry soul from His own table, but there is not abiding fellowship, or any real boldness toward Him. The next spiritual step is humbly to recognize and claim our position in and toward Him, as Ruth did hers toward Boaz in chapter 3. This brings present rest (3 : 1), for it brings us to His feet (3 : 7, 8, 11), and it brings increased food and fruitfulness (3 : 15-18). But, at the end of this long night, "when the day breaks and the shadows flee away" (Song 2 : 17), will come the glorious event pictured in chapter 4. when, the nearer kinsman, the law (Rom. 7 : 4; 8 : 3), having failed, Christ will take us to Himself in most holy and blessed relation forever. For the Church is to be the Heavenly Bride, the wife of the Lamb, to dwell above with Him as Israel, even in their restored and blessed state.

A little book by the late Henry Moorhouse, called "Ruth the Moabitess," very beautifully brings out many of these illustrative lessons; though care should be taken in applying for ourselves typical truth that must belong and be interpreted of, Israel.

LESSON XVIII.

The Books of the Israelitish Kingdom.

I—II Samuel. I—II Kings.

In God's great plan of *Creation unto New Creation*, as we saw in the opening lessons of this course, is to be found the explanation of His ways with our race as a whole, and with that nation which He especially chose from amongst others as His own.

Introductory.

In the Present Creation God is showing that He Himself must be the All in All of His creatures; that they have no sources of blessing or life in themselves; that it is both sinful and suicidal to depart from Him, or seek to be independent of Him. He is letting His creatures make their choice, in the present creation—their *eternal* choice, of Him or sin; faith or independence; obedience or rebellion; light or darkness; life or death.

He has permitted death and vanity to pass upon all that is seen in the present creation—upon the *whole* of it indeed (Rom. 8 : 20, 22), that we may realize the poor, passing character of all that is *made*—all apart from *God Himself*. He would thus teach us the lesson of our absolute *dependence upon our God for all things, forever.*

Then, when all His own shall have learned this great lesson, He will remove this present creation (both the heavens and the earth), and bring in a *New Creation*, wherein shall dwell eternal righteousness and infinite blessedness. Those who inherit by divine grace the enjoyment of the glories and blessings of that New Creation, will be forever safe from apostasy, through the discipline of this present creation, in which they learned the only true blessedness of the creature, and especially of the sinful creature—loving and complete surrender to the Creator and eternal dependence upon Him in everything and for all things.

Now the Bible is the record of God's dealings with our human race, during the time of its testing in the old creation, and as part of it. For all men are born into the Old Creation, and are permitted to discover for themselves, by the light of their conscience and the aid of the Holy Spirit, its utter inability to satisfy their needs; they are convicted also by God's direct working upon their hearts, of their guilt before God, and their need of His mercy and grace. They are thus given the responsibility of deciding each for himself whether he will live far from God, independent of Him, in rebellion and lawlessness—that is, in *sin*; or whether he will renounce all that is of self, and cast himself upon God, as every human being's conscience witnesses he should do.

In the Old Testament we find, then:

1. The story of the race as a whole, with respect to God and His claims.
2. The particular history of that nation which He chose from among others to receive His revelations, and stand for Him, if it would, in the world—a separate, holy nation.

We know how the race as a whole has gone: they have chosen self, sin, the Old Creation, the creature rather than the Creator, Rom. 1 : 25.

And we have been tracing Israel's sad failure, also, through stage after stage of its dark progress.

We have seen them fail in the wilderness, and then in Canaan. Now we are to see them cast off altogether their separate character and choose to be like the "nations round about." They will renounce God as their *King*, their *Ruler*, as they have already departed from Him in heart as their *God*.

God will let them go on, now, to the end. He will let them show their hearts, as *sample human hearts*, that all the earth may know what *man* is, in his best estate.

And God will also take advantage of this history of Israel to *reveal His ways* with His creatures, and especially with those who are His people—those who are in *covenant* with Him. This will make Israel's history a priceless treasure-house to the people of God of all ages.

Then, too, God is accomplishing another end in all

this: He is opening up to us His *plans for the future* in this history. For He is so disposing it all—despite human wilfulness and failure, that the history contains great types and shadows of Christ and His great work, as the Beginner and Bringer-in of the New Creation and its blessings.

We saw something of this in Ruth; when Israel's failure was so faithfully pictured, and God's method of recovery by a Kinsman-Redeemer: One who should have the *right* to redeem, being a Kinsman, and who should also have the *power* to redeem.

In the books of Samuel, too, we shall see (amidst the terrible sin and departure from God that led to Israel's asking for a king), God's picture of the future. The whole will lead us to the Great King of David's House, that will by and by take the kingdom—not only of Israel but of all the earth. While in Saul, the choice of the *flesh*, God sketches us an outline of the days just preceding the coming of Christ to take His kingdom, when the Anti-christ will rule on earth.

The first book of the Kings (the two books of Samuel) shows us the kingdom established; the second (Kings), the failure of the kingdom in the hands of man. If Christ is typified in David and Solomon, Christ is demanded in the rest of the story. Man's utter failure to govern himself calls for the "King that shall reign in righteousness" no less surely than do the great types and shadows of Scripture foretell Him. No one can read the Bible or human history with unbiased mind, without coming to this double conclusion, that what this world needs is an *absolute despot*, who shall establish a universal reign of infinite righteousness, coupled with infinite wisdom to direct it, and infinite power to enforce it. The more enlightened among men are to-day talking of and looking for such a regime; while the more ignorant and superstitious throughout the world are looking and longing for such a person.

Such a Monarch is coming, thank God, and many of us believe, coming soon. All hail the day!

But across the sky of the bright vision of the great Advent of our Lord Jesus there drops a heavy cloud of

gloom—of brief duration indeed, but awful and portentous, the coming of that terrible Other One spoken of by Christ in John 5:43, and prophesied and figured from Genesis to Revelation, from Cain to the First Napoleon—the Man of Sin, the Antichrist, the King of Fierce Countenance, the Self-Willed, Lawless One, who shall magnify himself as God, and in the very power of Satan shall carry all before him, and literally enslave the world at last in the conscious bondage of the sin it has loved and chosen.

And so, in the setting up of the kingdom, as typified in the books of Samuel, we must have first this awful prelude of Man's King, with his way and his end set forth in Saul, ere David, "the Beloved," the "man after God's own heart," can take the throne, and bring in the reign of godly power, righteousness and judgment, that will become in Solomon ("the Peaceful One") the real picture of the millennial kingdom of the Prince of Peace, "of the increase of whose government and of peace there shall be no end," Isa. 9.

We need not be surprised or jealous, if we find that the most of the Old Testament must be interpreted as relating primarily to Israel, the earthly people of God. We, the Church, are the heavenly people, the spiritual people, to whom God has given the wondrous place of membership in the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, the personal indwelling and fellowship of the Holy Ghost, and through Him of both Christ and the Father (John 14:23; Col. 1:27; 1 John 1:3); to whom He hath granted and prepared a heavenly inheritance and destiny of unspeakable glory and excellence, as the very sons of God Himself. It is rather an indication of the Church's exalted position and privileges than a slight, that she should have but a very small portion of Scripture (the epistles of Paul, and several chapters of the Gospels and the Revelation) given exclusively to her. It is apparently taken for granted that the Church will be able properly to interpret, apply and use, in a spiritual sense, the Old Testament, although it concerns generally not herself, but Israel. And these Scriptures, studied in the light of that body of

truth just referred to that does concern herself, make together with it a wondrous field of revelation indeed!

So we see that while Old Testament figures and types and lessons refer primarily to Israel, and may be fully interpreted of Israel, yet we may constantly apply the general lessons and truths we find there for our own instruction and edification. And this God expects us to do. Consequently, He uses in the passages that relate to the Church, the matter, character and lessons of the Old Testament as far as possible; though in an entirely new setting, of course. It seems to be the rule, in the Word of God, as one has said, to set forth every great doctrine in some one special passage, on the subject, and throughout the rest of the Bible, to take for granted that that passage is familiar; as for example, the sixteenth and seventeenth of Leviticus on *atonement*; the eighty-ninth Psalm on God - *faithfulness*; the fourth and fifth of Romans (in Church truth) on *justification by faith*; the fifteenth of first Corinthians on *the resurrection of the body*, etc. We may add that God seems to set forth some *person* in the Bible to represent every phase of human character, gracious or natural. For example, Abraham stands forever for faith in God (Rom. 4); Moses for faithfulness toward God (Heb. 3); Balaam for covetousness (Jude and 2 Peter 2); David for whole-heartedness, etc. Each character has its lesson, and is not exactly or nearly duplicated elsewhere in the Word.

Thus, in the present lesson (1 Samuel) we have the story of Saul as picturing fully and once for all, the career of a self-willed soul. We do not need a repetition of this lesson, nor do we have it given. Now, while Saul's history belongs to Israel, and prefigures the Antichrist, with whom Israel will be cursed (through their own choice) in the last days, his life has wonderful lessons in it for all of us, as we shall see. God lets him stand to all ages as the great warning against an unsundered heart.

We may call Samuel the last of the judges, rather than the first of the great prophets, from the passage in Acts 13:20, "He gave them judges until Samuel, the prophet. And afterward they asked for a king." Here, though

Samuel is called "the prophet," because that was primarily his Godward character, it is clear that in his relation to Israel he is viewed as a judge. That was his office. He was the representative of God in the theocracy. God ruled through him. Earthly sovereignty was not yet committed to Israel. When the kings finally come—as they will with Saul presently—we shall find many of them doing after their own will—certainly not after that of Jehovah—and yet allowed to continue on in power, because they represented an order of things in which God was not directly ruling Israel as in the theocracy (from Moses to Samuel), but had entrusted to human hands, for a thorough trial, the scepter of government.

It is exceedingly important that we grasp carefully, and constantly bear in mind, in the study of the history of Israel during the times of the kings, just what God was doing—what His dispensational plan was, in this period.

We can easily discover a three-fold object in Israel's history, as viewed from God's standpoint. First, as toward the race as a whole, Israel's failure under law proves man's general inability to keep God's law; and second, its failure as an earthly kingdom proves man's general inability to govern himself in righteousness. Third, as toward the people of God on earth, whatever body they be, in all ages, Israel's absolute failure in their corporate character as the earthly representatives of Jehovah before a wicked world and the angelic hierarchies, proves man's utter inability, in an unregenerate state (that is, as belonging to the old creation, John 3 : 3; 2 Cor. 5 : 17 and Gal. 6, R.V., margins), or in the mixed state of regenerate and unregenerate together, to bear any sustained testimony for a holy God.

In view of these things, then, we are prepared to enter upon the study of the kingdom in the hands of Israel. God has never for one moment surrendered the government of this earth in any absolute sense. But He has at various times committed to His creatures such offices and responsibilities that they have practically held the dominion of the earth during their times, as if it were really their own. This is one of the ways of God. And when

once He has so delegated His authority, He makes the appointees invincible within the bounds He has set, till they show themselves finally and utterly unworthy of any such position. Then He changes the order of things, giving the power to another for a season.

Of the early, or pre-adamic, political order we know nothing. (See Lesson I.) The antediluvians seem to have had no ordered government, such as we now have; though whatever make-shifts they may have had we know to have been godless, and entirely futile, as regarded any proper restraint of the earth's iniquity. When we come to the ninth of Genesis, all is changed. As we have before seen (Lesson I.), God now invested man with governmental authority over his fellows, with the power of life and death inhering in the new-made magistracy.

Immediately, of course, in the power of such political order, nations and kingdoms began to spring forth, the tenth of Genesis being a record of little else. And there are hints, as in Nimrod, of early emperors; and of extensive confederacies and conquests, as in Genesis 14.

But there is no hint that God had given to men other than minor authority, as it were. There is no such delegation of universal supremacy, for example, as we find in the second of Daniel bestowed on Nebuchadnezzar (verses 37-38). But on the contrary, in that same fourteenth of Genesis there comes on the scene a peculiar, even mysterious personage, who, apparently without any of the earthly pomp and dash of the other kings of the story, yet moves and acts with a dignity that is at once acknowledged by Abraham, the man who knows and recognizes God's way in the earth, as far superior to his own. (It will be well to read thoughtfully the first ten verses of the seventh of Hebrews, in this connection.) Melchizedek is called a "priest of the Most High God," which is just Daniel's name for God as the Disposer of earthly dominions, Dan. 4:17, 32, 34, 35. Melchizedek held the high office of the Royal Priesthood of this earth. He may have been, as one has suggested, the last of a series of such highly honored men. That Moses held power resembling his, we see, in his power in Egypt, and

in his initiating Aaron and his sons into the priesthood. Lev. 9. as well as from Dent. 33 : 4, 5. But we do not find any later man so fully invested with prerogative from God toward men. Though Joshua was given irresistible power (Josh. 1 : 5), he did not have the place the others had; as there is no mention of his holding any priestly place. We may remark that God's purpose seems now to be to keep the royal priesthood unfilled by man till Christ shall come, who only can worthily and permanently hold it. See Ezek. 21 : 26, 27; Zech. 6 : 13.

But that God did invest the nation of Israel with irresistible and absolute power in the earth as the head of the nations, is plain from many Scriptures. And as the heads of His people Israel, God's servants were victorious over all their enemies. It seems to have been the divine purpose to make the chosen nation the agents of His government on earth. This certainly is God's purpose for Israel in the future, Isa. 60 : 12, 14, 15; Micah 4 : 1-5; Jer. 51 : 20-24; Isa. 11 : 14; 14 : 1, 2, and many similar passages. The terrible failure they made has only postponed, not annulled, this purposed consummation.

But we must carefully observe God's chosen method of governing Israel, and through them the peoples, in order that we may see their sin. It was to be through *judges* raised up by Himself, that He would rule His people Israel. He would maintain the theocracy through all. *He* would be their *King*, and their only *King*; while these judges would represent Him, and be the mere *executors* of His will toward the people. That this order of things was really according to God's mind for Israel, and not a mere permission, is seen in Isa. 11, 26, where Jehovah declares that in restoring Israel for the millennial glory He will establish the system of *judges, as at the first*.

Now, as we find in this lesson, Israel rebelled against this order of things. It was not Jehovah as God, but Jehovah as *their King*, whom they rejected. See 1 Sam. 12 : 12; 8 : 7; though this was a sin of like character with the other, 8 : 8.

And so, in His *wrath*, as we read in Hosea 13 : 11, God gave them a king—one of themselves, a man just such as

their hearts were going after. If they would leave God and lean on a broken reed, it must be allowed to break and pierce their hand. And in the meantime God will be working out His great plan through it all. For Christ must yet be given as Israel's true King, when everything and every person besides shall have utterly failed. Through this sinful choosing of a king God was thus able to further His great plans of *grace* toward them!

So we see that while it was *against* God's *mind* for them to ask for a king (which is apparent in the story), it was *according* to His *purpose* that their request should be granted, till they should have a thorough trial of their own will and wisdom. Saul, their own choice, would prove a dismal, a dire, a startling failure.

Then God would go still further. He would raise up David, a man of His own choosing—the very best mere mortal man to be found (and he was a wonderful *man*); and David, God's pick of the sons of men, as Saul was their own, would send a pall of horror through the ages by his terrible sins, and *fail* as an ideal king. Then Jehovah would let the experiment run on through wise, weak Solomon and the rest of the kings—for the most part a sorry list—down to the sickening end, captivity, disgrace, oblivion.

Thus Israel proved their utter unfitness to govern the earth, or even themselves. But, lest the high-minded Gentile should complain that universal dominion had never been given *him*, to show *his* ability for it, a longsuffering God again defers the manifested kingdom of His dear Son, to let the Gentiles have their chance. He transfers the world-wide authority that captive Judah loses to the master of Babylon. The second of Daniel witnesses this transfer, and begins "the times of the Gentiles," Luke 21 : 24. The fearful wreck they will make of it, the Apocalypse, as well as Daniel, discloses. Their ideal Emperor—their *Man of Destiny*, is coming shortly; God's name for him will be, the *Man of Sin*.

Our next lesson will be the chapters of the First Book of Samuel.

LESSON XVIII.

The First Book of Samuel: the Divine Kingdom in human hands.

We have seen the *human race* go utterly away from God (Gen 3—11)

We have then seen that people whom God chose out as His own, when tested as to *righteousness*, utterly break down at Sinai (Ex. 32).

Next, they fail completely in *faith and obedience*, at Kadesh Barnea (Num. 14).

Meanwhile, the *priesthood* had terribly failed, at its very beginning (Lev. 10).

We have a sad record of *constant* failure in the wilderness, often of fearful *sin* (Num. 11, 16, 20, 21).

Next, we find them settling down in the land of Canaan, in general failure: they do not dispossess their enemies, but ally themselves with them and sink into their corruptions (See the whole book of Judges.)

Now, in First Samuel, they are taking a still further step in apostasy: they desire to cast off their allegiance to God as their King, and separate character altogether, and openly return to conformity to the world that long before, ere Abraham, their father, was separated from it, had been definitely judged and rejected by God as utterly bad (Gen 11).

Israel now ask for a *king*—one from among *themselves*, like the *nations round about*: that is, they do not want God's *will*, nor God's *ways*. They will rule themselves—do their own will; and they will walk in the ways of the world, not of God

God will yield to their request. He will "give them a king in His anger" (Hosea 13 : 10, 11), till they eat the fruit of their own ways. Their king will be their curse. They will find the folly of resting on their own arm, instead of upon their God. They will prove their utter inability to *rule*, as they have shown themselves an absolute failure

In all other respects. God was making *an experiment* with Israel during the time of the earthly kings of His chosen people. From the moment that they rejected His direct rule over them through the judges, He let them have their way, that they might find out their folly, and be ready, finally, to accept the King whom He should anoint over them—Jesus, the Son of God. And in order that the trial of man's ability to rule Israel in righteousness might be fully tested, not only was Saul, the best unregenerate specimen of humanity of his day, given a trial, but, after his failure, David, the best regenerate specimen—one of the greatest saints of all the centuries—was given the throne, only to record his own sad failure, and that of his house in the midst of his last prophetic vision of the covenanted coming of the Righteous One (2 Sam. 23 : 1-7). See verse 5. It seems that all the earthly offices with which God the Father will invest His Son will have first been entrusted to human hands until their utter failure proves the absolute necessity of God's order. With this general thought in mind, we will proceed to a brief study of the subject matter of the books of Samuel.

Part I. First Samuel I—XV. The Lapse of Priesthood, the Establishment of Prophets, the Permission of Kingship.

I Read these chapters, as usual, over and over again continuously, until their contents are like the twenty-third Psalm in familiarity. This is always the very first step in studying any passage of Scripture. "As we have said before, so say I now again" (Ga. 1 : 9).

II. What do you think of the following chapter-names?

Hannah's Prayer; II., Hannah's Song; III., Samuel's Call; IV., Ark Taken; V., Ark Triumphant; VI., Ark Returned; VII., Ebenezer; VIII., King Asked; IX., Saul Selected; X., Saul Anointed; XI., Saul's Success; XII., XIII., Saul's Failure; XIV., Jonathan's Victory; XV., Saul Rejected.

Do not accept these chapter titles till you thoroughly satisfy yourself of their aptness. Drill yourself then, till you have fixed them in your memory's wall as hooks for hanging these chapters safely and conveniently up.

III. This lesson naturally falls into four lines for study. (1) The collapse of the priesthood, and the utter chaos in Israel; (2) Samuel the prophet, who stood in the gap; (Jer. 15 : 1; Ezek. 22 : 30). (3) The national rejection of the theocracy; (4) The trial and failure of Saul.

We can hardly overstate the terrible state of things at the time of the present lesson, at *Shiloh*, where the tabernacle had been set up at the conquest of the land, in Joshua's days (Josh. 18 : 1).

The Priesthood in Ruins.

In the hands of Eli's sons, the service of the sanctuary had become a public abhorrence, even in those dark days (1 Sam. 2 : 12-17). God by and by determined to cast off Shiloh utterly—and take His name from thence absolutely, and amid such judgments as would reveal His indignation to everyone. Verses 56-64 of the seventy-eighth Psalm picture the divine action at this time most vividly. Jeremiah also reveals the ruin God wrought in Shiloh, as a warning, to those who dreamed that the possession of the Lord's temple in their midst rendered them immune from His judgment. See Jer. 7 : 1-15.

God removed His ark away from Israel; delivering up to the Philistines, their worst enemies, not only His people, but His very *Ark* itself! Jehovah seemed utterly to *abandon* His people; as indeed He did, as far as they were concerned. In His wrath He *abhorred* them, Psalm 78 : 59. And He utterly judged and rejected the *priesthood* for the present; and put the priestly work into the hands of Samuel, whom He raised up to "stand in the breach," in this awful time. Indeed, He forever rejected the house of Eli from the priesthood (1 Sam. 2 : 30-36; 3 : 13); though He afterward raised up the house of Zadok (1 Kings 2 : 35; 1 Chron. 29 : 22). This was in the new beginning in David's days, and will continue, even in millennial days. See Ezek. 44 : 15-16.

But the failure at Shiloh is complete. It is in accord with all God has hitherto done: He first lets *man* try what he can do. Man fails. Then God brings in *His* plans. The next permanent place for the tabernacle (or *temple*, as

it will become) will be *Jerusalem, God's city*. But then, there, even *there*, where the glorious temple of the millennial time will be one day built (Isa. 2 : 7; Micah 4; Amos 9; Zech. 14, etc.) man must be permitted to try his hand first, at securing and retaining blessing on the basis of his own consecration and faithfulness. But sin will soon cause Solomon's temple to be abandoned of the Lord (Ezek. 8, 9), and then destroyed (2 Chron. 36).

Samuel, one of God's greatest saints (see, for example, Psalm 99 : 6), should be most carefully and prayerfully studied. He stood alone in the awful gap between Israel and Jehovah, when the priesthood had broken down, when the tabernacle had been deserted, and the ark of God taken; when the people were on the verge of destruction from their enemies, and of final alienation from their God. For such a one as Samuel the Lord sought in vain in Ezekiel's time (chapter 22 : 30). For such He must surely soon be seeking again, on behalf of professing Christendom, else the dread word of Rev. 3 : 16, and Rom. 11 : 21, 22, will be shortly fulfilled, as we know it will eventually be.

The Prophet who stood in the Breach.

Study Samuel as a man of prayer; where he learned it (from his mother, do you think?); the little fellowship he had in it; how he persisted in it; his mighty faith and power in it; his boldness in the things he asked and in his method and manner of asking; the constant testimony of the people to his power with God in prayer; God's estimate of him as a man of prayer—ranking him with whom? (Jer. 15 : 1).

Study also the failure of Samuel with his sons, as an astonishing thing in the light of his observation in Eli's case. Do you think that Samuel was to blame for his sons' breakdown? Acts 13 : 20 would seem to prove that Samuel was the last of the God-appointed judges, so that his act in making judges of his sons was not by divine direction. It is a most dangerous experiment to put those uncalled of God into positions of prominence among God's people, as Satan will try to overthrow such, and God does not guarantee support to our self-chosen plans. Look

up carefully the following promises and precepts as to the salvation and rearing of the children of godly parents. Claim the children for Christ and never give them up. (Acts 2 : 39; 16 : 31; 1 Cor. 7 : 14; Prov. 23 : 13, 14; 22 : 0; 2 Tim. 3 : 14, 15; 1 : 5.) This lesson is full of precious instruction to parents. If both Eli and Samuel failed with their families, Hannah did not; and the secret of it is seen in chapter 1, verse 28—"As long as he liveth he is granted to the Lord."

In Hannah we see most beautifully set forth the essential traits of a "mother in Israel":

Hannah. 1. Living faith in Jehovah and consequent vital godliness, 1 Sam. 1 : 11, 12, 20.
 2. Exalted capacity for understanding God and His ways, 2 : 1-10.
 3. Prevailing power in prayer, 1 : 10, 12, 19, 27.
 4. Rigid faithfulness toward God, 1 : 22, 24, 28.
 5. Passionate holy desire for children, with the willingness to devote them *wholly* to God, 1 : 7, 11, 28. (Would that more modern professing Christian women were like Hannah here!)

6. Sweet motherliness, 1 : 23; 2 : 19.

7. Unvaunted but constant self-sacrifice, 1 : 9, 28; 2 : 19.

A beautiful lesson on the method of the prayer of faith is seen in this first chapter. Real need, verses 2, 6, 7; definite prayer, verses 10, 11; consecration, verse 11; impurity, verse 12; reality, verse 13—"in her heart"; faith, verse 18; prevailing with God, verses 19, 20; confident assurance, verse 20 (Some people don't believe it if they do get an answer. See Job 9 : 16.); fidelity, verses 22, 24; public testimony, verse 27; persistent faithfulness, verse 28; triumphant praise, chapter 2 : 1-10.

Study Hannah very carefully—she is one of the great women of God. Compare her especially with Mary and Elizabeth, in Luke 1 and 2.

In Eli we have as great a contrast as possible to the vigorous faith, thorough devotion and intense zeal **Eli.** of Hannah.

What do you think was the real cause of his terrible life-failure? Find, if possible, the *root-sin*, the open

door through which the enemy came to ruin his house. Was it the idolatry of his sons (2 : 29, 30)? Or the refusal to judge and deal sternly with sin when he saw it, through cowardice or doting allowance (3 : 13, 14; 2 : 22-25)? Or through possible self-indulgence (4 : 18)? Or even through a hasty, judging temper (1 : 14)? That God accounted him unfaithful, we see in 2 : 35; and the terrible punishment that came to him and his house compels us to look for grievous things in his life. Study most carefully this subject.

Yet we must not turn away from Eli without noting the spark of godliness even in him, feeble though it was. Show how it appears in 3 : 18; 2 : 24; 1 : 17; 3 : 8, 9.

Could a man with a wicked heart, one who did not know God at all, nor love His honor and His people at all, have spoken as Eli did on these occasions? Why not? Go over each passage with this in mind. Believe me, this is invaluable—such study as this.

Saul is one of the most remarkable characters in the Bible, in that his history puts before us more fully than that of any other individual the steps in damnation, as well as its primal source in self-will. **Saul.** The words "forced myself," in chapter 13 : 12, show the seed of which the "would not" of chapter 15 : 9, is the shoot, chapter 28 : 6-8, the fruit, and chapter 31 : 4, the harvest. "Self-chosen" is the word that sums up Saul's career. The end of every self-chosen way is the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. The most fatal privilege that a man can secure before God is to be allowed to do as he pleases. It is, alas, often the sad necessity of the divine government to send forth the sentence: "He is joined to his idols; let him alone" (Hosea 4 : 17). Before the bar of God's judgment every lost soul will confess that the words of the Savior of the world were true in his own case: "I would . . . but ye would not." Matt. 23 : 37. Compare John 5 : 40; Prov. 14 : 12; Eccl. 8 : 11; 1 Peter 2 : 10.

The steps in Saul's awful career are most instructive, and should be carefully studied. Someone has well said, "Sin grows." As first he comes before us Saul is rather prepossessing than otherwise. He seems outwardly to be

an industrious, honest, generous sort of a person, and even to be modest—almost to humility. (See 1 Sam. 9; 10 : 16, 22, 27.) We see, however, all this modesty and retirement disappear at once when he is elevated to the kingship; and we discover the real man: occasion ever brings out the real truth. If we look carefully we see the foundation of all his terrible failure at the very beginning of his story—he appears, in chapter 9 : 7, to have been crassly ignorant of all the things in which an Israelite indeed (John 1 : 47) would have been most fully and thoughtfully informed—the men and the methods of God. He seems not even to have known Samuel's name, and nothing whatever of the ways of the prophets of God, but supposes Samuel must be hired as any fortune teller!

Saul's first recorded step aside is seen in chapter 13 : 8, 9, where we find him guilty of direct disobedience (chapter 10 : 3) and startling presumption. Saul was king, not priest, and was, withal, not a Levite. Then he excuses his sin—always a bad sign (chapter 13 : 11, 12), his very excuses revealing his utter unbelief in God, on account of which evil heart (Heb. 3 : 12) he is wholly unable to stand God's testing him by the absence of Samuel, the presence of the foe, and the defection of the people. Study this passage very carefully. Under his first real test Saul utterly breaks down: yet only the denial of perpetuation of the kingdom to his seed, not the loss of the crown itself, is the punishment here. (See chapter 13 : 13, 14.)

In 13 : 13 here we see how *bona fide* was God's trial of Saul. He might have had all, though he lost everything. This first failure need not have resulted so fatally as it did. Had he humbly accepted the warning of God at this time, he could yet have had the kingdom during his lifetime, and have received the forgiving grace of God for eternity. But he was too proud for any such submission as this involved. He would fight it out in pride, as he had begun. And so his story rushes on to the dark days of Gilboa.

His rash injunction in chapter 14 well-nigh loses to the people all the fruits of the victory which Jonathan, the noble man of faith, has secured. Note the arrogant self-assertion in the "I" and "mine" of verse 24, when com-

pared with the preceding verse, and the terrible persistence of selfish pride in backing up his own rashness.

Then comes the final utter, terrible disobedience of chapter 15, which sealed his career as king, and broke off from him the fellowship of Samuel and the regard of Jehovah. From this on his descent was rapid and unchecked. His words to Samuel in 15 : 30, "I have sinned; yet honor me now before my people," reveal at once the depth of his heart-pride, and the utter shallow inadequacy of his religious convictions. In the very presence of the God whom he had disobeyed, and of the holy man of God who is speaking God's terrible sentence of judgment to him, he is thinking only of the good opinions of those about him—"honor me!" We cannot wonder that Jehovah says, "I have rejected him." He could not do otherwise. Saul had become deaf to all but praise of himself. Satan, not God, can freely use such a man; for Satan appeals to and gratifies these lusts of selfishness, while God calls men to deny them utterly.

So we shall not wonder when we read by and by that Saul has been given over to "an evil spirit." Nor, if we know the ways of God, are we amazed to learn that this evil spirit is from the Lord. The twenty-second chapter of 2 Kings will show us how this was so, and we can get further light from the second chapter of 2 Thessalonians; and still further in the Scripture concerning the dark time ahead for this world in the great tribulation, when the whole earth will run madly after the Antichrist (not the pope, but an individual yet to be manifested), because they have given themselves over to Satan through their rejection of the counsel of God, Rev. 13; John 5 : 43; Isa. 28 : 14-22; Dan. 8 : 23-25. If men will "sell themselves to do evil," as Ahab did, or, as we now find Saul doing, will set out madly to do their own will, God will give them up," finally, to believe a lie. Because lies are what they love and will have, they shall have them, 2 Thess. 2 : 10-12; Rom. 1 : 24, 26, 28. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is the ways of death," Prov. 14 : 12.

Saul's rapid descent into iniquity after the last touch of the Spirit of God upon him, in chapter 19: 23,24, is startling indeed. His high-handed rebellion is seen in chapter 20 : 31; his deliberate breaking of the last tie with God, in chapter 22 : 6-19; his mad self-delusion in 23 : 21; his sorrow that wrought death, 24 : 10 (cf. 2 Cor. 7 : 10); his deep wilfulness, as revealed in his thorough consciousness of God's purpose, alongside his own hellish rebellion, 24 : 17-21; 26 : 21-25; his desperate resort in his God-forsaken need to the divinely forbidden communication with the spirits of the departed, 28 (see Isa. 8 : 19, 20; Deut. 18 : 10-14; Lev. 19 : 31; 20 : 6 and 1 Chron. 10 : 13, 14); his fearful profanity in support of his course, 28 : 10; his satanic pride to the very last, 31 : 4; and his final horrible rushing by his own hand into a lost eternity 31 : 4; 2 Sam 1 : 6-9.



LESSON XIX.

God's King Chosen, Anointed, and Victorious; but Rejected and Exiled.

FIRST SAMUEL XVI.—XXXI.

We have seen that upon Israel's ungrateful rejection of Jehovah as their King, He took occasion to bring out His plans for the future, when Christ will be the King of Israel and rule over the nations in righteousness.

And first, man is allowed to have a king that pleases the flesh. This is *Saul*. When he is seen to be intolerably bad, God "removes" him, Acts 13:22.

Then He raises up one who is marvelously typical of Christ Himself, as we shall see.

But just as to-day, though Christ has been chosen and anointed, yet He is rejected by the world, ruled still by Satan, so David is kept long out of his kingdom by Saul. So this double process goes on. Saul ripens in wickedness and for judgment, while David grows in grace and is prepared by suffering and divine discipline for the right use of that power which Saul, who knows not God, is so wretchedly abusing.

I. Read the chapters repeatedly as usual, for mastery of the material.

II. The chapter-names: XVI., David Anointed; XVII., David and Goliath; XVIII., Saul's Jealousy; XIX., David Exiled; XX., David and Jonathan; XXI., Shew Bread; XXII., Adullam; XXIII., Keilah-Ziph; XXIV., Saul's Robe; XXV., Nabal and Abigail; XXVI., Saul's Spear; XXVII., Joined with Philistines; XXVIII., Witch of Endor; XXIX., Separated from Philistines; XXX., Ziklag; XXXI., Mount Gilboa.

III. The glad anointing of David, in chapter 16, is a wonderful picture of the anointing of David's great anti-type with that which the oil and the horn symbolize—the Holy Ghost and the real power of God. (See Acts 10:38;

Luke 3 : 21, 22; 4 : 14. It should be sadly noted that Saul was not anointed with the horn, but with a mere vial of oil. (Compare 1 Sam. 10 : 13, with 10 : 1.) The Holy Ghost enduing a man for a brief act of service is one thing; His coming on one from the day of his anointing "and forward" is quite another. (Compare 1 Sam. 11 : 6 and 16 : 13, down to 2 Sam. 23 : 1, 2.)

It is at Bethlehem, "the house of bread," that David, "the beloved" (as his name means), the son of Jesse, "the living one," is anointed over the people of God, "in the midst of his brethren;" and the Spirit comes mightily on him henceforth—all a most beautiful type of Christ. (See John 6 : 32-35; 6 : 57; Matt. 3 : 17; Ps. 45 : 7; Isa. 42 : 1.) This type is wonderfully sustained in the seventeenth chapter, where we see in David's sling-stone victory over Goliath, Christ's successful conflict with Satan in the wilderness, with the smooth stones of the word from the living water of the Spirit of God; while in the *coup-de-grace* with Goliath's own sword and the resultant Philistine consternation, we see pictured the final utter overthrow of Satan and his hosts by our Lord on the cross, where "through death (Satan's own sword) he brought to naught him that had the power of death—that is, the devil," and "spoiled the principalities and the powers" (Heb. 2 : 14; Col. 2 : 15). Real victory over the hosts of darkness is realized by us as we enter boldly into Christ's victory over them, making it ours, and so sharing in it, just as Israel shared in that of David. Steadfast faith (1 Peter 5 : 9) and a "shout" (1 Sam. 17 : 52) will bring the result of James 4 : 7.

In Job 15 : 25, 26, the rebel against God's government is described as running madly upon the thick bosses of the buckler of the Almighty—a hopeless warfare, indeed! Isaiah pictures it as "a potsherd among the potsherds of the earth striving with its Maker" (Isa. 45 : 9, R.V.). In such a struggle we now find Saul engaging—self-willed, sin-blinded, pride-hardened, desperate. He goes down, of course, at the end, and out into the darkness, as all must do finally who fight the holy will and ways of God.

In chapter 18 we note Saul's jealousy in verse 8 ripen

through verse 9 into the murderous envy of verse 10; and though mingled with the checking but harrowing fear of verses 12-15, we find it developing into cool, treacherous villainy in verses 17-25; while it fruits out into direct, sustained and conscious hostility to Jehovah in verses 28 and 29. This is a dark chapter; sin indeed grows.

On the other hand, we begin to see in David's career the proofs of the heart-searching wisdom of God in selecting him as the great type of Christ the King. See Ps. 89: 19, 20; Acts 13: 22; 2 Chron. 16: 9. David's frank, whole heart of faith and his loyal love for God are markedly apparent already in his life. He fails again and again, but he will return every time to his Lord, with a humble, penitent heart, and we shall search in vain in this book to find in David that awful Satanic thing that was the ruin of Saul—self-will.

We cannot but be charmed with the lovely grace of David's character in these trying times. His faith, his meekness, his real humility toward God and man, his generosity of heart, his frankness and sincerity (you never know what Saul is thinking about or what he will do, but you see David's heart-motives continually); above all, his exquisitely tender conscience, as revealed in his quick repentance of sin, and his consuming desire to walk with God and to please Him, together with his marvelous knowledge of God's mercy and grace—all strike the candid reader everywhere in this story, and leave the conviction that this man David was rightly named by God "a man after His own heart." I must say I have little sympathy with the professing Christian who does not love David. It is a sign of spiritual shallowness and very small heart-experience of the grace of God not to see the divine beauty of this great soul.

The love for David of Michal, the daughter of Saul, a worldly-minded woman, though a real affection, is destined to give way to the deeper sentiment of selfish pride by and by (2 Sam. 6: 16 and 20). Thus must it always be. No Christian can fully trust the affection of a worldling. Below all is the enmity of Gen. 3: 15.

Jonathan's devotion to David was of a different char-

acter entirely from that of Michal, although it, too, sadly failed. His love declared itself (18 : 3), it sacrificed (18 : 4), it delighted (19 : 2), it testified (19 : 4, 5; 20 : 32), it served (19 : 7; 20 : 28, 29, 35-40; 23 : 16), it suffered in heart (20 : 34, 41); but it did not break away from all else and separate itself to the object of its love. Thus, although Jonathan hoped for much (23 : 17), he was destined to bitter disappointment (31). It is only those who openly suffer with Christ that will reign with Him (2 Tim. 2 : 12; Rom. 8 : 17. b; Rev. 2 : 26). We must go out with Him, bearing His reproach (Heb. 13 : 13), if we would come in with Him, bearing His renown.

This brings us to note the typical bearing of this whole period of David's life. In chapter 22 : 2, we find a motley array of sorry folk resorting to the banner of the exiled king. "The distressed, the indebted, the bitter of soul"—what a description of those who come to Christ! For He, too, is the chosen and anointed One, now exiled from David's throne, which belongs to Him, and upon which He will yet sit (Luke 1 : 32, 33.) It was this same forlorn crew who afterward came to the throne with David, sharing the glory as they had shared the shame.

These men who followed David in the time of his rejection by the nation as a whole, no doubt directly foreshadow the remnant of Israel, who will be turned to Christ at last and be true to Him in the dark days of the tribulation, when the majority of the nation will be following their Saul, Antichrist. But they also sweetly illustrate the position in the world of the true Church of Christ of this day, called to be faithful in an evil age to her God-anointed but earth-rejected Head.

There are several crises in David's life in the latter part of this lesson. Probably those in chapters 25 and 27 are the most serious. In each case he took himself out of God's hand, as far as that was possible; in the first instance, through impatience and anger under strong provocation; and in the second, through discouragement and unbelief under long trial. How marvelously human was David after all! And how infinite God's mercy in delivering him from murder in the one case and from abandonment of his life-calling and his national hopes in the other!

LESSON XX.

The Second Book of Samuel.

In the First Book of Samuel we have seen God permitting His people Israel to make trial of their ability to rule themselves by one of their own number. We have seen the sad circumstances under which the request of the people for a king came about.

Introductory.

The *priesthood* had utterly broken down (1 Sam. 2—4). At first, when Israel had come out of Egypt, God had made Moses (His *prophet*, His direct representative) responsible for Israel. But Moses broke down in His obedience (Num. 20), and could not bring the people into the land.*

God had established the *priesthood* as the basis of Israel's life in their land, under the law, Heb. 7 : 11. Even Joshua was subordinate to Eleazar, Josh. 19 : 51; 21 : 1, etc. Upon the *priesthood* depended the maintaining of the relationship between Jehovah and His people.

But this *priesthood* became itself so absolutely bad, that, so far from keeping the people in connection with God, it drove them from God, 1 Sam. 2 : 17.

Then, even before Israel asked for a king, God Himself began to get ready for a complete change of arrangements, under which the *priesthood* should be made subordinate to *kingship*. See 1 Sam. 2 : 35: "He" (the faithful *priesthood* to be raised up in the place of Eli's house) "shall walk before Mine anointed." That is, the priest would be under the control of the king, instead of the reverse.

From the days of Saul, and on to the end of the kingdom, we shall see these conditions maintained. The king

* We need to remember that in these Old Testament types we have *Israel* and the coming earthly *Kingdom* in connection with *them*, and their *Messiah*, shown forth: but not the *Church*, or the present dispensation, except in a very secondary way.

is accountable for the people. God holds him so. The priesthood is secondary. And God deals with the people according to the faithfulness of the king; if he is bad, they are allowed to follow him, and judgment comes on him, and his people; if he is righteous, the whole nation is blessed on the king's account.

Along with the kings, however (and beginning with Samuel), we shall see the work of the *prophets*, as God's direct messengers, the moral *guardians* of the kingdom. They watched over the kings with jealous eye. But the *power* was still with the king. The prophets were often put to death by the kings. Even Saul began to resist Samuel. See 1 Sam. 19 : 18-20. God let man go on in his own way, in these kings; only giving them timely and solemn warning, from time to time, by His prophets. Power He really committed to the kings, and responsibility for the people, as we have said.

God is permitting man to have thorough trial, on every line, and in all circumstances; that, when he has universally failed, the way may be clear for our Lord Jesus to come in as the New Man, in all His offices and glories.

Meanwhile, as we have already shown, God so arranged the history of those days of human trial and testing, as to contain wondrous types and foreshadowings of the time of Christ's coming, of His character, and His manner of rule, as King.†

The key word of 1 Samuel, then, is *Man's King*. It is one of God's ways with men to let them have their way till they are filled with it (Prov. 14 : 14; Matt. 17 : 19; Ps. 107 : 10-13; Deut. 32 : 20). Having utterly failed to deliver the people of God, and failing still more miserably to honor God. Saul left Israel in a much more wretched condition than the nation had been at his coronation. So far from being their deliverer, he had proven their destroyer. That ghastly headless trunk on the wall of Bethshan (1 Samuel 31 : 10) is a striking commentary on the end of the ways of man; whether it be the way of the multitude, which is

† Moses in a real sense, combined in himself the three great offices of Prophet, Priest and King. See Deut. 18. 18; Lev. 8 : 13-30; Deut. 33 : 4, 5. But he was pre-eminently God's prophet to Israel.

to trust their hero, or the common way of the hero, which is to trust himself.

The key of 2 Samuel is, *God's King*. When man had been brought to his extremity the divine opportunity had come. David, the chosen, anointed, and disciplined man of God's liking, was now brought out from his long time of trial and waiting to take the throne. With almost incredible rapidity and wonderful thoroughness he subdues all the enemies of Israel, and brings the kingdom to be the greatest on earth. He exhibits the while a greatness of heart toward his former enemies, and towards everyone who is willing to receive it, that show his generosity to be second only to his godliness; which latter, of course, is easily seen to be the great motive passion of his whole life and career. 2 Samuel 5 : 10.

Second Samuel I—X. David Received, Victorious, Reigning.

I. Read and re-read the lesson till all is familiar.

II. The chapter-names: I., David's Lamentation; II., At Hebron; III., Abner; IV., Ishbosheth; V., All Israel; VI., Ark of God; VII., House of God; VIII., Conquest; IX., Mephibosheth; X., Triumph. There are priceless spiritual lessons in the chapters before us.

An Amalekite (type of the lusts of the flesh) finally killed Saul (2 Sam. 1 : 10). He would not slay them (1 Sam. 15), and they slew him: Have you slain them all? (Gal. 5 : 24). Then, too, that David could not bold spite—no sincere Christian can (Matt. 6 : 14, 15)—is seen not only in his generous heart's lamentation for his bitter enemy, Saul, but in all his history. What enemy did he not gladly forgive? Then how sweet is the fruit of steadily refusing to avenge or exalt ourselves, but of patiently waiting only on God for deliverance and exaltation as David did! See 1 : 16; 2 : 1; 3 : 31-39; 4 : 10-12; then 5 : 1-3. Compare Psalm 38 : 12-15.) And how great the contrast between Saul and David, as seen in 1 Sam. 14 : 24 and 2 Sam. 5 : 12. That David could not rest with God's enemies in Jerusalem, the heart of the land (5 : 6-9), is a beautiful illustration of our

Lord's desire for His people's entire heart's devotion to Him. Indeed, we discover in David's entering upon his kingdom not only a beautiful picture in type of our Lord's final taking of the kingdom of this world, but also some sweet lessons of His method with His people as individuals. In 1 Peter 3 : 15, we are told to "sanctify in our hearts Christ as Lord"; and if we let Jerusalem, the heart of Canaan, illustrate the heart of the Christian, we will find many blessed practical lessons in these first chapters of 2 Samuel.

The beautiful *subjectness* of David's heart to his God, is seen constantly. Although he knows that he is **David** God's anointed, and that, in all human wisdom, the time has now come for him to inherit his throne, yet he will not move a step toward it, till he *waits on God*. Note the exquisite verses in 2 Sam. 2 : 1-4. David *loved God's will*.

In many respects David is the most *ingenuous* of all the Bible characters. He was so great that he could be nothing else than simple. This makes the secret of his life the harder, perhaps, to discover. It is the simplest things about which we generally know the very least.

But it will not be impossible to understand David if we approach him *from God's viewpoint*, endeavoring to see him as God saw him. Indeed this is the only real way to study the men of God as such.

We all know at once what God said of David, that he was "a man after His own heart." In some peculiar sense David satisfied God. God speaks of no other man in just this way. If we turn to Acts 13 : 22, we find the particular respect in which David so pleased God: "I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who shall do all My will." It was in respect of his spirit of implicit obedience that God was able to speak thus of him.

But in the margin of the revised version of this passage in the Acts we find new light. The *plural*, "wills," is here given. The meaning of this seems to be that God found in David so obedient a spirit that He could rely on him to execute His every command and desire. Though David fell into such grievous sin, we never hear a hint of real

heart rebellion against God, even amidst the terrible years of discipline that followed his sin. Nor do we find him neglecting any duty or service to which God called him. Instead of this, we see him at the close of his life with millions upon millions of treasure and untold quantities of other costly materials, prepared for that house of God that he had been forbidden to build. The man who can read 1 Chron. 29 and fail to see a reason for the pricelessness in God's sight of His servant David's devotion needs a vital revelation to his own soul of the nature and character of the God of the Bible.

This sweet, humble subjection of heart to God must, of course, be kept in the foreground as we study David, for the simple reason that God declares it to be the secret of his character as the man of His choice and delight. Compare with Acts 13 : 22; 1 Sam. 15 : 28 (with its context, especially verses 22, 23 and 26); 16 : 7; 23 : 2, 4, 10, 11; 24 : 5, 6, 10, 12; 25 : 32, 33; 26 : 9-11; 2 Sam. 1 : 16; 2 : 1; 2 Sam. 5 : 19, 23; 7 : 18-29 (note David's name for himself, ten times over in this brief prayer, "Thy servant").

If we seek to discover the secret of David's whole character, I think we will find it in two, I may say *the* two, great elements of his religious nature. The first was a high and holy fear of God, begotten through the wonderful conception he had of God's character and ways; the second was a passionate love of God, to which he surrendered his whole being. We will refer to a few passages bearing upon each, leaving the student to seek out others—an easy and delightful task indeed! As to the first, 11. Sam. vii., 21-24; Psalms viii., cxxxix., xix., l., xxix., lxxxvi., xcix., civ., cxiv. may be considered as samples of a host of passages in the Psalms, while many incidents of David's life show forth this deep knowledge of, and reverence for, the greatness and glory of God. As to the other, we may cite 1. Chron. xxix., 3; Psalm xviii., 1; xl., lxiii., cxvi., cxix., 14, 20, 24, 30, 35, 47, 48, 53, 72, 77, 97, 103, 111, 112, 113, 127, 131, 136, 143, 145, 159, 162, 163, 167, 174.

Especially in these verses of the sixtieth Psalm do we see David's fear of God and his devoted love for Him producing that sweet obedience which God so highly prized.

And right out of the same wall groweth that other chief element of David's character—living, vigorous faith in God. For no one can have a right fear of God and a real heart love for Him, without being thereby a man of faith. On the one hand godly fear forbids the soul to depart from God and His obedience; while love keeps drawing the soul to God as its goal and delight. So that the obedient, loving soul is in the constant attitude and atmosphere of faith. Perhaps the most striking example of David's faith in God is seen in his conduct in the terrible crisis of the last chapter of II. Samuel. Here, in verse 14, we see a childlike simplicity of confidence in God that could only have been possible to one with a deep acquaintance with God's character on the one hand and a devoted love for the Possessor of that character on the other. Study this whole subject thoroughly.

The life of David may be divided into six great epochs, as follows:

David's Life.

1. The early years in Bethléhem, 1 Sam. 16 : 11-13; 17 : 12-20.
2. The time of favor at the court of Saul, 1 Sam. 16: 14—18.
3. The period of exile, 1 Sam. 18—31.
4. The glorious season of conquest and of administration in Israel, 2 Sam. 1—10; 1 Chron. 11—19.
5. The dark sin and the years of chastening, 2 Sam. 11—21 : 14; 1 Chron. 21.
6. The golden sunset, 2 Sam. 21 : 15—23; 1 Chron. 22—29; 1 Kings 2 : 1-11.

The sixth and seventh chapters of our lesson are most important: the one because of the bringing before us again the ark of God, which had all this time (since the days of Eli) disappeared as the place of meeting of God and the people; and the other because of the great kingdom covenant made by Jehovah and David and his house. We will speak more fully of these chapters at the opening of our next lesson.

LESSON XXI.

David, Sinning, Suffering, Sanctified.

II Samuel XI.—XXIV.

I. Do read the chapters faithfully.

II. The chapter-names of this lesson are: XI., Uriah; XII., Repentance; XIII., Amnon; XIV., Impenitence; XV., Absalom's Rebellion; XVI., David Cursed; XVII., Absalom Counsell'd; XVIII., Absalom Killed; XIX., David Restored; XX., Sheba's Revolt; XXI., Gibeonites Avenged; XXII., David's Song; XXIII., Last Words; XXIV., Three Alternatives.

The very first chapter of this lesson sets our hearts all acry with the very words of him over whom we sorrow, "How are the mighty fallen!" (See chapter 1 : 19.) Once again our idol is shattered low at our feet, and the voice comes from heaven, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man" (Ps. 146 : 3)..

Moses was the great type of Christ the Prophet; but when Moses sinned God shut him out of the goodly land and pointed our disappointed hearts on to Jesus, who should "do always the things that were pleasing to His Father." (Num. 20; Deut. 34; John 9 : 20). Aaron was, in his service, the great type of Christ the Priest; but for his participation in the sin of Meribah, God sent him up to the top of Mount Hor, to come home without even a sight of Canaan (Num. 20 : 24). David is the great type of Christ the King, but our lesson sees him, because of his terrible sin, driven from his throne in anguish and shame into exile; from which he recovers, only to confess in abiding sorrow the sad failure of himself and his house, to realize, either the ideal of the true theocratic kingdom or the promise of the Righteous Seed, in whose hands God had, in

the great covenant of 2 Sam. 7 : 10-16, sworn to establish the kingdom of Israel forever.

Thus all the human types of our Lord, by their very failure fully to reveal their anti-type, accomplish best of all their end—to draw the attention and the desire of God's people toward Him in whom only is aught of perfection or satisfaction realized. 1 Samuel witnessed the complete and eternal failure of the savior and sovereign Israel had chosen; 2 Samuel now witnesses the personal failure of him of whom God testified that he was "after his own heart." And our hearts again cry, with the seer of Patmos, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" because we see that there is no help or hope in man. We may well find the key of this lesson in the sweet "last words of David" of chapter 23: "The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spake to me: There shall be One that ruleth over men—a Righteous One, that ruleth in the fear of God. . . . Verily, my house is not so with God" (2 Sam. 23 : 3-5). And then, after this confident prediction of the glorious second coming and blessed reign of Christ on earth, and this humble confession of the unworthiness and sin of his own family, David's faith beams out bright and strong in the covenant promises, as to the house from which this coming Ruler shall spring. "Yet"—in spite of all the failures—"hath He made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. . . . It is all my desire, although He maketh it not to grow" (verse 5). Through the weary years after his sin, when trouble after trouble haunted his steps, his heart found its solace in the thought of the promised One, who would redeem all the past and reign through all the future. May every reader, over whose past must also be written failure, have also such a blessed prospect in the coming of the King!

Note, in Amnon, (13 : 15), what may be called "the revulsion of lust." Compare Ezek. 23 : 17, 28, 29. Lust, gratified, nauseates, but still enslaves.

In 14 : 14, in the plea of Joab's tool, the exact plea of Universalism, that God does not eternally punish sinners, but will find some way to restore all, is set forth. The utter folly of thus lightly restoring the impenitent is illustrated

here as we proceed. Its ineffectiveness to bring fellowship, in verse 24 (contrast Luke 15 : 20); its awful overlooking of heart-pride and impenitence, in verse 32; its failure to elicit confession of sin, in 32 and 33, along with its mockery of reconciliation in verse 33; with its legitimate fruit in chapters 15—18. Heaven would not be a safe place to enter if the impenitent were admitted there. It will be "the Lamb that was slain" that will be the center of all there. (Rev. 5 : 9).

Study carefully the spirit of David in this terrible time. His submission to God (15 : 14, 25, 26; 16 : 10, 11); his deep faith in God (16 : 12; 15 : 31, with 17 : 14); his fellowship with Him who is a "very present help in trouble" (Ps. 3); his tender, forgiving love toward his rebellious, ungrateful son (2 Sam. 18: 33; 19: 4). It is when we are in deepest trouble that our real selves are most fully seen. And it is no slight thing that it is always in the darkest hours that David's soul-light burns brightest.

Four of the very innermost views of David's heart are found in chapter 24. Note in verse 10 his deep contrition, in verse 14 his unfailing faith; in verse 17 his unselfishness; and in verse 24 his generous sincerity. Sterling, priceless, traits, all of these!

Throughout this story we see that while God in His grace fully and freely forgives His children's sins, He must yet in His government deal openly with them, and often in severity. (Contrast carefully chapter 12 : 13 with 15 : 30) This thought should have constant power with us in our lives as a motive to a careful, watchful walk. (See Gal. 6 : 7, 8). We who are God's people in this world represent Him, and men judge our God by us. If we sin openly, then they judge God by the way He deals with us. The Lord had proclaimed Himself no respecter of persons. So when David openly and foully sinned the throne of Jehovah must be vindicated and that in two ways: First, David must be punished openly, that all men might know that God did not approve of His servant's iniquity, but would impartially punish it; and second, David having failed, the Son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ, must be revealed as the King who really and only satisfies and honors God.

and whom, as an absolutely Righteous Ruler, God will shortly set upon the throne that His servant had so sadly dishonored. (See Luke 1 : 32, 33.) Oh, may that day be hastened! For Christ has not yet taken David's throne, which is earthly; He has only sat down for a little season in His Father's throne in Heaven (Rev. 3 : 21), to wait till the day shall come for Him to take the kingdom of this world. (See Heb. 10 : 12, 13; Ps. 110 : 1, 2; Heb. 2 : 9; Luke 19 : 11, 12, 15; Dan. 7 : 13, 14; Rev. 5 : 7-14.) Note from the context of last two passages that the kingdom is not asked or obtained by Christ (cf. Ps. 2 : 7-9), until the tribulation time, which is yet in the future (2 Thess. 2 : 2, 3; Rev. 3 : 10).



LESSON XXII.

I Kings: The Kingdom Established in Glory.

I Kings I - XI.

In taking up the study of these chapters, it will be well, as we promised in the last lesson to say a few words about the re-establishment of Jehovah's relations with His people, which had been broken by the failure and lapse of the *priesthood*, as seen in the opening chapters of First Samuel.

We remember that God suffered His holy ark, the sign and pledge of His relationship with Israel, to be taken by the enemy (1 Sam. 4), and the tabernacle, which was then at Shiloh (Josh. 18 : 1; 1 Sam. 4 : 4), to be finally abandoned (Ps. 78 : 60). And during all the days of Samuel and Saul, and the opening days of even David's reign, the ark is left where it was placed upon its return from the land of the Philistines—in the house of Abinidab, at Kirjath-jearim, a city of Judah (1 Sam. 6 : 21; 7 : 1)

Now, upon the failure of the priesthood, God, instead of re-establishing the priesthood as the real bond between the people and Himself, brings in the office of the *King*; and, after showing, in poor, self-willed Saul, man's utter weakness in *himself*, to govern or bless the people, brings forth *David*, His own *elect King*, who will have God's help and grace in abundant measure for the great work of establishing Israel in divine blessing.

But we have seen David himself fail terribly as regards both his personal life and his family.

However, in pure grace, God, in 2 Sam. 7, gives David a series of promises, which constitute the great *Davidic covenant*, which is as absolute and final as the Abrahamic (Gen. 15). David's family is chosen by God as the *royal family of Israel forever*: a son of his shall not fail to occupy his throne forever.

But just as Abraham's *seed* have all so failed as to render apparent that *Christ* alone can be the true "*Seed*" by

God has said, "Be sure your sin will find you out." Do you believe that about *yourself*?

Then we see, in this chapter, that the heart's true character will sooner or later manifest itself. There is *Joab*. He has appeared wonderfully forward in warfare for God's people. He has shown abundant ability, boldness, energy, shrewdness, common-sense. In the last chapter of 2 Samuel, we see that his judgment was sounder than David's as to numbering Israel. But real faith in God—how sadly lacking it is, all through his career! Full of self-confidence, ambition, and selfishness—the very nearest he ever comes to faith in Jehovah is, evidently, in 2 Sam. 10 : 12, and there it is rather a general trusting to "Providence," as those that do not know God Himself often express it, than genuine personal resting in the God of Israel.

Wretched man! He had not gone astray with Absalom. But his heart was angry at Absalom for setting his fields afire; and, moreover, Absalom's thorough selfishness was too apparent to Joab's keen mind to permit of his risking much for him. But Joab's cruel heartlessness toward David's broken heart over poor Absalom shows Joab's real self. God had no place, we fear, in this unhappy man's *affections*. He lived for self. He would murder those who stood in the way of his pre-eminence as the leader of Israel's hosts, 2 Sam. 3 and 20.

So now he turns after Adonijah, 1 Kings 1 : 7. David, he thinks, is now too weak to interfere; David will soon be dead. Instinctively he knows Solomon will not favor him; for he knows David and David's God are against him; and Solomon is God's elect. Everyone, even Adonijah, recognizes that, 1 Kings 2 : 15. But Joab judges after the flesh, and *falls*, at last, in his own blood, 1 Kings 2 : 28-34. Joab does just as Saul would have done, to save himself. He runs to the *altar* for safety—to the *thing*, the *ordinance*, the *form*, the *fleshly ceremony*, instead of to God *direct*. How often do we see someone, face to face with death, wanting to be *baptized*, or to "take the communion." I have known Protestants, even, to run at the dead of night to fetch a minister to sprinkle water on a sick baby. This is ever the resort of the heart that knows not God and fears to

We have time, here, merely to *mention* these things. A good book on prophecy should be read.† Trench's "After the Thousand Years" is especially good on the character of the millennial reign.

The King, then, from David on, bears the responsibility of the people of God and, their blessing depends upon the faithfulness of their king, as before it had depended upon their priest.

David, in 2 Sam. 6 brings up the ark of God, which had been kept aside from the people, since Eli's day, and prepares to bring in the new order of things. For the present the ark is kept in a tent; but Solomon will be given, through David, instructions for the building of the *temple*, the order, service and symbolism of which will largely differ from those of the tabernacle, though, of course, the great center of all is God dwelling in the midst of His people.

In this first of First Kings, then, we have the record of the establishment of the kingdom in Solomon's hands—"The Peaceful One," as his name means.

Practical Lessons.

There is, however, as usual, the flaming out of the enemy's hatred against the ways of God and against His elect. "Adonijah said, I will be king," 1 Kings 1:5. Here are several solemn lessons. First, this is another of David's sons, who rises up against his father and exalts himself. Poor David! He is again to blame for the sad fall of his child. "He had not displeased Adonijah at any time, saying, Why hast thou done so?" This is the common way of children who go their own unhindered way. Parents who will not restrain their children may expect their lives to be cursed by them, by and by

Then again, the dark inability of the sinful heart of man to take *warning* from the fate of other sinners. *Absalom* had tried this, "exalting *himself*." But that fell heap of stones in Mahanaim's forest (2 Sam. 18:17) has no voice of warning for Adonijah. The *madness* of sin! "Take heed lest any one of you be hardened by the *deceitfulness* of sin."

*Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and "all the prophets," are the best works to consult on these themes; if only you are ready to *believe just what they say*.

we are in God's line, God will bring things into line with us. Contrast the fifth chapter with the eleventh.

The temple was the place of the manifestation of Jehovah on earth. God really dwelt above the ark in the darkness of that most holy place. There is no such building on earth now. One house is not holy above another. They stoned Stephen for telling this truth once (Acts vii., 48-50). But it is entirely true. This is the dispensation when God dwells in men, not in brick and mortar.

The glory of God filling the temple, when all was given over to Him with one accord (cf. II. Chron. v., 11-14), is a wonderful picture of the conditions under which the same blessing comes to individuals in our dispensation. (See John vii., 39; I. Cor. vi., 19, 20; Rom. xii., 1, 2.)

The furniture and apartments of the temple should be thoroughly studied and compared with those of the great temple yet to be built, described in the last nine chapters of Ezekiel and referred to in Isaiah ii., 1-4; Mic. iv., 1-5; Hag. ii., 6-9; Zech. xiv., 20; Psalm lxxv., 1-5; xxix., 9; and all the many passages that tell of Israel's future rendering of a perfect worship to Jehovah. All such passages refer primarily, of course, to Israel not to the church. The worship of Israel will still be a temple and ceremonial worship, even in the ages to come; that of the church will never, I believe, be this.

The ways of God with Israel under law are again evident in chapter ix., in the blessings conditioned on obedience and the curses consequent upon disobedience. God cannot allow a disobedient corporate body to represent Him on earth. Whether Israel or the Church, He will disown the unfaithful steward. (Compare Rev. ii., 14-16, with I. Kings ix., 6-9.)

We cannot over-imagine the magnificence described in the tenth chapter. Its fame was worldwide. God seemed to withhold absolutely nothing from the favored son of David. It should be remembered that Solomon himself was the center and soul of it all; thus we may appreciate the real dazzling greatness of the man. The promise of God to him had been that he should be the wisest of the sons of men of his or any succeeding day, and also the wealthiest and highest of all the monarchs of his age (I. Kings iii., 12).

13). Calmly reflect on this, if you would give this man his real place in history.

And at the close of this chapter it will be well for us to trace the typical character of the reign of Solomon. Enough has previously been said of the double type that David and Solomon make of the coming King to warrant our leaving this fruitful theme to the student to trace out. Base the study upon Psalm lxxii. David's reign represents the subjugation of the earth, at the opening of the millennial time, by our Lord Jesus and His people Israel; Solomon's the peaceful reign that shall follow.

Solomon now makes that great choice (iii., 4-15) that brings him God's peculiar favor, so that he is given to be the wisest of our race, as well as the wealthiest and most honored of Israel's kings. Oh, that he had been as faithful in heart to his God as was his father! Note that his continuance is conditioned on obedience, iii., 14. We must remember, that although God's promises in 2 Sam. vii., in the great covenant of the Davidic royalty, are absolute, yet each one of David's family must be duly tested, as to his particular worthiness to have and hold the blessings promised. Compare David's words to Solomon in 1 Chron. xxviii., 9.

Now comes the proof of Solomon's gift of wisdom from God, iii., 16-28. All Israel accepts the proof of it, iii., 28. Compare iv., 29-34. Let the marvelous statements of these verses sink into your heart. They are literally true, as are all God's words. This wisdom was a direct gift from God, with whom is all wisdom.

The general effect of the Solomonic reign is seen in iv., 20, 24, 25: increased numbers, universal joy, enlarged dominion, and peace and safety on every hand. These are the marks of Messiah's earthly kingdom, of which this is a type. He will be the Prince of Peace, Isa. ix. and xi; Micah iv., Zech. xiv. etc.

In the books of Samuel we have seen earthly sovereignty committed to Israel; its sad personal abuse by Saul and still sadder abuse by David, in view of his greater light and privileges. We have marked the total failure of Saul's reign as a whole, and have heard David lamenting the deep chasm between his own house and administration and that perfect ideal King and kingdom which God had foretold and promised to his line. (II. Sam. 3-5.) We are now, in the books of Kings, to see this trial of human government in the hands of Israel run on to the bitter, disgraceful end.

The first step in this lesson, as in each lesson, is to read our chapters over and over at least seven times. Only by such successive readings can a passage of Scripture be mastered, and mastery is always the absolute and primal condition of real study.

We are ready next to give each of these chapters a suggestive name. We may call them together the eleven Solomon chapters. And then, singly :

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| I. Coronation. | VI. Building. |
| II. Execution. | VII. Furniture. |
| III. Wisdom. | VIII. Dedication. |
| IV. Administration. | IX. Promise and Warning. |
| V.-VIII. The Temple chapters. | X. Fame and Glory. |
| V. Preparation | XI. Failure. |

At last, under Solomon, David's elect son, we see the kingdom of Israel in its full extent and glory. David had conquered the great realm promised by God to Abraham's seed—from the Euphrates to Egypt. All enemies were subdued. Everywhere the power and authority of David's mighty throne were acknowledged. The days of war were over, and Solomon, "the peaceful one," has taken the scepter. For forty years he is to reign—a period that will witness a most marvelous outshining of royal glory and splendor, that will eclipse anything the world has ever seen. But still more wonderful will be the *wisdom* and *counsel* displayed through God's chosen king, Solomon. All the ends of the earth will flock to see this glory and hear this wisdom—the fame of it, and of the Jehovah God who is acknowledged to have brought these things to pass.

Now why did God do all this? Why was this kingdom of David and Solomon established by God at all? Why did God take such care to give Israel that great empire, and to confer upon Solomon such glory and wisdom, that all nations sought Jerusalem, to hear and see?

It is of high importance that we answer these questions. God had a reason for bringing about all this wonderful story.

If we go over to Jerusalem to-night the glory is laid in ashes. The happy days of Solomon are gone. Israel are out of their land, aliens on earth, scattered up and down among the peoples. They have no kingdom to-day.

So it could not have been God's plan to have Solomon's glory *last*, or it would have been there still. God's purposes He fulfils.

Then why did He bring it to pass at all, if it was not to last? What was the use in it? Indeed, why give David a kingdom at all? Why give his family the promise of a perpetual kingdom, as in 2 Sam. 7? Why have a chosen city Jerusalem at all? Why a chosen people Israel?

These are fundamental and most important questions.

The sixty-seventh Psalm contains the answer. It is a prayer of the godly remnant of Israel. Read it carefully. "God be merciful to us (Israel) and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us, that Thy way may be known *upon earth*, Thy salvation *among all nations*." God chose a people on earth, to whom He might reveal Himself, in order that they might be a light to all other nations of earth—the teachers of the world. He chose a city (Jerusalem) as a place upon earth where He could "set His name," Deut. 12 : 9, 11.

We must remember that the present age is altogether abnormal. We must not for a moment judge of the future by the present order of things. Because of Israel's sins they are now cast out of their land, and God's city lies waste. But all the prophets tell us that, by and by, when God shall have called out and saved a certain number of Gentiles, He will bring back His people to their land, and establish them there forever; and that His city and temple shall be rebuilt and all the nations of the earth must then come up to *to Jerusalem* to worship God. See such passages as Amos 9 : 11-15; Zech. 14; Isa. 2, etc. If anyone object that such local worship will be a step backward from what we, the Church of Christ, now enjoy, we answer, Certainly, it is not so privileged, for we are under grace, *in Christ*; but God has revealed that it shall be so.

Now, in those days, which will succeed this present age, our Lord Jesus will reign *in person* over the nations of Israel, and through them, over the earth He will *fill*, at last, the great office of KING. Others—all others, will have been shown unable to govern the race aright. Power

will then be in Christ's hands. He will bear the glory and be a priest upon His throne, Zech. 6 : 12, 13.

Before Christ comes to take the government upon His own shoulders (Isa. 9 : 6-9), God let men have the power and the glory in their hands, just as far as they could bear it; both as a promise and picture of what was coming, and also to prove man's inability to hold or enjoy blessing, of himself.

This explains Solomon's glory. God was letting Israel, in Solomon's days, have a taste of the glory that is to come in the millennial days, when Jesus will take the kingdom and reign in infinite might and wisdom and glory. If God could bring in such glory as Solomon's (1 Kings 4 and 10), by the hand of a mere weak mortal, what will it be when the Lord of glory takes the throne of His father David!

So we have the key of all that occurs in Solomon's days.

The people, when in the wilderness, were made continually to realize that they had not yet reached their place of establishment and rest. Especially in the tabernacle, with its pilgrim form, being a mere tent of travel, did God set forth the fact that He, with the people, was a sojourner. There was nothing permanent or abiding.

But when the people are established in the land God has chosen for them, the forms of their life, and especially of their worship, set this forth. David, who had the mind of God for the people in the land, establishes His throne in the place where God had set His name—that is, on Mount Sion. This is the place where our Lord Jesus, when He comes, will reign. Trace this mountain through the prophets and Psalms with a concordance.

But the time was not come, in David's days, for the *throne* and *temple* to be united, as they will be when Christ takes the kingdom, Zech. 6 : 12, 13; 14 : 16, etc. For Christ had to be offered for *sin*, ere kingdom blessing could come in forever. There might be faint types of it in Solomon's days; but not till our Lord Jesus had said "It is finished," on Calvary, could God bring in the millennial glories that lie ahead for Israel and the earth.

So, on another hill adjoining Mount Zion, there was built the *temple* of the Lord, for the present. This was Mount Moriah. We remember it was the place where Abraham offered up Isaac (Gen. 22)—beautiful type of the sacrifice God would by and by make of His Son. But now it had to be marked out anew, as the place of mercy for poor Israel—the place of atonement for their *sin*, ere they could enjoy the *semblance* of kingdom-blessing, under Solomon. So God allowed the judgment that was due them to come upon them (2 Sam. 24; 1 Chron. 21), and then met David in mercy for Israel, at this very spot, Mount Moriah, owned at that time by one Araunah, a *Jebusite*, showing that Israel, in *themselves*, were no better than the accursed nations they had driven out (Deut. 9). And David perceived that God had chosen this site for His temple (1 Chron. 21 : 28; 22 : 1). Here He met them in the mercy that saved them from doom. Here He was propitiated by the *sacrifice made by their king at his own cost*, 2 Sam. 24 : 24. Here David reared at the divine command, the altar of Jehovah, 2 Sam. 24 : 18, 19. Indeed, he had so realized the awful danger that had been averted by his sacrifice at this spot, that he feared to go, after this, to the old tabernacle, which was then in Gibeon, 1 Chron. 21 : 28-30. Here, at Moriah, was now God's evident place of mercy and grace for Israel.

Upon this divinely indicated site, therefore, David prepared to build the great temple, which it was in his devoted heart to build, for Jehovah his God.

But God would not permit him actually to erect it; although it was given him to prepare the materials, and receive from God, by inspiration, the divine pattern for this great established sanctuary, as Moses had received the pattern of the tabernacle in the wilderness. See 1 Chron. 22 : 2-9; and 28 : 11-19.

David, as the type of the Christ, the Victor, the Subduer of all things to Himself, upon his taking the kingdom, could not set up the temple; for that will be done *after* Christ has subdued all things to Himself, at His second coming. Then will follow the great reign of peace on earth, for a thousand years (Rev. 20). Then will the

great millennial temple be built by and for the Lord, Micah 4; Ezek. 40—48; Hag. 2 : 6-9.

The two great pillars (1 Kings 7 : 18-22) Boaz and Jachin, "Strength" and "Establishment," set forth the general character of the temple, as the place of God's *abiding* blessing; whereas the tabernacle was temporary and pilgrim.

We cannot here enter upon the detailed study of the temple. There are several good works upon this subject. There are, doubtless, many points in its construction the meaning of which may not fully appear until those still future kingdom-days of which the Solomonic days and order are typical.

The Temple of Solomon.

In general, as we have said, the temple represents established blessing—blessing consequent upon the finished work of Christ; whereas the tabernacle order and service more especially sets forth the manner of Christ's atoning work, the holiness of God which renders atonement necessary, the moral distance from God at which man under law must be kept, etc. The temple, while it is established when the people are still under the law, was yet set up on the spot where God had indicated His *acceptance* of propitiatory sacrifice (1 Chron. 21 : 25—22 : 1). The temple of Solomon represents days when the work of Christ will have at last been accepted for Israel, and, at least in some vital sense, applied to them nationally. It refers in type to those glad days after "the fountain" shall have been opened "to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13 : 1).

So David is given by the Holy Spirit a new pattern of everything, on a grander scale, and after a more glorious and costly order, than that of the tent days in the wilderness. See 1 Chron. 28 : 11-19. He is also directed to a complete and permanent readjustment of the priestly order and service, suited to establishment in the land, and settled ministry. Indeed, David, by divine direction, rearranges the whole national order after a kingdom pattern. See 1 Chron. 23—27. Solomon, of course, develops the details of this new national constitution and order. See 1 Kings. 4.

When all is ready, and the sanctuary built and set in order as God would have it, the glory came into the temple in unstinted fulness—*kingdom* fulness. See 2 Chron. 5. It was a great picture of the coming glorious days when, into the great millennial temple of which Ezekiel speaks (Ezekiel 40—48, especially 43 : 1-7) and Micah (4 : 1-2), and Isaiah (2 : 2, 3; 24 : 23; 66 : 20-24), and Haggai (2 : 6-9), and practically all the prophets.

One of the saddest stories in the Bible is the account in Ezekiel 8 to 9 of this same glory that came into the temple after Solomon's prayer taking its departure; for the people went on to sin against their God till they drove Him "far off from His sanctuary." Read these tender but awful chapters (Ezek. 8—11) most carefully. How wondrous the grace that will bring that glory that went away from Israel, back to them in the kingdom days (Ezek. 43 : 1—9). To those coming days of glory the wondrous words of Isaiah (4 : 5, 6) refer: "Jehovah will create over the whole habitation of Mount Zion, and over her assemblies, a cloud of smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for OVER ALL THE GLORY SHALL BE SPREAD A CANOPY."

But that ominous *IF* of 1 Kings 9 : 4, 5, shuts the door in our faces, as we linger hopefully at this first temple, at the great dedication service of 1 Kings 8. Solomon soon departed from God's good way of blessing (1 Kings 11). And since permanent blessing had been conditioned on human faithfulness, we must see the sun of our expectation eclipsed again. The kingdom must go *down* in human hands ere it can rise in eternal glory, in the hands of Him who shall at last bring it in in divine power and abiding glory.

All hail that day!

These be the last words of David:

These shall be One that ruleth
Over men—a Righteous One—
That ruleth in the fear of God.

He shall be as the light of the
Morning, when the sun riseth,
A morning without clouds;
When the tender grass
Springeth out of the earth,
Through clear shining after rain."

—2 Sam. 23 : 1, 3, 4, R.V.



LESSON XXIII.

General Survey and Summary.

We have traced, in this series of lessons, the course of things, as narrated by the Spirit of God, from Adam to Solomon. It will be well, ere we close, to cast our eye both backward and forward, from the viewpoint of our last lesson—the days of Solomon—that we may get a general conception of the content of Old Testament revelation. We shall thus be prepared, in a sense, either for further intelligent study of the Israelitish history or for the beginning of that wondrous New Testament story for which the Old Testament prepares the way.

We have seen, in the early lessons of this course, that God's great plan in His creation has been, to introduce His creatures into a sphere of being that is temporary, transitory and unsatisfactory, that they might see the inability of the mere created universe to satisfy their needs; so that in their despair of all else, they might turn, in utter dependence and simple faith, to their God alone for all things: for in Him only dwells all good and blessing, James 1 : 17.

We have called this sphere of being the *first*, or *old*, *creation*. We have seen that it is destined to pass away forever, to be destroyed by fire, and the very *memory* of it to be effaced from the minds of those who are finally saved, Isa. 65 : 17; Rev. 21 : 1, 4, 5.

And we have noted the word of God, that those creatures who choose their portion in this present creation, worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator, who alone is blessed, shall be punished with eternal divine vengeance for their deliberate rejection of the glorious God, and their turning His *truth*, which they could not help but see, into a *lie*, Rom. 1 : 25; 2 : 8, 9; Rev. 21 : 8 because God has revealed enough of His power and deity and character in the present creation to render those who reject its testimony without excuse. Rom. 1 : 20.

21. And God has also subjected the present creation to *vanity*, or constant *unattainment*, that all creatures may see its utter impotence to satisfy the soul, and may thus turn to its Maker and theirs, and rely upon Him alone, Rom. 8 : 20, R.V. Death and decay are written by God over all that He has made, for the present, to warn all creatures from trusting aught but Himself.

Yet we saw that man had scarcely begun his history as the appointed head of the present order of things in this earth, when he turned aside from God, to follow the path of self-dependence, and reliance for blessedness upon what God had made, rather than upon God; thus turning his heart away from His Creator and Benefactor, and refusing Him the glory and love that alone belonged to Him, Gen. 3. In this revolt from God we saw man under the leadership and delusion of a more ancient enemy of God—even Satan, who ages before had pursued the same dark path of apostasy from his great Creator, Ezek. 28 : 13-17. And we found that this dark and terrible adversary, not content with his own ruin, had been, from that remote day of his rebellion from God, a liar, and a deceiver of other beings, enticing them to their eternal death, in leading them, like him, to seek independence of God, 1 John 3 : 8; John 8 : 44; Rev. 12 : 9. We saw how this great adversary, who was once the anointed one of the cherubim in heaven (Ezek. 28 : 14), is now the head of the empire of evil, or kingdom of darkness (Col. 1 : 13; Luke 22 : 53; Eph. 6 : 12; 2 : 2), which includes those angels that have fallen (Rev. 12 : 7-9), the demons, probably the disembodied spirits of pre-adamic creations upon earth (See *Earth's Earliest Ages*: Chapter *The Interval*); and the whole human race since its fall (Eph. 2 : 1-3; 1 John 5 : 19).

We have noted, with heavy hearts, the sad after-history of our poor race, from the moment of its surrender to the enticements of the arch-enemy of God, and its revolt from the path of obedience to independence of God. Down, down, down it plunged, into fearful abysses of iniquity, until a longsuffering God was forced at last to blot it off the earth, reserving one family alone for Himself; only to see the sons of Noah depart into universal blindness, and

deeper departure from their God than ever. For after the flood we begin to hear of *idolatry*: images of wood and stone. Even Abraham's family "served other gods" when they lived "beyond the River," Josh. 24 : 2. And the vile teraphim were in Jacob's family when he left that land for Canaan and many a day after, Gen. 31 : 19; 35 : 2. Indeed, the Spirit shows us through Stephen (Acts 7 : 42, 43) that even after the Exodus, and all through their history, Israel as a nation were in *heart idolaters*. Even the tabernacle in the wilderness was to them an idol house!

Then we begin to discover God's wondrous plan of salvation.

One was to arise from among men—nay, come from God among men—who would redeem and save, and bring in everlasting righteousness. We have traced type after type, in story, in person, in ordinance, of this Great Savior. He would bring help. He would bruise the serpent's head; He would bear the awful penalty God must bring upon man's sin—He would shed His blood as a sacrifice; He would be a heavenly and divine Helper, though by grace a Kinsman of our race.

But before He could come—before man could receive Him as their only hope and help, they must find out the separateness of their case; they must realize their sickness, ere they send for the Physician; they must feel their fearful danger, ere they cry for help. Christ will come, but it will be to seek and save the *lost*, Luke 19 : 10.

So the weary years must run on, till "the fulness of the time" shall come, for God to send forth His Son (Gal. 4 : 4).

First, the race as a whole goes "its own way," till it is despaired of by God and *let go*, Rom. 1 : 18-32; Acts 14 : 16. There is no divine movement toward *racial* recovery after Genesis 11. I think. Individuals are saved, and nations are dealt with, but the race is pronounced *lost*.

But now God calls out a man, *Abraham*, and separates him and his seed from all the rest of mankind; gives him a land, makes with him and his seed a covenant, and brings this chosen nation into all the privileges and opportunities of a people owned of God. Only He continually says, "If ye continue in My obedience, I will continue blessing

you. My promises to Abraham I surely will fulfil; but I would see first and have you see, if you are worthy in *yourseives* of My blessing."

• How terrible was the failure of this chosen people, is witnessed by God's own words to them, in Rom. 2 : 24: "The name of God is blasphemed among the *Gentiles*, because of *you!*" We have seen them fail at every point where God put the least responsibility upon them. First, they are seen to be a murmuring, unfaithful company while yet in Egypt. Then, when brought out, in Jehovah's redeeming kindness, they begin a life of perpetual provocation of their faithful God; insomuch that Moses, much as he loves them as God's people, is forced to say, "Ye have been rebellious against Jehovah from the day that I knew you." Deut. 9 : 24. God gives them the law, but they make a calf as their god, while God is writing, "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image." God opens Canaan that goodly land, before them, at Kadesh-Barnea; but they make a captain to return to wretched Egypt in dire rebellion. God gives them the land, in pure grace, finally; but they unite with the unclean inhabitants, and reject their character as God's people. The priesthood collapses in horrible ruin, and Israel falls a prey. God raises up judges to help them in their distress; but they came to Samuel to make them another king than Jehovah, whose ways they cannot bear. When their first king utterly fails them, God raises up a king after His own heart, who blesses and delivers them. They eagerly seize the opportunity to get rid of him, by following the dastard Absalom, seeking to slay his father. When God intervenes again, and replaces David upon the throne, and brings in the unparalleled glory of the Solomonic kingdom, when "Judah and Israel were many as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and making mery" (1 Kings 4 : 20), what shall we find?

Even the same old story. Solomon, in his latter years, departs first from Jehovah's Word (see Deut. 17 : 14-20). and then, in great measure, from Jehovah Himself, and the splendor of his glory sets in dark idolatry. I Kings 11 : 1-8.

And the people, ungrateful and sinful as ever, depart

from God anew, and under a specious pretext divide asunder Jehovah's kingdom, 1 Kings 12.

But the history grows darker and darker than ever now, with the years. By and by both northern and southern kingdoms are in the hands of their enemies, because of sin more vile and abominable than the unspeakably reprobate nations cast out when Israel entered the land, 2 Kings 21:9. Defying all their prophets, they persist in sin till doom comes.

Thus do they prove how utterly evil is man, and how unable to merit or to hold divine blessing. But thus also God lets the way be prepared for the coming of Him who is mighty, upon whom help can be laid at last, with safety and assurance.

The human race as a whole having absolutely failed, and Israel, the chosen people, having perhaps still more terribly failed, God has now a clear field for His GRACE—that is, His favor and kindness toward those who deserve His judgment.

Ere, however, Christ shall come, God will bring back from captivity the people of the southern kingdom, that He may come to "His own." But they will only anew prove, and that finally, the utter wickedness of their hearts; they will say, "This is the Heir; come, let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be ours." Thus they show the real character of sinful flesh: they would be finally *independent of God*. "Sin," says the Holy Ghost by John, "is lawlessness." 1 John 3:4, R.V.



LESSON XXIV

Division and Apostasy

I Kings XI—XXII

The eleventh chapter is as sad a story of utter folly, sin and failure as that other eleventh chapter (II. Samuel) which tells the tale of his father's fall. Ten grand chapters in each case, and then—darkness! How similar the narratives, too! David—ah, that horrible story of unbridled lust! Solomon—the child of the other two, "his wives turned away his heart." It does not take 700 to do it for some to-day, dear reader; be thoughtful ere you sentence Solomon.

But what he lost! Sin always lets in the foe, and the seeds of sedition, sown and sprouting as this lesson closes, will bring a rank harvest in the lesson next week. And we must write Solomon on the black list of failure—Solomon, so sweetly filial, simple and humble in his youth; so gifted, wise, gracious and great in his manhood; so excellent in glory and fame down to his old age; but "when Solomon was old * * * his heart was turned away." Ah, the bitter, bitter end of cherished sin! For Solomon never truly judged and put away his first great sin against the Lord. (See I. Kings 3: 1.) And he knew it (II. Chron. 8: 11).

The crisis at Shechem, the folly of Rehoboam, the revolt of the ten northern tribes, the forbidden effort to recover them, and their terrible sin under Jeroboam, is the story of chapter twelve. The rupture of the kingdom we must trace back to Solomon's sin (chapter 11), but back of that lay the gnawing jealousy of Israel at the ascendancy of David's house (II. Sam. 2: 4; 19: 40-43; 20, etc.). Ah, how Satan loves to divide the people of God! It is his most-trusted wile.

The thirteenth chapter is the story of God's effort to bring back Jeroboam from his evil way (see verse 33). First, by the prophet's being of Judah, not of Israel; again, by the stern message of woe;

again, by the blasted hand; and further by the sign of confirmation of the prophetic word; again, by the healing of the rebel—wonderful grace; and then, by the holy refusal of the hospitality of the wicked; and seventh, by the righteous punishment of disobedience, even in God's own prophet—a warning indeed to the high-handed rebel! But all was scorned. Jeroboam had passed the line of repentance. Though the fourteenth chapter sees him consulting a man of God (how like many worldlings to-day he runs quick to the minister when in trouble!), yet he is bad as ever—would even deceive Jehovah's prophet by a cowardly ruse! Abijah (what a grand old man of faith and faithfulness!) announces a triple burden of woe—the death of the treasured child, the utter destruction of Jeroboam's entire house, and now, for the first time as a certainty, Israel's coming captivity and its trans-Euphrates location.

Rehoboam, with Judah, at first pious (II. Chron. 12: 1), soon falls into such iniquity that an Egyptian scourge is sent upon them. Brief penitence stays vengeance (II. Chron. 12: 58), but the rot has set in. Judah also is turning away from God. Note Rehoboam's Ammonite mother (see Deut. 23: 3). Strange women will have strange children, as a rule; and Abijah simply follows his parents in sin (15: 3). He is spared for David's sake. Note how often David's obedience is mentioned (see especially 15: 5). Only this once, and then most graciously, does God mention David's dark sin, after the terrible exposure and arraignment of it in II. Sam 11 and 12. When God forgives sin, He ceases to remember it. He is unlike man in this.

Asa is a marvel. With a heathen mother (15: 13), as well as a sinful father, he yet shines forth as one of Judah's most godly kings. His heart as toward Jehovah was like David's (verse 14)—that was the secret; but how, with such environments, only grace can answer. Study carefully the more detailed history of II. Chron. 14-16. The devotion to God that deposed his idolatrous mother—an astonishing act for an oriental—reveals a character from which we may well withhold severer criticism than God bestows for the failures of I. Kings 15: 14, 18, 19, and II. Chron. 16: 10, 12. Perhaps with David's early discipline he might have had as beautiful an old age. Even as it was, his people sorely missed and mourned him.

We should note the alliance of the southern kingdom with Syria; the northern had already had dealings with Egypt—God's people seeking the intervention of the godless world against one another! Such things have been heard of in our own day.

We expect nothing but wickedness from Jeroboam's son; and Nadab fulfills our expectations. Sin now begins to bear its harvest of revolution and blood, and Jeroboam's house is annihilated by Baasha,

with prophesied though murderous hand (16: 7), only to have his own dynasty's fate follow quick on that of his supplanted Lord. Zimri, the new assassin, reigns a week before the able but wicked generalissimo of Israel's army drives him to suicide and overwhelms his successor. The record for evil of Omri's reign now eclipses all previous history.

But of his son, Ahab, it is written: "Ahab did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him. There was none like Ahab, which did sell himself to do that which was evil in the sight of the Lord." (I. Kings 16: 33; 21: 25). Under him and by his terrible consort, Jezebel, the worship of Jehovah was proscribed, and the horrible system of Baal became the national religion. As if to crown their defiance of God, Jericho, the city of the curse, was again built up, despite divine visitation (I. Kings 16: 34; Josh. 6: 26). Sin, darkness, death, despair, is writ large over Israel. Their national testimony seems gone forever. Where are the faithful?

"The darkest hour is just before the dawning," and though what now comes is a brief day, quickly to be overcast with clouds Elijah blazes for a little with the radiance of Him before whom, as a servant waiting in the presence-chamber, it was his high calling to "stand." Chapter 17: 1.

To understand aright Elijah's work we must study its description as applied to his great successor, in Luke 1: 17. And to understand Elijah himself we must consider him in the light the Holy Spirit sheds upon him in James 5: 17, 18.

In the first of these passages we find that it was Elijah's mission to change the people's attitude toward God—to avert the awful, impending judgment of Jehovah upon Israel by a reformation which, though not thorough, would yet allow the sword of vengeance to be a little longer sheathed. Had it not been for Elijah's ministry Israel must quickly have been visited with condign destruction, so fearful was their state at this time. By the passage in James we are shown the secret of the character and the spirit of the ministry of this wonderful servant of God. Elijah spoke the exact truth and shows us his very heart when, in chapter 19: 10 and 14, his querulous answer begins: "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts." That, just that, is the essence of his life—jealousy for his God. It tortured him, it anguished him, it consumed him, that "the children of Israel had forsaken the covenant of the Lord." Not as the pre-eminent man of faith, nor as the man of loftiest spiritual attainment, nor yet as the noblest example of sustained faithfulness, must we

write Elijah; but there is none other in whose seraphic spirit burned more quenchless and consuming the passion for the honor of his God. When Phineas, in a day of shameful public sin, had a touch of this same fire, God so delighted in his act as to reward him with an everlasting priesthood (Num. 25: 10-13). What, then, shall we say of Elijah? In what estimation his holy God, whose character was so precious in His servant's eyes, holds Elijah may be judged when we remember that He has determined to send him back to earth for a final and most marvelous mission to Israel, just before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. (See Mal. 4: 5, 6; Matt. 17: 11; Mark 9: 12, and, possibly, Rev. 11: 3-12.)

For John the Baptist's gentler Elijah ministry was rejected, as was the humble Messiah, whose way he prepared; and Elijah's terrible personal ministry must yet prepare the path of the glorious, all-conquering Messiah.

But to return to the fifth chapter of James. We are here told that the three and a half years of drought and famine, so abruptly announced by Elijah in I. Kings 17: 1, were the reward of Jehovah to his fervent prayers, as well as were the mighty torrents of rain in the next chapter (I. Kings 18: 42-45). And why should a lover of Israel pray for a famine on Israel? Ah, do you not know? Had not Elijah studied such passages as Lev. 26 and Deut. 28? Did he not see that naught but the scourge would turn Israel's heart back again? And is it love that spares a needed rod? Never. The truest earthly friend Israel had in the awful years of rainless desolation was the man of God who in some desert prayer in Gilead had prevailed with God to have mercy on Israel and send the famine, rather than the cherubim.

The past ministry of Elijah doubtless foreshadows that of the future. It will be with Israel that he will again labor, in the last days, to turn them from the influence of the Anti-Christ and his fearful idolatry, to one another as brethren and to God and his Christ. He will probably do like signs then as formerly (II. Kings 1; Rev. 11: 6, etc.). He will then accomplish what at first he failed in—the restoration of all things (Matt. 17: 12, 13). The remnant merely discovered then (I. Kings 19: 18) will be brought through the fire in holy deliverance (Isa. 4: 3, 4; Ezek. 22: 17-22; Jer. 30: 4-7). And he will then usher in the glorious advent of the Messiah of Israel, who will find at last His people prepared for Him. Mal. 4: 5, 6; Psa. 110: 3.

Of the remainder of the chapters we will not write, save to note the rapid and terrible rush at the last of the desperate sinner Ahab into the vortex of sin and its dark destruction. It is hard to under-

stand Ahab. We may blame Jezebel for much of it; but we must note that Jezebel, his wife, simply "stirred up" the pool of hell that was in him (I. Kings 21: 25). There is mystery in some iniquity. There are deep things of Satan (II. Thess. 2: 7; Rev. 2: 24). The heavenly scene opened to us in I. Kings 22, by Micaiah should make us shudder and shrink nearer God. The pit has an awful claim on its own. And a finally offended God will not only consent to the claim, but will direct the arrow of a bow drawn at a venture to consummate it.

Do not fail to study Micaiah. There are no truer hearts to God than was his. Compare the three great prophets of I. Kings carefully, Ahijah, Elijah and Micaiah. They are a rare trio; and they have some very vital elements in common.



LESSON XXV

II Kings—The Ministry of Elisha

II Kings I-XIII

The chapter names of the lesson are:

I. Consuming fire.	IX.—X. Jehu.
II. Elijah and Elisha.	IX. Coronation.
III. Ditches.	X. Revolution.
IV. Shunammite.	XI.—XII. Joash.
V. Naaman.	XI. Coronation.
VI. Dothan.	XII. Reformation.
VII. Four Lepers.	XIII. Arrows.
VIII. Hazaal.	

We may trace the life of Elijah the Tishbite, as given in these books of Kings, in the following nine stages of steps; study each most carefully.

1. Preparation. I. Kings 17: 1, R. V., "A sojourner of Gilead." Probably, like John the Baptist (Luke 1: 80) he was an eremite—most ascetic and devout during these early years. Finally, as he saw the awful desolation of God's people, his whole spirit became a flame of desire to turn his nation back to God.

2. Prayer. We must compare with I. Kings 17: 1, the seventeenth verse of the fifth chapter of James, to realize fully what was the source of the wonderful assurance the prophet displays as he stands before Ahab for the first time. The deep consciousness of answered prayer is the essence of faith, from the human side. (Hebrews 11: 1. See Rotherham's translation.) And perforce the man who has this confidence is mighty before his fellows.

3. Prophecy. I. Kings 17: 1. So far as we know, this was his first utterance as a man of God. Study it in this light. Twenty-six words, but where among the prophets are they surpassed for high, holy confidence, terrible power, sweeping generality, directness, intensity and boldness of present application? Surely Elijah came straight from the presence of the Most High with this message.

4. Preservation. I. Kings 17: 2-24. Of course God was here schooling and preparing His servant for the great day on Carmel, but it is a period of retirement and refuge in his God.

5. Public testimony. I. Kings 18. We will not try to describe this greatest day of Elijah's earthly work so far. Study especially his

spirit, his zeal for God throughout the chapter, his wonderful public prayer and his no less mighty and more persistent private prayer on the mountain—more persistent, because it was easier to get God's public acknowledgment of His faithful servant than to secure again His so long despised favor for the apostate people.

6. Public failure. I. Kings 19. It began, I think, in chapter 18: 46, when Elijah stopped at the gate of Jezreel and let Ahab whine to Jezebel the tale the prophet should have thundered. It was apparently under a Satanic whisper of coming danger from this awful woman that Elijah halted. And fear, admitted for a moment, swells to a horrible torrent of unbelief. How many of God's dear children have found it so! Let us remember that God never gave one of His servants a "spirit of fearfulness"; this is always from the adversary. See II. Tim. 1: 7; Luke 24: 38; Rev. 1: 17; Isa. 41: 10.

7. Private discipline. I. Kings 19: 9-18. How good of God to teach us in secret, after our failure in public! Study most carefully God's way with Elijah at this time! First, refreshing his body—what many a discouraged Christian worker needs—verses 5-7; next, personal fellowship with His servant, verse 9; then, teaching him His ways and purposes, verses 11, 12; next, active service again, verses 15-17, and finally, the sweet, assuring vision of His full, safe providence in the faithful remnant, verse 18.

8. Public exoneration. First, before Ahab, in I. Kings 21, and then before the whole nation, just before his translation, in the first chapter of II. Kings. God is jealous of the honor of His faithful servants, and He will see to it that their failures do not cause permanent injury, either to His glory or to their reputation as His representatives, if only they turn fully back to the course of duty.

9. Promotion. I. Kings 2. In II. Kings 1: 9, R. V., we see that the dwelling place of Elijah in these last days was on a hilltop, the place of separation, seclusion, meditation, fellowship and preparation. In chapter 2 he is ready, and step by step leaves behind everything of earth—for even the professing people of God, the nation of Israel, have so utterly defiled themselves and their holy places that not one of them is fit for the landing of that heavenly chariot to receive its precious passenger. Gilgal, the place of separation from the world (Joshua 5: 2-9) is no longer that, and must be left behind; Bethel, the house of God, which once the patriarch found to be the very gate of heaven (Gen. 28), is now the seat of idolatrous worship, and must be abandoned; Jericho, rebuilt in defiance of God, is no fit lighting place for Israel's fiery horses; there remains but the Jordan and the wilderness beyond. Thither must the prophet go if he will travel to heaven in

God's way. How very sad is all this! But how like the state of things to-day, when, if one really choose the heavenly path, which gladly and surely leads to the glorious consummation of I. Thess. 4: 15-17, he must leave behind very much that is regarded on every hand as excellent and praiseworthy in the religious life and practices of Christendom, and go "without the camp" to meet his Lord! (See Heb. 13: 13; II. Cor. 6: 14-18; Rev. 3: 4.)

Study most carefully Elisha's experience, as revealed in II. Kings 2: 1. We have here: *The steps into the blessing*—1. Accepted responsibility—he "went with Elijah," knowing that involved his succession to the great office to be made vacant that day. 2. Realized need. He knew he was not ready for such tremendous responsibilities, while he did not dare to shun them. Oh, that Christians generally felt thus regarding their calling to witness for Christ, that they must accept and fulfill their commission, but that they simply cannot fulfill it without an endowment from their Master! 3. Definite seeking. Elisha felt that Elijah only could bring him what he needed and he clung to Elijah for it. 4. Unwavering persistence (verses 2-6). No obstacles can hinder him, whether his Master's apparent unwillingness to suffer him, or the unbelieving taunts of the heady "theologs." 5. Obtaining a promise. Suddenly a great opportunity opens (verse 9). He meets it with a great prayer, and secures a great promise, conditioned (verse 10) as experimental promises always are. 6. Fulfilling conditions (verses 11, 12). When a soul has done this it is ready to step out into victory, and so we find. 7. Claiming by faith (verses 13, 14). Here we see four elements: (a) Left alone to faith—Elijah gone; (b) taking up the line of faith—appropriating the master's mantle; (c) turning back to duty and difficulties; and (d) finally, when the need comes, by the banks of Jordan, boldly challenging God! "Where is Jehovah, the God of Elijah?" When a soul truly follows this course we may say, reverently, *God must bless*; His word and His honor demand it. Easily now follow; 2. *The results of the blessing*. (1) Power with God—the waters divide (verse 14). (2) Power with men—the sons of the prophet bow in awe (verse 15). (3) A marvellously full and fruitful ministry (verse 19—on).

Elisha's ministry in contrast with that of Elijah should be carefully studied. Except that of calling the visitation on the "young lads" (R. V.)—who apparently mocked the idea of Elijah's rapture by telling his successor to "go up," and who certainly dishonored the person of God's prophet (II. Kings 2: 23-25)—and Gehazi's curse, his miracles are works of mercy, corresponding strikingly with those of our Lord, whom he seems to typify, as Elijah prefigures our Lord's precursor John.

The jealous watching and warning by God of Israel through His prophets in these days of decline and apostasy is remarkable and should be studied thoroughly. From the moment when He committed His people to the hands of earthly sovereigns (I. Sam. 8) He had His representatives, the prophets, on the ground constantly as inspectors, censors, judges of everything, and often as ministers plenipotentiary, as in the cases of Elijah and Elisha. And for even the king to dispute the sacred supremacy of the prophet in Israel as the direct commissioner of Jehovah was the last act of godless defiance, deserving, and sometimes receiving, swift divine retribution (see II. Kings 1).

So, if we would study these times from God's view-point—the only true one—we must live with these men of God till we see things as they did, in the light of heaven.

Elisha thus becomes the great figure of II. Kings, as was Elijah of I. Kings. We cannot here trace his story in detail—would we might! But study his life and work along the following lines: 1. His ministry; (a) the general spirit or character of it; (b) the exact divine object of it as toward Israel at this time (compare it in this with that of Elijah); (c) the degree to which this object was accomplished. 2. His miracles: (a) Study the object of each; (b) the method of each; (c) the effect of each; (d) compare their character and number with Elijah's. 3. Study the general effect of his life and ministry upon the nation as a whole. Did the king and people feel toward Elisha as they had done toward Elijah? Why not? Would this sentiment of affection (as in II. Kings 13: 14) have been possible but for the preceding ministry of Elijah? Why? 4. His personal life and character: (a) Early life and occupation (I. Kings 19: 19-21); (b) his call and response (I. Kings, 19: 19-21); (c) his apprenticeship (II. Kings 3: 11); (d) his receiving the Holy Ghost (II. Kings 2); (e) his characteristics as a prophet of God—clearness of spiritual vision, independence of man, personal holiness, power in prayer, activity of life, attractiveness toward the truly godly people in Israel (his schools of prophets rapidly increased), his absolute separation of life from the world, while living much more in its midst than did Elijah. We beg you to study out the passages in proof of each of these traits. It affords spiritual exercise that is absolutely invaluable. 5. The typical character of his life-work and that of Christ. Much of this will have been already discovered. It may be beautifully summed up in the resurrection power that his bones imparted to the man of Israel in II. Kings 13: 20, 21. (Compare this incident with Ezekiel 37; Hosea 13: 14; Romans 11: 15, etc.) There is a wonderful field for profitable study in these typified things regarding Israel's future, for they are "at hand to come" in these our days.

LESSON XXVI

The Captivities of Israel and Judah

II Kings XIV-XXV

The chapter names of the lesson are:

XIV. Thistle-Cedar.	XXI. Manasseh.
XV. U-z-s-m-p-p-h-j.	XXII. } Josiah.
XVI. Ahas.	XXIII. }
XVII. Assyrian Captivity.	XXIV. J-J-Z.
XVIII. } Hezekiah.	XXV. Babylonian Captivity.
XIX. }	
XX. }	

The Lord made an unconditional promise to Jehu (II. Kings 10: 30) to place four generations of his dynasty on the throne of Israel. Although these kings were no improvement morally on their father (II. Kings, 10: 31; 13: 1, 2; 13: 10, 11; 14: 23, 24; 15: 8, 9) God fulfilled His word, as He always does. Indeed, He did much more (see 13: 4, 6, and 14: 25-27). Oh, the overflowing kindness of God! And yet there are those who tell us that they do not think the God in the Old Testament is lovable! Blessed be His name forever! His name is Love in both testaments alike. The God of this lesson is the God of John 3: 16. He could not fully disclose the infinite reaches of His love for man till Calvary had opened the way; but he that reads the Old Testament with an honest heart and anointed eye cannot but see in all Jehovah's ways with men His great "heart of mercy" (Luke 1: 78, R. V., margin). Men may reject God's love and trample it beneath their feet in final obduracy—Ahab and Jeroboam did; nations may despise God's goodness and rush on in rebellion beyond recall or repentance—both Israel and Judah did; but the terrible judgments that God's holiness and justice must visit upon the persistently impenitent, so far from leading us to doubt His goodness, really confirm it and reveal the real infinity and utter immeasurableness of His love, who, despite His eternal, holy hatred of sin, yet waits with yearning inconceivable and long-suffering amazing ere He let fall the vengeance

so long deserved. God loves sinners in spite of their sin, that, just that, is the great, overpowering, unspeakable wonder of revelation.

We speak the more fully of this because in this lesson both Israel and Judah are delivered over to their enemies, amid appalling judicial distresses, and many critics of the Most High, in these days of shallow thinking and small reverence, are ready to cry out against all the displays of divine justice and judgment in the old testament as unworthy the Deity. We may say at once that it is useless to seek to explain God's actings to the most of these men, in that they are conscious rebels against divine authority because they love the sin He hates.

But to those who are sincere and ready to reason it needs but a brief glance at the awful history of the sins of these people to beget the heartiest approval of God's course with them. See, for example, chapter 17: 7-17. Mark the course of their apostasy: 1. "Fearing other gods," verse 7—that is, unbelief, always the root sin. 2. "Walked * * * as the other nations," verse 8—that is, worldly conformity, the vital sin against their separate character. 3. "Secretly * * * served idols," verses 9-12—that is, heart-idolatry, the sin their whole law cried out against. 4. "The Lord testified * * * they would not hear," verses 13, 14—that is, stubbornness, a step further on in guilt. 5. "They rejected His statues * * * followed vanity * * * made images * * * and worshipped all the host of heaven," verses 15, 16—that is, open, acknowledged, universal idolatry, another step down. 6. "They used divination and enchantments," verse 17—that is, sorcery, every kind of which strikes hands with hell to insult God. There is to-day but one step from intelligent Spiritualism to the sin against the Holy Ghost. What was a corresponding step to Israel, then, they proceeded to take, and it filled up their iniquity, the seventh count in the awful indictment. 7. "They sold themselves to do that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger," verse 17—that is, abandonment. Now, what else could God do but give them over to judgment? In the very act of punishment of these nations His mercy was eager and ready to note and accept the penitence of any individual and even to hold off the calamity for the righteous' sake just as long as might be. (See II. Kings 22: 15-20.) How the children of men have tried and tempted the forbearance and patience of God!

The failure of Amaziah to prevail over Israel in II. Kings 14, is explained in II. Chron. 25: 14-16, 20. Study this. Wicked Abaz, in II. Kings 16:10, we see committing precisely similar folly. See his blind reasoning in II. Chron. 28: 23. Read Jonathan Edwards' great sermons on the inconsistency of the impenitent.

In chapter 15, we have simply given as a chapter name the initials of the kings of the chapter. The first and last, Uzziah and Jotham, belong to Judah; the rest to Israel. Run through the initials till it is easy, then supply the names. Use such simple means often to help memory. These kings of Israel are all bad. Strange to say, Hoshea, under whose reign the crash comes (17), is the best of them all. But the cup of sin was full and there was no such positive personal godliness in Hoshea as was found later with good King Josiah in Judah, to stay judgment for a little season.

Uzziah is a blazing warning against the spiritual pride that brings presumption. (See II. Chron. 26:16-21.) A warning needed to-day, when the two chief snares of Satan for the servants of God seem to be spiritual pride and fleshly lust.

Of Hezekiah it is written (II. Kings 18: 5) that he was the greatest in faith of all Judah's kings; of Josiah (II. Kings 23: 25) that he was the most single and constant of heart in his turning to God. (Compare II. Chron. 34: 2.) I suppose we are all ready to agree who was the greatest of the lovers of Jehovah among the kings (Psalms 18: 1, etc.).

Note the great revivals under Hezekiah and Josiah and see how each began with the king; that each centred about the house of the Lord; that each was based upon the written word of God—was really a simple return to that word; that each found its vital delight in the Paschal feast; that each resulted in the renovation of Judah, and that each secured the blessing and the presence and the deliverance of God, Who is ever ready to be entreated by His people, be they never so sinful. Study most thoroughly, as a great lesson for the time now present, the Chronicles account of the revival under Hezekiah 29-31.

We ought to make a careful study of these national revivals or reformations that from time to time are found in the history of the two kingdoms, noting the causes, means, character and extent of each, and comparing them with one another. We should begin with the reformatory measures of Jehoshaphat in Judah (II. Chron. 17, 19, 20), which, while excellent, were sadly thwarted by poor Jehoshaphat's weak toying with the world in his alliances with the godless north.

That under Jehu, in Israel, we shall see to be little else than a dynastic revolution, going to the extent of overthrowing the regnant religious establishment. "Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord." (II. Kings 10: 31.) There was no positive, vital godliness brought in by this man, whose boasted "zeal for the Lord" (10: 16) was really zeal for Jehu.

It needed only the passing away of godly Jehoiada to let the briefly restrained wickedness of Judah's princes run full riot again after the Joash reformation. They felt in their hearts that Joash was really one of them, as he quickly proved himself to be when his saintly guardian was gone. (See II. Chron. 24: 17-27.) We cannot class this as a real *national revival*.

What constituted Hezekiah's and Josiah's work as such, however, was their return, through the law, to the great doctrine of the atonement, as set forth in the Passover, which was the center, the core of Israelitish corporata life and testimony. Nothing is a *revival* that stops short of a general and vital appreciation of and delight in the precious propitiating Sacrifice.

Hezekiah's pride (II. Kings 20: 12-19; II. Chron. 32: 25, 23; Isa. 39), after the great favors shown him, is a sad comment upon our human weakness when left to ourselves. For see II. Chron. 32: 31. Poor Josiah seems to have been slain because of some such sudden uplifting of heart (II. Chron. 35: 20-25). The Lord save us from it! Perhaps Hezekiah's sin began in the unsurrender that would not go to heaven when God sent for him (II. Chron. 20: 1-3). God sometimes sends an answer to prayer wrapped in a package of leanness (Psalm 106: 15.). For Manasseh was born in those fifteen added years; besides all the trouble his ungrateful uplifting of heart in itself brought to him (II. Chron. 32: 24, 25).

And now, if you can read the story of Manasseh (II. Kings 21), and yet call Jehovah stern and unforgiving, there is sad sin in your life somewhere. It will not be possible to doubt God's grace in heaven in the ages to come if we can but catch a glimpse of Manasseh—godly reared, apostate, idolatrous, devilish, stricken, humbled, repentant Manasseh!

LESSON XXVII

The Captivity Period

In studying the closing scenes of the Kingdom of Judah, two classes of facts present themselves. 1. Those that concern the spiritual life of Israel as the earthly people of God. 2. Those that concern her political career as an earthly kingdom. Although these seem to intermingle everywhere, study them separately as far as possible.

1. Israel's spiritual apostasy and its consequences. We must here notice first the constant pleas of the great prophet of the period, Jeremiah, as, reiterating the awful warnings of his faithful predecessors, he agonized with his nation till it had sinned away its day of grace. (Jer. 1-25). Read these chapters in Jeremiah through, noting carefully Israel's final obduracy beyond repentance or even intercession, 7: 16; 11: 14; 14: 11, 12; 15: 1). Along with Jeremiah, in his earlier years, stood Zephaniah, and cried out with him of coming woe; and a little later Habakkuk raised his voice against the fearful iniquity of the day. (See Zeph. 1: 3; Hab. 1: 2.) But toward the end Jeremiah stood *alone*—so far as Jerusalem was concerned, *absolutely alone* (Jer. 5: 1.)

Study most carefully in this connection the departing from the temple of the Glory, that Shekinah Presence, in the holy of holies, of the God of Israel, which made the temple what it really was—the dwelling place of Jehovah (See Exodus 25: 8, 22; 29: 43-46; 40: 34, 35; I. Kings 6: 13; 8: 10-13; 9: 3; II. Kings 21: 4, 7, 8; II. Chron. 36: 15). We will find the account in Ezekiel 9: 11. This prophet was perhaps more singularly fitted to receive such a vision as that here recorded than were any of his contemporaries; and it is in accord with the whole spirit of his prophecy. Mark the sorrowful steps in the departure of God from His sinning people: 1. From the cherub (the accustomed place) to the threshold, 9: 3. 2. Over the threshold, 10: 4. 3. To the east gate of the temple, 10: 18, 19. 4. To the Mount of Olives, 11: 22, 23 (cf. Zech. 14: 4), and thence "up," verse 25. To the thoughtful spiritual mind there is not a sadder passage in the Word of God than this. No wonder, after this, that the enemy triumphed quickly over Zion.

But how reluctant and slow was the departure! With what holy sadness did Jehovah leave His Israel! How great a contrast to His quick, full, glad entrance into that temple when the whole-hearted devotion of the people made it possible! (II. Chron. 5: 2-14.)

In leaving the temple God indicated prophetically His withdrawal from Israel for a time of their character as His corporate spiritual representatives on earth. Although this withdrawal was not consummated and openly declared till they had crucified their Messiah and rejected the testimony of His apostles concerning His resurrection and exaltation, yet, I believe, we see it in vivid picture, before us in this vision of Ezekiel; as we have it in many plain prophetic utterances, from Moses to Malachi.

2. Israel's political unfaithfulness and its punishment. Along with spiritual failure Israel had, of course, exhibited equally deplorable and absolute governmental failure. And they were now deprived of earthly sovereignty. With Zedekiah the manifested kingdom departed from Israel till the Son of David shall come to claim and take it—Ezek. 21: 26, 27; Luke 1: 32, 33. (This does not contradict Gen. 49: 10; or any other scripture rightly rendered and interpreted in its full content and context.) The dominion of the earth was now given outright to Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Daniel 2: 37, 38), with whom began the "times of the Gentiles" referred to in Luke 21: 24, and near the end of which we now are, according to the outline of Daniel 2, and many other prophecies. The earth rule descended to Persia, as was prophesied not only by Daniel, who lived near the time of the transition, but by Isaiah, who lived 300 years before it. Indeed, Isaiah, in one of the most remarkable prophecies of the Bible, names out Cyrus as the conqueror of Babylon, and describes in advance all the essential features of its capture. See Isaiah 44: 27-45: 7. No wonder the destructive critics want to assign this second part of "the book of the words of Isaiah, the prophet," as the Holy Ghost calleth it (Luke 3: 4) to another author of a later date! Fulfilled prophecy kills infidelity.

Henceforth, then, we must regard the Gentiles as the masters of the earth, by God's own appointment. He desired that all ground for complaint should be removed from vain man before the kingdom of this world should be given to His Son, and to the saints of the new creation. This will also partially explain His letting the temple be built by Gentile direction and support, both at the restoration time and later by the Herods.

In connection with the Kings and Chronicles account of the godlessness and reckless wickedness of the closing days of the kingdom of Judah, should be read chapters 23, 35, 36, 27, 28, 32, 34, 37, 39, 52, of

Jeremiah, and in this order which is nearly, or quite, chronological. Jehoiakim was wicked, and reckless and defiant in it (36); Zedekiah was wicked, and weak and dastardly in it (24, 37, 38); Jeconiah, who reigned between the other two, was wicked, and absolutely contemptible in it (22: 24-30).

The events of the captivity period should all be carefully studied. The following scriptures and many others, especially in Jeremiah, bearing upon the period, should be read. These events may be grouped as follows: 1. The beginning of the captivity, B. C. 606, from which dates the seventy years prophesied by Jeremiah in 25: 11, 12, and 29: 10 of his prophecy; II. Kings 24: 1-7; II. Chron. 36: 5-8. 2. The second carrying away by Nebuchadnezzar B. C. 598; II. Kings 24: 10-17; II. Chron. 36: 9, 10; Jer. 52: 28, 31-34. 3. The final capture and captivity under Zedekiah and the burning of the temple, B. C. 588, II. Kings 24: 18-25: 22; II. Chron. 36: 11-21; Jer. 37 to 39; 52: 1-29. 4. The story of the tragedy in Judah and the fugitives in Egypt, II. Kings 25: 23-26; Jer. 40 to 44. 5. The gleanings, Jer. 52: 30. 6. We should add the important letter written by Jeremiah to the captives at Babylon (Jer. 29), which reveals the moral and spiritual condition of the exiles in the early part of the captivity. By comparing this passage with what we learn in Ezekiel of the somewhat later years of the exile, and in Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai and Zechariah of the state of things at its close, we may get a tolerably fair picture of the Babylonian times.

A number of the Psalms, as well as the book of Lamentations, belong to this period. These should be studied in the light of the scripture doctrine of "the remnant," which term stands for the faithful in Israel, the "Israelites indeed," at any period of her history. "They are not all Israel which are of Israel, neither because they are Abraham's seed are they all children," Paul declares in Rom. 9: 6, 7. The ninth, tenth and eleventh chapters of this great epistle will explain this declaration to the subject heart, though others will rebel at it. Now this "remnant," the really righteous and godly Israelites, are those with whom God constantly deals in covenant and mercy. It is they who write the Bible; it is they who make its spiritual history; it is they whom we must know if we would understand God's ways with Israel. God never permitted the remnant to fail; He never left Himself without their witness. Even at the darkest times they were as salt, preserving the earthly people from utter destruction. Elijah thought they were all gone (I. Kings 19), but there were 7,000 left. So it was in every age; so it is to-day; for, saith Paul, "at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace,"

Rom. 11: 5. Israel—the real Israel—are not cast off, and by and by they will be brought forth into the light, and made the nucleus of the all-righteous nation of millennial days. (Isa. 10: 20-22; 60: 21; 4: 2-6; Mic. 7: 18; Mal. 3: 1-3.)

We must remember, then, that it is this remnant that we find, during captivity and restoration times, calling faithfully upon the Lord and keeping in view their holy calling and their national hopes. In studying the scripture of the time we should hold before us the following seven marks of these faithful Israelites. Look for them carefully in the passages you study, and you will appreciate your study as never before:

1. They love Zion, or Jerusalem, as the city of Jehovah and His worship.
2. They mourn because of the loss of their testimony for God among the nations.
3. They confess Israel's sin and God's righteousness in their punishment.
4. They pray for God's mercy upon their nation.
5. They cherish hope of restoration.
6. They cry for divine vengeance on their enemies.
7. They pledge future faithfulness to Jehovah.

These were the characteristics of the remnant in the days of the captivity, and they are the same to-day. Do you know that there are all over the world to-day those Jews whom God sees as "the remnant"? For their sake, because of His promise, He still keeps mercy for Israel. Let us treat all Jews well, since this is true. (Rom. 11: 5.) God cannot but be pleased or grieved with our attitude towards Israel.

LESSON XXVIII.

Ezra and Nehemiah

The Restoration Period

Ezra and Nehemiah may well be studied side by side—the books as well as the men.

The chapter names of Ezra are:

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|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| I. Cyrus' Proclamation. | VI. Temple Dedication. |
| II. First Return. | VII. Ezra's Commission. |
| III. Temple Foundation. | VIII. Second Return. |
| IV. First Interruption. | IX. Ezra's Prayer. |
| V. Second Interruption. | X. Separation. |

The chapter names of Nehemiah:

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|----------------------------|----------------------|
| I. Nehemiah's Prayer. | VIII. Bible Reading. |
| II. Commission—Inspection. | IX. Confession. |
| III. Wall Building. | X. Covenant. |
| IV. Sword and Trowel. | XI. Census. |
| V. Restitution. | XII. Wall Dedicated. |
| VI. Wall Completed. | XIII. Separation. |
| VII. Genealogy. | |

Read and re-read these books until all their details are familiar. Nothing but the faithful performance of this task will open the way for real profit from these notes. Familiarity with the contents of Scripture is the first and absolute condition of progress in its study. And this familiarity easily comes, but comes only through attentive and repeated reading of Scripture itself—not of human commentaries or outlines. Oh, that Christians really believed this!

These restoration books are rather unfamiliar to most people. For this special reason they ought to be mastered all the more thoroughly. As God's children we have no right to slight any part of His blessed Word.

We will note many striking outward similarities between these two books that will help us master them, as, for example: 1. Each begins at Babylon and ends at Jerusalem. 2. Each centers round the man of God who writes it. 3. The story of each begins with a Persian king's decree. 4. Both books tell of building as their chief theme. 5. Each contains, and in its ninth chapter, a long prayer of humiliation and confession. 6. Each ends with the purification of the remnant from social pollution. Discover other resemblances.

The outline of restoration events should be carefully examined:

1. The first return under Zerubbabel and the founding of the new temple, B. C. 538-535 (Ezra 1-3).
2. The years of interruption (Ezra 4).
3. The finishing and dedication of the temple, B. C. 519-515 (Ezra 5, 6).
4. The second return under Ezra and his reformation, B. C. 457-456 (Ezra 7-10).
5. The ten years' unfruitful interval, B. C. 456-446 (Neh. 1: 3).
6. Nehemiah's first commission, B. C. 446 (Neh. 2).
7. The building of the wall of Jerusalem, B. C. 445 (Neh 3: 6).
8. Revival of national worship and covenant of faithfulness, B. C. 445 (Neh. 8-10).
9. Dedication of wall of Jerusalem and restoration of the city, B. C. 445 (Neh. 11-12).
10. Nehemiah's second commission and reformations, B. C. 434 (Neh. 13).

The time covered by these two books is just about a century—536-434. The Persian kings of the period are: Cyrus, 558-529; Cambyses (Ahasuerus, Ezra 4: 6), 529-522; Smerdis (Artaxerxes, Ezra 4: 7), 522, seven months' reign; Darius Hystaspes (Ezra 4: 5, 24; 5, 6), 522-485; Xerxes (probably the Ahasuerus of Esther), 485-465; Artaxerxes Longimanus (Ezra 7; Neh. 1, 2, 13: 6), 464-424. Only one of these monarchs, the false Smerdis, seems to have been really hostile to the Jews (and that because of his religion—an intensely interesting story), so that the long desertion of the temple building was quite inexcusable. It was not only after the adverse decree of Ezra 4: 24, but several years before it, that they became slack and discouraged in the work. Study carefully Ezra 4: 4-6. Now compare the words of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, whom God had to raise up to get the people started again in the work (Ezra 5: 1), and you will discover the real state of affairs. (See Hag. 1: 1-11; 2: 10-19; Zech. 1: 1-6; 7, 8; 9, 10, 14-17.)

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah constitute God's history of the godly remnant in the land, while that of Esther may be said to concern the nation out the land. In these two books we see the future and final restoration of Israel in type, not so much as to extent or glory as to fact and spiritual order. The fact of Israel's future and glorious return to their own land and loyalty to God no honest and thorough student of scripture can doubt for a moment. (See, for example, Isa. 11, 27, 33, 9, 62; Jer. 31-33; Ezek. 36, 37; Amos, 9: 14, 15; Mic. 4, Zeph. 3: 19-20; Hag. 2: 6-9, 20-23; Zech. 8: 18-23; 13, 14; Mal. 4, Acts 15: 15, 16; Rom. 11: 25-31.) We see the order of Israel's return to God in these books, and its typical and spiritual lessons: 1. The altar established, though because of fear (Ezra 3: 1-7). This is the first step in the final repentance of the remnant, when restored—prayer. (See Ezek. 36:37; Zech. 12: 10-14; Isa. 26: 16.) 2. The temple built, after much interruption (Ezra 3: 8; 6: 18), and its services resumed (Ezek. 40-48, Mic. 4). This represents complete dedication or consecration to God. 3. The wall restored (Neh. 1: 6). Here we have establishment in security, though amid danger. Spiritually, the life of victory, consequent upon consecration and restitution (Neh. 5). 4. The proclaiming of pedigrees (Neh. 7). Here is full assurance of relationship. 5. The final covenant of faithfulness (Neh. 10). 6. Fruitfulness, the city populated (Neh. 11). 7. Utter separation from disobedience and defilement (Neh. 13). Study this order of truth carefully.

Study the characters of Ezra and Nehemiah most carefully. Both are great among the men of God. Note, as to Ezra: 1. His high priestly origin (Ezra 7: 1-5). 2. His thorough training in the law (7: 6), largely self-training, probably, in view of the times, his home, and 7: 10. The Jewish traditions rank Ezra next to Moses, as regards the law. Consult a good article in a bible dictionary or cyclopedia. 3. His probable prominence in Babylon, from the king's attitude toward him in 7: 11-26—though Ezra's account of this is the true one. (See verses 27, 28.)

Note the character of these two men of God, finding passages proving each point: High faith in God; sterling integrity; intense earnestness; unlimited fidelity to the will of God; rigid self-denial; familiarity with God's Word; great spiritual power; great humility; deep knowledge of God's character; intense hatred of sin; remarkable power in prayer; fervent, devoted love for Israel as the people of Jehovah; singleness of purpose; untiring, unwavering, uncompromising persistence. You cannot afford to omit this; do it faithfully.

What do you think was the key of Ezra's life? Of Nehemiah's? What was the strong and the weak point of each? Which did the

greater work? If each did God's will for him, which did the greater work? Does either of these men seem selfish? Why not? If either had occupied himself in trying to live an unselfish, beautiful life, instead of being on fire with zeal in the actual service of God, would they have shown as resplendent as they do? Why not? (See Rom. 12: 21.)

Study Ezra's keynote in 7: 10, of his book, and Nehemiah's in 6: 3, of his. Ponder these passages prayerfully.

Make a thorough study of the great prayers of the ninth chapters of Ezra and Nehemiah. (Several other ninth chapters contain or mention remarkable prayers. See Deut. 9, Dan. 9, Matt. 9: 27-29; Mark 9: 24; Luke 9: 18, 28). In Ezra's prayer (Ezra 9) we find: (1) Realization of Israel's sin, verses 1-3; (2) Absolute unlimited humiliation, verses 3, 4; (3) Confession of Israel's sins and general sinfulness, verses 5-7; (4) Acknowledgment of God's amazing mercy, verses 8, 9; (5) Confession of particular present sin, verses 10-14; (6) Utter surrender to the righteous will of God, verse 15. Note that there is not a petition in this prayer—not one. All is abject abasement before a long-suffering but now justly offended God. To the casual reader Ezra's attitude and actions on this occasion may appear unreasonable and fanatical, or, at least, unjustified, just as his intense intolerance in the following chapter will seem to be largely the fruit of blind religious bigotry. Not such, however, the thought of the reverent saint who knows something of the infinite holiness of the God Ezra was dealing with. There is a tendency in these shallow days to smooth over sin, rather than to plow it up deep. "Fools make a mock at sin" (Prov. 14: 9); but when sin is finally revealed in the light of the Great White Throne, with the fearful smoking lake of eternal death just beyond, there will be no mocking. Ezra's holy earnestness may seem strange to some now, but it will stand right consistent in the eyes of all flesh when the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and men shall go into the caves of the rocks, and into the holes of the dust, from before the terror of the Lord, and from the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake mightily the earth. (Isa. 2.) We would beseech those readers who would have such godliness as will bear the last scrutiny of Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire (Rev. 1: 14) to dig deeper than most are wont in these times. If the *fear* of the Lord is not at the very ground of all your religion you have as yet but folly and falsehood; for *that fear is the beginning of true wisdom.* (Prov. 1: 7; 9: 10). We cannot but testify our conviction that much of the work done, even in the special conventions and meetings (a blessed reality and privilege!) is awfully untempered and superficial

—a seeking to bear fruit upward without taking root downward. Isa. 37: 31). Oh, for more men of God of Ezra's thoroughness! Oh, for more Christians who have been brought to a real knowledge of the unchanged character of Him who declareth Himself through Isaiah as the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy! (Isa. 57: 15). Oh, for more who are working out their purchased and freely bestowed salvation with fear and trembling, since it is God that worketh in them! (Phil. 2: 13). These things need to be deeply pondered.

Study now the prayer of Nehemiah 9. Believe me, it never pays to pass over lightly the prayers of the Bible. Prayer is by far the most important function of the Christian's life here below. The answered prayers of the Bible were given us to imitate; the unanswered, for instruction and warning; none was given to be neglected. Let us neglect none.

You will note that the prayer in Nehemiah began where that in Ezra ended—with utter surrender and separation to God. (Compare Neh. 9: 1, 2, with Ezra 9: 15—10) Of course, then, we may look for it to get on farther. We find in verse 1, humiliation; in verse 2, thorough separation and confession to God; in verse 3, worshipful submission to God and His word. Note that it is not only an individual, as in Ezra, but the whole people, that are engaged in this. (The preceding chapter, where the remnant were brought back to the word of God, accounts for this. How?) We next have verses 5-15, confident adoration and praise; and then, verses 16-31, mingled praise and confession—a beautiful passage indeed! We then find the sweetly humble petition of verse 32. But immediately, again, verses 33-35, careful exoneration of God in His judicial course with them, and the confession of their own recent utter ill-desert, with a humble and frank, but very pitiful, statement of their present evil case, verses 36, 37. And then, at last, verse 38, that bold and exquisite act of faith in the covenant of faithfulness—in spite of all the past. This is, indeed, very beautiful. Study it all carefully until you are thoroughly imbued with its spirit. Trace the fruits of this great twenty-fourth day (verse 1) in chapter 10.

We must notice, now, the precise character of the restoration from Babylonish captivity.

1. The restoration was not Israel's release from their bondage in the sense of a cessation of the "times of the Gentiles." These "times" ran on undisturbed by the return of the feeble Jewish band from Babylon. The Israelitish nation were still under Gentile dominion, and they fully understood that. (See Ezra 9: 8, 9; Neh. 1: 3; 9: 36, 37).

2. It was not a full restoration to Israel of their testimony for God in the earth. Into their restored temple we shall not find the Shekinah glory returning. The Ark of the Covenant will no longer stand in the Holy of Holies. Over all will be written Ichabod. (Compare with Ezra 6: 16-18, the similar occasions of Ex. 40: 17-35, and I. Kings 8, 1-11).

3. We are shown in Ezra 9: 8, 9, the divine object in this restoration from exile of the remnant of His people: "For a little moment grace hath been shewed from the Lord, our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in His holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage. For we are bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the ruins thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem." We see from this passage that it was out of God's heart of mercy that this restoration time was granted to the remnant of Israel as a "reviving" or refreshing from His tender, gracious heart. Though His people were out of the place of blessing through their sin, yet He must bless; the reservoirs of divine love must overflow if long restrained from their regular channels by human guilt. How else, indeed, shall we account for many of the great revivals of the Christian centuries? Almost wholly unsought by the great body of the church these great outpourings have again and again been sent from the presence of the Lord. As in the days of the second Jeroboam, our God has often blessed an utterly unworthy people. (See second Kings 14: 26, 27—a deeply touching passage).

But we must also reflect that it was in answer to the importunate prayers of the truly godly among the captives that God brought about this time of refreshing for them. The complaints and pleadings of many bleeding Jewish hearts were voiced by Jeremiah in his "Lamentations." Such prayers as Psalms 80 and 123 were not unheard. "He regarded their distress when He heard their cry" is written of this time, I think, in Psalm 106: 44.

Of course God had definitely *promised* to bring them back after seventy years in Babylon (Jer. 25: 11, 12; 29: 10). And we read in the very first verse of Ezra that it was to fulfill this word that He "stirred up the spirit of Cyrus" to proclaim the restoration. But it was *through prayer* that He wills to have His counsels of grace brought to pass; and it is well worthy of note that the two men who seem most thoroughly to have understood God's purpose to restore Judah are the most instant and earnest in supplication to God to remember His faith-

fulness and do it. Compare Lamentations and Dan. 9. Jeremiah had the burden at the beginning, Daniel at the end of the captivity. And that Ezekiel bore his share through the midst of it, witness his attitude in his early ministry (Ezek. 9: 8; 11: 13). And it is at the end of Ezekiel's wondrous prophecy of the certain final restoration of Israel that he writes, "For this, moreover, will I be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them" (36: 37). The men of God of the Bible were men of prayer. Without much "theory of prayer" they knew its power and practiced it continually.

The restoration we see, then, was wholly undeserved by Israel; was purposed in God's "heart of mercy" (Luke 1: 78, R. V. Marg.); was revealed by sure prophecy as a stay to the faithful in captivity; was meant as a "reviving" to the remnant; and was brought about through prayer.

There are three other ends God accomplished in it that must be noticed:

First, through the return of the Jews and the rebuilding of the temple God opened again the door of entrance to fellowship with Himself to any among the nations who sought the true God. Individual salvation was still from the Jews (John 4: 22, R. V.); though national salvation had been temporarily wrecked in their hands. (Only temporarily, thank God. Acts 15: 14-18; Rom. 11: 12; Zech. 8: 20-23).

Second, God through the restoration made it possible for the Word to "come to His own," though not to be received (John 1: 11); for her King to come "in meekness" to the daughter of Zion (Zech. 9: 9), though to be rejected; for the Judge of Israel to sit, though only to be "smitten with a rod upon the cheek." Mic. 5: 1). It was necessary that a body of Israel representatives, enough either to receive or reject nationally their Messiah, should be in Palestine when the time was full for Him to come.

Third, the "fullness of time" for Christ to come, spoken of by Paul in Gal. 4: 4, was brought about through the restoration. For, as we shall later see, the Jewish people were not a kingdom, but an ecclesiastical community, after the restoration; ruled, not by princes, but by priests, with their separate and spiritual character ever before them. Very rapidly, under such circumstances, legalism went to seed. "The law worketh death"; and under the casuistically terrible regime of the Scribes and Pharisees the nation was well-nigh dead when John's wakening voice rang out from the wilderness. For the "root" to grow up to David (Isa. 11: 1, 2) was to be out of "dry ground" (53: 2); and Israel was even "vety dry" (Ezek. 37: 2) when He

“grew up as a tender plant” before His Father, in their midst. (Isa. 53: 2). In the earlier periods the law had never had a full chance in Israel. In the days of the Judges it was the conquest of the land that occupied the people; in the days of the kingdom, national aggrandizement and worldly ends and alliances. But the returning exiles had only their past history and the prophesied future glory—with the law as the sole means to reach their longed-for emancipation. At last they were shut up to the law, and when its failure was full Jesus came bringing grace. (John 1: 17.)



LESSON XXIX.

The Book of Esther

Read this remarkable book over at least half a dozen times—or till its contents are thoroughly familiar.

The chapter names of Esther are:

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| I. Vashti. | VI. Mordecai's Promotion. |
| II. Esther. | VII. Haman Hanged. |
| III. Hamen's Decree. | VIII. Mordecai's Decree. |
| IV. Esther Petitioned. | IX. Revenge—Remembrance. |
| V. Esther Petitioning. | X. Peace. |

The book of Esther was probably written by Mordecai. The date of its story, if, as is quite generally conceded, its Ahasuerus is the Xerxes of profane history, is about 483-470 or 465. We see thus that it comes between the first and second parts of the book of Ezra—between Ezra 6 and 7. The Jews who returned with Zerubbabel had rebuilt and dedicated the temple, and, although the city of Jerusalem was not yet restored as it was later under Nehemiah, the way was open to any Jews who desired to return to their land and their worship.

And here, at once, we discover the key that opens the book of Esther to us. The majority of the Jews did not care to go back to Jerusalem. Only a small number comparatively, some 50,000, had returned at first; and later Ezra found only 6,000 more were ready to return with him. The greater part of them had settled down throughout the Persian empire and were successful—as when have the Jews not been?—in business, agriculture and politics; and the call to return to the land of their fathers found little or no response in their hearts. This is the state in which our lesson finds them (a state how nearly paralleled among the Jews of to-day!). Some were godless, many quite careless, and nearly all reconciled to live always out of their land, away from their temple, apart from all fellowship with the God who had chosen them as His people and Jerusalem as the city where He would cause His name to dwell and where he would gracious-

ly meet His favored nation in their worship and service with constant and unlimited blessing.

The book of Esther recounts His ways with these unfaithful, ungrateful, wandering people, who refused or neglected to return to their God and their land; just as the books of Ezra and Nehemiah exhibit His ways with the remnant which humbly and gladly welcomed the opportunity, to get back to the land and the city of promise and covenant.

We are not, therefore, surprised when we find that the name of God does not occur in this book in any form. We could not expect that it would when we reflect that it is the story of a people out of all fellowship with God. Everywhere we see God's hand, but His face and His name are hidden, just as long before He said should be His way with them if they should prove evil and rebellious. Deut. 31: 17, 18.

It is, indeed, true that there are four verses in Esther in which occur in the Hebrew, in mysterious acrostic form, the name Jehovah: 1: 20; 5: 4, 13; 7: 7. And there may be—probably are—depths of revelation yet unfathomed in this book. But to the common, reverent student of the story two great facts are apparent: The people of God are out of both obedience and fellowship, and God in infinite tenderness and faithfulness in working in their behalf, in spite of their sins. There is no other book of the Bible, perhaps, so full of God's manifest providences, and these are exercised in the gracious care of His own while all unfaithful. Study it with this as the central thought and it will be easy.

For instance, in their sore need (chapter 4), we read that the Jews fasted, but not that they prayed. Doubtless many did pray, but they were all consciously under the hiding of God's face, and the story brings it out very plainly everywhere. Again, Esther's marriage to a Gentile was in direct disobedience to an unabrogated law of God for Israel: Ex. 34: 16, 17; Deut. 7: 3; Josh. 23: 11, 12; I. Kings 11: 2; Ezra 9: 11-14; Neh. 13: 23-27. But there is no rebuke accorded to it in this book of Esther; but, instead, the tender, wise overruling of even this sin to His own glory, in the preservation and protection of His poor, wayward people. It is one of the ways of our blessed God to treat us infinitely better than we know when we are forgetful of Him; while still withholding from us, till we truly repent, the light of His loving face. And how, often, to turn us from our own ways to Himself, it is necessary for our faithful Father to let us come into some terrible trial, some deep, dark crisis like that which came to Israel through the enmity of Haman. God oftentimes shuts us up to Himself for succor, that He may reveal Himself as a very present help in trouble to those who neglected Him in prosperity.

In this Persian monarch and his court we see that the Gentile, to whom the sovereignty of earth has now been committed, is rapidly proving himself as utter a failure as a ruler as the Israelite did before him. We see all about us here naught but pride, vain glory and self-indulgence. God is getting little honor indeed at the court of Persia!

Do not regard Vashti's refusal as too virtuous. Wilfulness and pique were probably as potent factors as modesty in her action. Typically she may stand for the gentile Christendom that must soon meet the rejection it merits and give way to the Jewish wife spoken of in Hosea 2, and as seen in Esther. Practically, the keen, wise speech of Memucan reveals the important truth we must not fail to see. Col. 3: 18; Eph. 5: 22-24; 1 Peter 3: 1-6; 1 Cor. 11: 8-10; 1 Tim. 2: 11-15; I. Cor. 14: 34-36. These passages are God's words, not man's. Let none dare despise them. But Eph. 5: 25; Col. 3: 19; 1 Peter 3: 7, are also God's words, and are far more constantly and shamefully disregarded than the others, we must believe.

Esther is a rarely sweet and attractive character. Beautiful, indeed, but withal modest (2: 15); winsome (2: 9-17; 5: 1-3); obedient (2: 10); humble (2: 20); filial and tender (2: 20; 4: 4); resolutely self-sacrificing (4: 16); courageous (7: 6); loyal and constant (2: 22; 8: 1-2; 7: 3-4). She was an able woman also, as her speech and actions show. The delicate and unlimited tact with which she manages the king are worthy much study. That she had been endowed with heavenly wisdom in earthly things seems plain. She had been divinely guided in it, we cannot but see. Many a woman would do well to imitate her method of handling her husband in chapter 4. Constant conventions and careless culinaries—thus do Christian wives lose hold of their husbands sometimes, we fear.

Haman was simply an oriental despot's favorite—we need nothing more to explain his elevation. But he was an Amalekite, and Mordecai would never honor one whom God had cursed (Ex. 17: 14-16). Haman is the first great anti-semite. There have been many since. His hatred of the Jews came from heart enmity to their God. So does modern anti-Semitism. And the destruction that overtook Haman will yet overtake the haters of the Jews, even down to the coming Antichrist, the last great head of the gentile dominion, who, with his ten allied kings (Dan. 2, 7, 13; Rev. 17), seems to be typified in Haman and his ten sons. In fact, this book of Esther seems to stand for God's general attitude during the times of the Gentiles toward Gentile power in the first place during its time of sovereignty—an attitude of sufferance,

indeed, but of constant jealousy and warning; and, second, as toward His earthly people, Israel, of most loving though unrequited watch-care and preservation, through all ills and dangers unto a time of final elevation (Ch. 8), vengeance on their foes (chapters 8, 9) and ultimate glorious, fruitful peace (chapter 10).

The character of Mordecai should be very thoroughly examined. He justly stands high in the estimation of the Jews to this day; though it is as Jews, not as God's people, we may say, that they so highly honor Mordecai. Trace carefully all the passages about him in the lesson, with these questions in mind: What is this man's motive for doing as he does? Is it godliness or selfishness? Does his zeal for his people's welfare, aside from his instinct of self-preservation, spring from his vision of them as the people of God, or only from what we call "patriotism"? Do you think he had already been at Jerusalem among those that returned? (See Ezra 2:2.) Do you think Ezra would have done, step by step, as Mordecai did? Compare these two men carefully. What is the vital difference between them? We have no hesitation in pronouncing Ezra one of the great *men of God* of the Bible. Can you class Mordecai as a "man of God"? What is the reason?

LESSON XXX

The Books of Chronicles and The House of David

We have determined to pass by, for the present, the books of Chronicles, leaving them for a future course, if it should please God to lead us. But a further word of them is needed, although the study of them be postponed.

The books of Kings treat of Israel's history as an earthly nation, as a sovereignty, as one has said, amid the other sovereignties of earth. So the full history of both northern and southern kingdoms is given in detail, with the final end of each. But in Chronicles we find only the Northern Kingdom traced after the division, and its history only as connected with the sanctuary of God, the priesthood, the Levites, and the worship of Jehovah. It is the history of the theocracy—veiled, of course, because carried on through an earthly representative and amid failure, yet still the theocracy. And thus, since God's new purposes of grace with Israel as the royal nation of earth were expressed in His great covenant with David (II. Sam. 7; I. Chron. 17; Psalm 89), the history of David is repeated with many delightful and characteristic additions—practically the whole book of I. Chronicles being devoted to his line, his acts and his faithfulness to God. His great sins are here omitted, as not in keeping with the distinct character of the book, as the book of God's grace toward Israel by David and his house.

It should be most carefully borne in mind that the crisis of the days of Eli, at the end of the long story of apostasy of the period of the judges, was one of the most serious of all Israel's history. (See I. Sam. 2: 12—7). This is plain enough from the simple fact that Jehovah permitted His holy ark to be taken clean away from Israel by their deadly enemies, the Philistines. That there had been at that time a divine judicial decree of strange and terrible import to Israel is evident, even were there no direct Scriptural statement of it. God does nothing without a meaning; and there is surely the deepest significance in His utterly withdrawing Himself for a season from His sinful people.

But if we will turn to the seventy-eighth Psalm we shall find the divine key to God's remarkable action in the time of Eli. We bespeak for this passage the most careful consideration, because therein lies one of the several complete answers to the Anglo-Ephraim theory, viz., that the Anglo-Saxon people are of the so-called "lost tribes" of Israel, and, through the tribe of Joseph, are now enjoying those great promised blessings to Israel that fair and thorough interpretation of Scripture shows can only come with their future national repentance and the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus. This passage before us does not touch upon the identification of the English with the Israelites; but simply shows the absolute impossibility of divine blessing now having come to Israel through the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, as these theorists so loudly claim.

In the fifty-sixth verse of Psalms 78, we see (if we follow Israel's history through the Psalm) that the tracing of the judges' apostasy begins (Jud. 2: 11, seq.); and in verse 59 God's consequent anger is pictured and His final abhorrence of Israel for their persistent iniquity. This word in Scripture is a most grave one; it portrays a terrible crisis at that time for Israel, that God should abhor them. And it portends deep dealings with His people, if not their utter rejection.

Verses 60-64 now give the three great steps of divine judgment at that time. (1) The permanent abandonment by God of His tabernacle at Shiloh (verse 60).

We will do well to trace the history of Shiloh. Josh. 18: 1, 8, 9, 10; 19: 51; 21: 2; 22: 9, 12, show it to have been the place of setting up the tabernacle upon the conquest of the land, and the point of constant resort, in those days, both to seek the Lord and as a national rendezvous. It was so in the time of the judges as well (Judges 18: 31; 21: 12, 19, 21); although the necessity of such specific directions to find the place, as were given in Judges 21: 19, is a commentary on the latter neglect of Jehovah by perhaps the mass of the people. All the reference to Shiloh in I. Samuel are in the story of the first four chapters, except the one in 14: 3, where the priest of the rejected house of Eli is significantly seen with Saul, each holding fast to his office, despite God's counsel. Shiloh is not mentioned in II. Samuel at all; for that is the book of David, Judah and Jerusalem, and not of Saul and Benjamin, Ephraim and Shiloh, as we easily see upon examination. In I. Kings 2: 26, 27, we find a note of the final fulfillment under Solomon of the curse on Eli's house of II. Samuel 2. Jeremiah uses God's desertion and desolation of Shiloh as a solemn warning to those of his day who trusted in false hopes that the Jerusalem temple would never be destroyed. (See Jer. 7: 1-15.) And his

further references to Shiloh in 26: 4-9, conclude the Scriptural references to the place in connection with the tabernacle and priesthood.

But to return to Psalm 78. Verse 31 recounts (2) the capture of the Ark by the Philistines; and then we have (3) verses 62-64, the desolation of Israel by the Philistines.

Then, after the twenty years of I. Samuel 7: 2, we have the three great steps God took (from that time on to David's time) in grace. (1) The delivery of His people from their enemies, verses 65, 66; (see I. Samuel 7, and on). (2) The definite rejection, as to the vessel of His grace toward Israel, of the double tribe of Joseph (verse 67). (3) The selection of the tribe of Judah, the establishment of His counsels with David, and their permanent connection with the sanctuary and the City of Zion (verses 68-72). Now we must note and remember that these were definite transactions by the living God and that they remain unannulled to this day and must be unchanged forever, since Christ stands in David's line, of the tribe of Judah. And though Reuben stood first by way of birth and Ephraim by way of natural pre-eminence and works, both fell utterly—Reuben into unnature (Gen. 35: 22; 49: 3, 4) and Ephraim into arrogance, peevishness and sloth (Josh. 17: 14-16; Judges 8: 1-3; 12: 1-6) as well as disgraceful cowardice (Psalm 78: 9, 10). Above all, the idolatry that cursed Israel seemed to have had its hotbed in Ephraim. (Judges 17, etc.) We know it was the great seat of the calf worship of later days. Read Hosea regarding Ephraim. It is *absolutely impossible* for blessing to come to the nation of Israel except through Christ. All God's promises to Israel are through Christ. (Gal. 3: 16.) And Christ, to Israel as a nation, is the Son of David; though to Israel as the godly seed, He may be simply Son of Abraham. Two points determine a straight line. Matt. 1: 1, tells through what *man*, and 1: 2, through what *tribe*, the blessing of God comes from Abraham by Jesus Christ. David is the man, Judah the tribe. In the latter verse Judah is the only one named, the others being simply "his brethren." There is no place for a point outside this line (Abraham.....Judah.....David.....Christ) when we speak of blessing to Israel nationally. Shiloh has been utterly and forever rejected, and Jerusalem forever chosen, as the city of the earthly sanctuary and throne of Jehovah. Joseph has been forever refused as the tribal source of blessing, Judah forever chosen. (See Psalm 89.) Christ has come, and through the nation's rejection of Him has shut them up to the grace of God in His own person, absolutely and forever. And He is *the Son of David*.

Now, Anglo-Israelism disregards all this and professes to find in Scripture the warrant and in history the proof that the Anglo-Saxon race is the double tribe of Joseph (it was through Dan and Benjamin they claimed their clews for awhile, but that error became too palpable) and that they are now enjoying God's national favor and blessing, since, forsooth, they have escaped the doom of the "Jerusalem sinners" in their rejection and murder of Christ. But they overlook, forget or utterly ignore the fact that Joseph was rejected, and Judah and the Davidic line *exclusively chosen*, long before the Messiah came. (See Psalm 78: 67-70. And in Judah and David all blessing still stands. Psalms 18: 50; 89: 3; 20, 35, 40; 132: 11, 17, 18; Isa. 9: 7; 16: 5; Jer. 33: 15, 17, 20-22, 25, 26; Ezekiel 37: 24, 25; Hosea 3: 5; Amos 9: 2; Zech. 12: 7-12; 8: 1; Luke 1: 32, 60; Rom. 1: 3; Rev. 3: 7; 5: 5; 22: 16).

Inasmuch, then, as God's purpose of grace for Israel are now all bound up with Judah and David's house we do not wonder at the insertion of a separate book in the Bible to treat of that house, as the books of the Chronicles do. And we will also find that in Chronicles all that is detrimental to the house of David is omitted. Neither David's nor Solomon's sins, for example, are noted at all in these books. It is evident that, after the story of Kings, which gives simply the history as it occurs, the Chronicles takes up the house of David in *grace*, as the chosen vessel of God's future blessing in Christ to Israel. And grace remembers transgression no more forever—bless God! Of course, the blind legalist, as well as the godless critic, will mock at this; but that only goes to prove its truth.

LESSON XXXI

The Books of Experience

A General Survey

Inasmuch as we expect, in the present course, to proceed to the New Testament, after the study of a single one of the prophets (Daniel), (because we are convinced that prophetic study, for the Christian, should always be carried on from the proper viewpoint of church truth), we have determined, since two of the psalm books (Psalms and Solomon's Song) are very largely prophetic, to leave these five books also until next year's course for particular study, while we take, for the present, such a simple survey of them as will enable us to realize something of their general meaning and their bearing upon other Scripture.

We may call the Old Testament books from Genesis to Esther, the historical books; from Psalms to Solomon's Song, the experimental, and from Isaiah to Malachi, the prophetic. The first group, in general, deals with facts; the second with lessons, the third with hopes. The first group reveals man as a moral and spiritual wreck, from the *history* of his utter moral and spiritual failures. The second reveals man to himself as such a wreck, through the medium of his own *experience*; the third points him forward in *prophecy* to his only remedy—the "restitution of all things" by the Lord Jesus Christ, the second Adam, the Head of the new creation.

The position of the book of Job is thus easily explained. After the long, dismal tale of human sin and failure which we find in the historical books, several great, earnest questions naturally suggest themselves to the thoughtful heart: 1. Why does God permit all this awful evil to continue? 2. Is it possible for men to be so victorious over sin as to fully satisfy God's righteousness? Or, as Job puts it in 9: 2: "How can man be just before God?" 3. In view of all the dark, sad history of earth from Genesis to Esther is there any real good for man to be found on this earth? "Can man's heart be satisfied 'under the sun'?"

The first two of these questions God answers in the book of Job, the last in Ecclesiastes. Ere we proceed to look at these books let us note that these five books of experience have a remarkable and instructive order, which ought to be recorded here, inasmuch as we shall not deal with the remaining three of them until next year. In the book of Psalms the uppermost thought is the ways of God in government—of the universe, of course, but especially with reference to His own people, His saints. In the book of Job we find the vindication of His governmental ways, even the darkest and most inscrutable of them, through their success with and ultimate glad acceptance by the saints of God, as represented in Job himself. In Proverbs we have divine directions for the shaping of the life on earth of those who choose submission to these ways of God. Then in Ecclesiastes comes the full testing of all that earth has to offer man, by one into whose hands God has placed every possible means for thorough investigation; "for what can the man do that cometh after the king?" (Eccl. 2:12.) And the verdict is that everything of earth is vanity, weariness, vexation of spirit, "a striving after wind." And then, last, we have the wonderful little book that sings the sweet high joy of those who consent in heart to all those preceding—who are willing to die out to all that is of self or of the old creation; whether to their own power (Psalms), their own wisdom (Proverbs), or their own self-gratification (Ecclesiastes). To such saints the Song of Solomon becomes a living, breathing, holy reality, and in the words of the Beloved One Himself:

"The winter is past,
The rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in the land."

—Song II., 11, 12.

This is the acme of Christian experience, when Christ has been crowned Lord of every part of our hearts and lives; when "every thought has been brought into captivity to Him." I. Pet. 3:15; II. Cor. 10:3-5. This is the "joy unspeakable and full of glory," the "glorying in Christ Jesus," the "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," spoken of in I. Pet. 1:8; Phil. 3:3, and I. John 1:3. When a soul truly and finally chooses to renounce all other joys for Christ, Christ becomes unutterably sweet to him. Because he has chosen his full portion, not in this age, but in the age to come, he is given an earnest of the glad millennial marriage joy of the bride. May God lead us into it! But the door is strait. Gal. 6:14; II. Cor. 4:14-17.

Inasmuch as the book of Job opens the group of experience-books, and since it deals with the fundamental question of righteousness, we will speak a word further of it, postponing, of course, its thorough study.

God called Job "perfect and upright." His three friends, then, were wrong in charging him with sin as the only possible cause of his calamities. Job was perfect as regards human righteousness; but he was brought now into utter darkness, and his greatest agony came from his inability to find God, or to have fellowship with Him or deliverance from Him, on the basis of his own goodness. Finally he sees God, and in utter self-aborrence he seeks the dust, whence God lifts him into new favor and grace (48:8), new service (42: 8, 9), new prosperity (42: 11, 12), new fruitfulness (42: 13-15) and new longevity (43: 16). In James 5: 11, we are referred to the "end" the Lord made in His dealings with Job as the proper point from which to consider his story. From the failure to do this arises most earnest people's difficulties regarding Job. The quibbles of those who call this book a mere "allegory" can only be noticed to brand them as at war with God, for He rates Job as a person, one of His very mightiest saints. (Ezek. 14: 14-20; James 5: 11.)

We cannot take up the argument of Job further than to say that in order to prove Job's utter hypocrisy and ill-desert Eliphaz stands upon his personal experience—"I have seen," 4: 8; 5: 3, 27; 15: 9, 17; Bildad draws upon tradition—"the fathers," 8: 8-10; and Zophar resorts to rigorous legal and religious methods (11: 13-20). But that their whole attitude was unjust and wrong was seen by Elihu in 32: 3; while there narrow bigotry, their real self-complacency and their lack of love is manifest everywhere in their speeches. But God shows their vital error in 40: 7, 8. Their judgment of God's ways and of His servant Job was wholly human and unenlightened.

Under the first testing (1: 13-21) Job "sinned not" (5: 22). Under the second (2: 7-10), not "with his lips." But in chapter 3, what was in his heart gets out. And his afflictions finally bring him to know himself before God—infinite boon! See 40: 3-5; 42: 1-6. And the reason for the presence of evil in the world is thus revealed to God's saints, enough to satisfy them; others God does not expect or attempt to satisfy. And those who have reaped the intended "peaceable fruit" from their Father's chastening (Heb. 12: 11) are ready to cry with David, "Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, and causest to approach unto Thee * * * It is good for me that I have been afflicted"! Psalm 94: 12-15; 119: 71.

LESSON XXXII.

The Book of Daniel

We must stop to study this book thoroughly. Without the truth it holds, much in the New Testament and more in the Prophets will be dark to us. No man is a thorough Bible student who is ignorant of Daniel or whose study of it has been shallow. In Deuteronomy we found the chart of Israel's covenant history; in Daniel we shall find that of their post-captivity history to the "time of the end" of all their troubles. If the keys of the Bible, up to the Book of Psalms, hang on Moses' book, those of the rest of the Bible, through Revelation, hang on Daniel's; and, indeed, very many of the prophetic Psalms fail to open to us till we seek their solution in the wonderful visions of the faithful seer of the captivity.

No one is excusable for ignorance of this great book in these days. Within the past century God has graciously recovered to His saints prophetic truth that had lain hidden, or known but to a faithful few, since the early days of the church. Indeed, the fourth verse of the last chapter of our prophet, when translated aright, reveals the fact that at or near the "time of the end" the book of prophecy (especially Daniel's own) will be opened up to those devoutly studying it as never before. "Many shall search it through and through, and knowledge of it shall be increased."

No believer need fear to study prophecy. What if many discordant voices arise as to interpretation of it? Has not the Christian the Holy Ghost to guide him? We have a sure word of prophecy, and unto it we "do well to take heed." (II. Peter 1: 19.) It is, indeed, the only real light in this world, left so dark by the absence of our Lord. (John 9: 5; 12: 35). And since the blessed Holy Spirit has, as part of His heavenly commission, to show us of the "things to come" (John 16: 13), we ought gladly and trustfully to surrender ourselves to Him, and expect to find the path of truth, rest and confident hope, through the midst of this sinful, deceitful world, in which, as strangers in a foreign, hostile land, we must walk for a little, until the day-star arise and we be caught away into the light unto Him.

1. As always, our first step must be to read the book at least half a dozen times. Do not rest short of real familiarity with it from beginning to end.

2. We see at once that the book falls into two natural divisions of six chapters each; the first, historical (except part of chapter 2); the second, prophetic (except part of chapter 9. We may name the chapters of the first section as follows:

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|---------------------|-----------------|
| I. Heart-Purpose. | IV. Great Tree. |
| II. Gentile Image. | V. Handwriting. |
| III. Fiery Furnace. | VI. Lion's Den. |

And those of the second section:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| VII. Four Beasts. | XI. Truth History. |
| VIII. Ram and Goat. | XII. Tribulation—Resurrec- |
| IX. Prayer—Period. | tion—Consummation. |
| X. Great Warfare. | |

3. The character before us in this man Daniel merits our prayerful study. Daniel is one of the few men of whom God writes only good. And he seems to have had a like close place in the divine heart in the Old Testament as did John in the New, as thrice over he is called the "greatly beloved" one (9: 23; 10: 11, 19); moreover, the writer of the Apocalypse and Daniel have "all things in common," as those who have been let together into the very arcana of God.

4. The form of the prophecies of Daniel is peculiar. We may group them as three-fold: (1) Symbolical; those in which symbolic visions are first given, and afterward, by either direct divine revelation to the prophet, or by angelic agency, explained. (See chapters 2, 4, 6, 7, 8). (2) Apocalyptic or revelatory; those in which, without symbol, the message is given to the prophet directly by a heavenly messenger. (See chapters 9-12.) (3) Typical; those parts of the book which seem to foreshadow in their persons and events, prophetic persons and events still future. (See chapters 3, 4, 5, 6.) Examine the book with these distinctions in mind. There is not in the whole of Daniel such a prophecy as those commonly uttered by Isaiah, Jeremiah. Compare, for instance, the method of Daniel's prophecies with that uttered by Jahaziel in II. Chron. 20: 14-17. Can you find any other prophecies like Daniel's in the Old Testament?

5. The time of Daniel's prophecies should be carefully noted. In chapter 1 we learn that he was taken to Babylon in the first captivity, B. C. 606. It was from this date that God began to reckon the seventy years' captivity and the times of the Gentiles. This is important, as agreeing with the fact that Daniel is the prophet of Gentile times.

His career begins and his predictions all end with Gentile times. Since the sovereignty was now given to the Gentiles, God removed Daniel to Babylon, the Gentile capital, to represent Him there. For God is still watching over the course of earthly affairs with a jealous eye, during this trial of the Gentiles, and, since He had not yet taken from Israel their place as His people, but only political sovereignty, it must be through a Jew that His mind and will be made known at the Gentile courts.

We leave the spiritual lessons of this book largely to the discovery of the student; because though very numerous and rich, they are here, we feel, less important than the prophetic truth. We will, therefore, simply indicate a few of the more prominent and then proceed to the prophecies.

Note in chapter 1, 2, the source of Nebuchadnezzar's power over God's earthly testimony. (Compare Psalms 78: 60, 61.) What was the cause of God's permitting such dishonor upon His name and sanctuary? (II. Chron. 36: 14-21.) Why does God's glory involve, generally, the public disgrace of His unfaithful people? In what way did Nebuchadnezzar's handling of the holy vessels differ from that of Belshazzar in chapter 5? Think of this carefully. God permitted it here and judged it there. Why.

What did Daniel's great heart purpose in 1: 8 (the key of his whole life, indeed), involve? Fear of whom? Faith in whom? Denial of whom? Separation from whom? Boldness towards whom? Danger from whom? Glory for whom? Add the word "continued" of verse 21 to the "purposed" of verse 8 and you have Daniel's entire career.

Mark the steps in the victory of faith in the second chapter: (1) Faith's opportunity, verse 13. (2) Faith's calmness, verses 14, 15. (3) Faith's confidence, verse 16. (4) Faith's method, verses 17, 18. (5) Faith's reward, verse 19. (6) Faith's return, verses 20-23. (7) Faith's humility toward God and toward men, verse 23. (8) Faith's denial—all that is of man, verse 27, and of self, verse 30. (9) Faith's confession, verse 28. (10) Faith's public victory and vindication, verses 46-48. (11) Faith's unselfish generosity, verse 49.

Make some such study of the glorious triumph of the faithful three in chapter 3 and of Daniel again in chapter 6. "The royal power of a renewed will" is grandly seen in 3: 18: "We will not worship the image." "As for me," cries Joshua, "I will serve the Lord." (Josh. 24: 15.) "My heart is fixed," said David. (Psalm 108: 1.) "Ezra had set his heart." (Ezra 7: 10.) "I have made thy face hard against their faces * * * as an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead," is God's preparation of tender Ezekiel in Babylon. (Ezek.

3: 8, 9); while a little before at Jerusalem He had set ahrinking Jeremias among his enemies as an iron pillar. (Jer. 1: 18.) John waxes strong in spirit (Luke 1: 80), and James and John are approved as "sons of thunder." (Mark 3: 17.) When Paul's purpose is once formed there is no wavering, no "yea and nay" (II. Cor. 1: 17, 18), whether it be to resist Jerusalem Judaism to the face in the chiefest apostle (Gal. 2: 11) or to deliver the last loving testimony to the Jerusalem Jews (Acts 21, 22). If it must be "Athanasius against the world," Athanasius stands. If assembled Christendom will draw Luther to a final confession he will say, "Here I stand; I can do no other. So help me God!" And why all this? Because these men all stood for the immutable truth of God, and they must, to hold the truth, be likewise immutable. Read the burning words of Isaiah 50: 4-9. This is the Master of all the saints prophetically speaking of Himself: "I have set my face like a flint." And when the hour verged on for the "shame and spitting" the Holy Ghost saith, He "steadfastly set His face to go up to Jerusalem." (Luke 9: 51.) We must not hide this fact from our eyes, that there is spiritual iron in the blood of every true man of God. And Daniel 3, speaking in type of the faithful remnant of Israel, has a most solemn message for us, who are fallen upon days when next to everyone is ready at the sound of this world's music to fall face down. "Our God is able to deliver us" from persecution to-day—certainly; but suppose He doesn't? Suppose instead He lets the devil get ready his furnace, as in Rev. 2: 10? Are we ready to go in? It is the "but if not" of Dan. 3: 18, that reveals the hearts of these Hebrew children. Sooner or later you and I must decide what we will do in a like crisis, for note the "shall" of II. Tim. 3: 12.

A very thorough study of the character of Daniel should be made. He is one of the most wonderful characters the world has ever seen. A commanding figure as to intellectual capacity, executive ability or personal prowess, he stands far over all as a man of almost peerless moral character. He is twice named by God as one of the three of His servants whose righteousness before Him had real *power*. (Ezek. 14: 14, 20.) Do not fail to make a deep and prayerful study of this man.

Some one has said, "Isaiah is the prophet of Christ, Daniel of the Antichrist." This, on the whole is true.

All through the Bible we are pointed forward, in direct prophecy or in type and shadow, to a terrible person of the last days who is to blaspheme and defy God and advance in awful iniquity above all men that have preceded him, even on this sinful earth. And his career is described as being, though very brief, yet very terrible and destructive

in its character, especially toward the saints of God, and most of all toward Israel, the earthly people of Jehovah.

At first the references to this wicked one are quite vague and indistinct, but gradually the testimony concerning him grows in detail and distinctness, until in one of Paul's epistles (II. Thessa. 2, I. V.) we have not only his absolutely lawless and blasphemous character portrayed more clearly than ever before, but plain information given as to the conditions that shall accompany his coming—that he shall be openly manifested directly upon the "gathering together unto Christ" of the "Church in the air." (I. Thessa. 4) and the withdrawal of the hindering influence that had heretofore prevented his coming. (II. Thessa. 2: 6-8). Here we see that, but for this restraining influence (which we believe to be the presence and present operation in the world of the Holy Spirit) the devil would doubtless long since have brought forth this "son of perdition" for man's acceptance and worship; but God has not permitted this. The Antichrist has "his own seasons," according to II. Thessa. 2: 6, and till then he cannot be revealed; but that he "cometh" (I. John 2: 18) is the constant testimony of the Holy Ghost by the prophets; and that spirit which shall animate him is already abroad (I. John 4: 3), since the testimony of Jesus Christ come in the flesh began.

To call the Antichrist a system of iniquity and not a person is to wrest Scripture, where it is very plain indeed. Personality is constantly attributed to this "lawless one." (See II. Thessa. 2: 3-9; John 5: 43; Isa. 30: 30-33; 31: 8; Rev. 11: 7; 13: 4-8, 18; 19: 19-21; 20: 10.)

When we come to the book of Revelation this Antichrist, the great human enemy of God and His Christ, is the great earthly personage before us constantly, from chapter 11 on, in connection with the final apostasy. It is he who heads up and leads the awful rebellion of earth that ends with Christ's glorious advent in chapter 19. Of course, as we see in chapter 13, he is the mere tool of Satan, the great dragon. But he is such a conscious, willing and terribly effective tool that there will have been none like him. And he will turn the whole earth (except the few elect) to himself in abject worship, and through himself to Satan. For Satanworship, intelligent and confessed, shall yet be the all but universal "religion" of a world that crucified the Christ of God and derisively despised for centuries the amazing offers of divine love to forgive even that unspeakable crime. (See Rev. 13: 3, 4, 8.) The "beast" here is the Antichrist. And find who the "dragon" is in Rev. 20: 2.

So fearful will be the danger from the awful delusion of that time to the saints of God that the most thorough particulars of its character, and the most careful descriptions of its leaders, abound in the Word and especially in the prophets. In Rev. 13:18, there is such a hint as enables the saints—at least those of the tribulation days—to identify beyond question the terrible enemy who will lead the mass of men, all unsuspecting, to their doom, because of their final rejection of the truth. (See II. Thes. 2:9-12; Rev. 13:8, 13-15.) If we wonder at the frequency with which the Antichrist, the tribulation, and “the iniquity of the end” are reverted to in scripture we need only study the period of “the end” to lose our wonder. And when we remember that all the principles of evil that will then rush forth into full, final and awful manifestation are simply those that are to-day working subtly on every hand, like the very “leaven” to which they are compared (Matt. 13:33; 16:6, 11, 12), we begin to realize how very important these very Scriptures are to us, in that they discover to us, clearly and plainly, in its ripened form, what is more or less indistinct and deceptive in its hidden, or “mystery” working.

Daniel is the prophet who deals more than any other, except John in the Apocalypse, with “the time of the end” and its “Man of Destiny”—the last great ruler of “the times of the Gentiles.”

It is not proposed, nor is it here possible, to go into an exhaustive study of the wonderful prophecies of Daniel. But it is earnestly hoped that we may so arouse interest, and so sketch the contents of these great predictions as to direct the student toward their deeper study—a study that, conducted aright, cannot but prove a very bulwark to faith and a most effective prophylactic to worldiness. Some one has rightly said, “No student of prophecy is a skeptic.” To which I would add, No real student of prophecy can be worldly-minded.

In the preparation of the chart I have here given of the five great prophecies of Daniel I have been indebted to several earnest students of the word of God—most of all to Mr. George H. Pember, whose excellent work, “The Great Prophecies of the Centuries,” published by Hodder & Stoughton, London, has been of much help to me.

Daniel, then, is the prophet of the Gentiles. When God transferred the earthly sovereignty from Israel to Nebuchadnezzar He raised up this great man to God to represent Him at the Babylonian courts, to teach the king of Himself and to impress upon the Gentile world-empires, through Nebuchadnezzar, their head, the great fact of the delegated nature of their authority, and their consequent responsibility to Israel’s God for their proper use of their powers, with the certainty of speedy judgment in case of unfaithfulness.

Chapter 1 serves as a general introduction to the book, revealing in verses 1-3 the spiritual state of Gentile times—God's earthly people in captivity and his earthly testimony debased; in verses 3-5, the Israelitish people in the present age "learning the tongue of the Chaldeans"; and in verse 6 that faithful remnant of Israel, who are always true to God. Then, after the outline of chapter 2, which reveals the historical course of Gentile times, we have four more remarkable chapters of narration, in this first half of Daniel's book. Each has its peculiar prophetic message to us concerning these same "Gentile times." In chapter 3 we have the spirit of Gentile government exhibited, first in the self-idolatrous act and decree of Nebuchadnezzar; for where did the king likely get the pattern of his image but from his dream of chapter 2? And the head of that is grown into the whole of this! The center of all here is "Nebuchadnezzar, the king," as in chapter 4: 30; it is "the glory of my majesty." And there has never been a Gentile government, nor will there be till Christ shall destroy them as they now exist, that really or permanently sought as its one chief end the glory of God; every nation of this earth is essentially and finally and irrevocably committed to selfishness in its policy and self-interest in its practice. We may well call to witness the present scenes in the Philippines!

The next of these remarkably faithful characteristics of the Gentile spirit is seen in the persecuting intolerance of the three non-conformists, who without doubt prefigure the faithful remnant of the last days, who will refuse the blasphemous demands of Antichrist (see Rev. 13, etc.) and suffer untold agonies therefor. (Psalms 10-15, 35-37, 102, 141-143; Rev. 13: 7, 15; Matt., 24: 15-22; Isa. 10: 20-32; Isa. 33: 1; Jer. 30: 4-7; Dan. 7: 21, 25; 8: 24; 9: 27, and many other passages.)

In chapter 4 we have God's methods of government during the "times of the Gentiles" abasing ripened pride by His judgments until men know that "the heavens do rule" (verse 26), albeit government is for the time committed to the sons of men; while in chapter 5 we are shown the final issue into utter baseness of the Babylonian empire, as typical of each of the succeeding powers. The historian knows full well that the end of every fallen power of the past has been in just such godless, licentious, drunken gluttony as is described at this closing feast of King Belshazzar, and it ought to be significant to the thoughtful mind to see the advertisements so lately springing forth everywhere of certain medical nostrums which, it is claimed, will avert the ill-effects of overeating! Rome, before her fall, was less fortunate!

We see in chapter 6, the sure succession of Gentile times—a sort of illustration of the accuracy of chapter 2; and we observe also the cor-

rectness of the statement (chapter 2:39) that the kingdom to succeed Babylon should be "inferior" to Nebuchadnezzar's empire. If we compare Daniel's description of the majestic centralized might of Nebuchadnezzar, in verses 18 and 19, with the constitutional weakness of Persia (for constitutional governments are always, finally, weaker than autocratic), as seen in the bold scheme and words of the princes in 3:7, 8, 12-15, together with the whining impotence of the king, we see that the downward progress of the metals of the image Nebuchadnezzar saw in chapter 2, from gold to iron, and finally to mud, is meant, at least in part, to exhibit the respective real values of these successive governments in the eyes of a wise man of the world, such as Nebuchadnezzar.



LESSON XXXIII.

The Great Prophecies of Daniel

We take for granted that every one knows that chapter 2 is a marvelous prophetic outline of the world's history from the time of its utterance to the second coming of our Lord and the establishment of the millennial kingdom. Its predictions have been so exactly and literally fulfilled during the centuries since it was uttered as to compel godless critics and infidels to all sorts of wild and desperate efforts to prove that Daniel did not write the book, and that it was written centuries later!

It was much to be expected that God should directly reveal to Nebuchadnezzar, in some way, the fact that he had received and was holding his power only from Him, the Lord God of Israel; that he was directly responsible to Him for his use of it; that his future career was all known to God; that not only his kingdom, but that of his successors, was all open before the eyes of heaven; and that God had a kingdom of His own that would overthrow or swallow up, in its establishment, all the governments of earth, and endure forever. Moreover, Nebuchadnezzar should know that His Israel were still God's chosen people and not the unholy devotees of Bel; and so the king should have a dream that he would irresistibly recognize as divine in its origin, but which none of his wise men and magicians could interpret for him; and he would be compelled to learn the mind of God from one of that nation to which the divine oracles have been committed. Rom. 3: 2.

We have endeavored to show upon the chart, in as simple and plain a way as possible, the important points of the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Babylon was the "head of gold," 2: 37, 38; Medo-Persia a double power, the "breast and arms of silver," 2: 39; Graeco-Macedonia, the "belly and thigh parts of brass," 2: 39; the Roman empire, the "legs of iron"—divided duly as the symbol represents, 2: 40; while in the "feet of iron and clay" we must recognize the present state of European governments, the successors of Rome, in which there is mingled the strength of the iron, or imperialism, with the weakness of the clay, or social democracy. And that "these two do not mingle," 2: 43, let the incessant strife of law with socialism and anarchy in Europe witness to-day! In the French revolution the clay principles and influences took definite, public shape, and

CHART OF DAN

Prepared for Union Bible Classes.


HEAD of GOLD. BREAST and ARMS of SILVER. BELLY and THIGHS of BRASS. LEGS of IRON.

Chap. II. — GREAT IMAGE.	BABYLON under NEBUCHAD- NEZZAR. Absolute Auto- cracy.	MEDO-PERSIA — Limited Monarchy dependent on Nobility.	GREECE- MACEDONIA. — Limited Monarchy de- pendent on Military Aristocracy.	ROMAN EMPIRE AND — Imperialism dependent on Populace. AND
	B. C. 538.	B. C. 331.	B. C. 31.	

Chap. VII. — FOUR BEASTS.	LION (With Eagle's Wings.) BABYLON — "Majestic, swift, irresistible."	BEAR MEDO-PERSIA — Heavy, slow, of great brute strength, "overwhelming." Three ribs in mouth: Lydia, Babylon and Egypt.	LEOPARD (Four wings; four heads.) GREECE- MACEDONIA — Agile, adroit, cunning and very swift; finally divided into four. See Ch. viii.	TERRIBLE MON ROMAN EMPIRE — Strong, cruel, relentless, destruc- tive, universal.
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Chap. VIII. — RAM and HE-GOAT.	RAM (Two-horned) MEDO-PERSIA — Heavy, Slow. Higher horn, Persia; rose after Media and soon became dominant. Three directions corre- spond to three ribs of Ch vii.	HE-GOAT (From West.) GREECE-MACEDONIA — Light, Quick. Notable horn : ALEXANDER. Conquered Persia B. C. 331. Died suddenly 323. (verse 9) Empire divided into four parts.	Four horns: GREECE. ASIA MINOR. THE EAST. EGYPT.	This was the Former Time of the Sovereignty of these four kingdoms; the last, Egypt, being absorbed by Rome in B. C. 31. See vs. 23.
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MESSIAH THE PRINCE, vs. 25. JESUS CHRIST

Chap. IX. — The SEVENTY SEVENS.	The Babylonian Captivity 606..... 536 Daniel's Prayer 538.	Artaxerxes' Decree (Neb. ii.) B. C. 445. Seven Sevens and Sixty-two Sevens—483 years. Jerusalem rebuilt, after the captivity, in troublous times, vs. 25. See Neh. iii.-vi.	THE — "Cut off"  and temple by the "Nothing for Him." vs. 26.
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From Artaxerxes' decree to restore JERUSALEM, to Christ's Triumphal Entry (as King of) Israel, Zech. ix. 9, Matt. xxi. 4, 5), has been shown to be, with due correction, 173, 800 days, or exactly 483 prophetic years of 360 days. (See Anderson's "The Coming Prince.")

Chaps. X-XII. — The SCRIPTURE of TRUTH. (x. 21)	B. C. 538. Time of Vision, 534.	MEDO-PERSIA — "Yet three Kings in PERSIA," (xi. 2): Cambyses, Pseudo-Smerdis, and Xerxes, who invaded Greece, 480-479 B. C.	GREECE-MACEDONIA — "MIGHTY KING" of xi. 3, ALEXANDER THE GREAT. Four Succeeding Kingdoms (xi. 4) same as in Chap. viii. Kings of the South, Ptole- mies of Egypt; Kings of the North, Seleu- cidae of Syria, xi. 6-32. ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES, xi. 21-32. B. C. 175-164. The Maccabees, xi. 82. 166-63.	"Those that understand (godly Jewish teachers, inclu- ding John, Christ and Apostles) instruct many." xi. 33.
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* Great King of the Time of the End same Person in each Prophecy. Note Correspondence
† The time during which Israel are out of their land, or under their enemies, does not count

Literal Translation of Daniel IX: 24-27. (Pember.)

(24) Seventy Sevens have been severed off upon thy people and upon thy Holy City, to shut up the transgression, and to seal up sins, and to cover iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophet, and to anoint a Holy of Holies.

(25) Know, therefore, and understand:—From the going forth of a commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto an Anointed One, a Prince, there shall be Seven Sevens and Sixty and two Sevens: it shall be built again, with street and moated wall, even under pressure of the times.

IEL'S PROPHECIES.

Chicago, by William R. Newell.

FEET and TOES of IRON and CLAY.

EASTERN DIVISION GREEK CHURCH.	F E E T	I N T H E F R E N C H R E V O L U T I O N (1789-1795). Democracy and Socialism, the clay-principles, fully appear.	T I M E O F T H E E N D	Toe Final
				* ten-fold * division * Ten * King- doms and * ten * Kings. (v. 44.)
WESTERN DIVISION LATIN CHURCH.				

STONE
Strikes and destroys Image and fills all the Earth.
Matt. xxi. 43, 44; Psa. li., ex., lxxii 6-11; Isa. viii. 9; xl. 1-10.

STER

This empire, though now for centuries subjected, ridden and directed by the Harlot Church, will revive at the Time of the End as ten Federal Kingdoms; and, under its Last Emperor's headship, will destroy the Harlot Church, and reassert world-sovereignty. Study Rev. xvii.	T I M E O F T H E E N D	Ten Horns: "Another King"—vs. 24.
		Final ten Kings, as in preceding Prophecy. (vii. 24.)

LITTLE HORN, vs. 8.* THE ANTICHRIST

THE SON OF MAN
Receives the Kingdom from the Father, vii. 10, 10, 13, 14 (compare Rev. iv. v.; Pa II. 7, 8); the Beast is thereupon destroyed, vii. 11, 13, 23 (compare Rev. xix. 19-21; Isa. xxx. 30-33); and, with Christ, the faithful Saints vii. 22 (compare Rom. viii. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 12; Rev. ii. 26, 27; iii. 21), and the Remnant of Israel, vii. 27 (compare Luke xii. 32; xxii. 29; Matt. xxv. 32, 34) possess the Kingdom.

LITTLE HORN, vs. 9.* THE ANTICHRIST

"The Latter Time of their Sovereignty." (vs. 23)— "The Time of the End." (vs. 13, 19.) Greece is already a sovereign state.	T I M E O F T H E E N D	"King of Fierce Countenance"
		Wise, discerning, and crafty, vs. 23, 25 Arrogantly self-willed, vs. 11, 24, 25. Mysteriously mighty, vs. 24. Terribly destructive, vs. 24, 25. Persecuting to Israel, vs. 24. Wonderfully prosperous, vs. 25, 24, 9, 10. Blasphemously presumptuous, vs. 11, 25.

KING
Is Broken without Hand.
vs. 25.
Compare Isa. xxi. 8; xl. 4; xxx. 31. R. V., 2 Thess. ii. 8.

COMING PRINCE, vs. 26.* THE ANTICHRIST

Jerusalem destroyed, A. D. 70, PEOPLE of the COMING PRINCE, vs. 26.	T I M E O F T H E E N D	Seventieth Seven—7 years.
		"Prince That Shall Come," Will be a Roman Emperor, vs. 26. Will make covenant with unbelieving Israel in Palestine. Cf. John v. 43.

PRINCE meets his end in the "flood," or outpouring of divine vengeance, at Christ's coming, vs. 26. (Compare Isa. x. 22; xxviii. 13, 18; xxx. 28, 31.)

ISRAEL'S iniquity covered, everlasting righteousness brought in, and accepted worship restored, vs. 24. Compare Zech. xii. 10; xiii. 1, 2; Isa. xxxiii. 24; xlv. 21-29; lx. 21; Jer. xxx. xxxiii.; Mal. iii. 3, 4; Zech. xiv. 20-21; Ezek. xl. xlviii.

THE WILFUL KING, xi. 36-45.* THE ANTICHRIST

But the impenitent nation falls by sword, flame, captivity, and spoil, many slays, xi. 33. A. D. 70, and on.	T I M E O F T H E E N D	"The King"—xi. 36.
		Self-willed, xi. 36. Self-exalting and self-deifying, 36, 37. Marvellously blasphemous, 35. Rejects all accepted deities, 37. Astonishingly prosperous, 36, 39-43. In collusion with Satan, 38-39. Compare Rev. xiii. 1-4; 2 Thess. ii. 9; Matt. iv. 8, 9; 2 Cor. iv. 4. Marches to destroy Jerusalem, xi. 44, 45, in connection with the Great Tribulation, xii. 1. Compare Matt. xxiv. 21.

KING Comes to His End in Palestine, xi. 45. Compare Isa. xlv. 25; Rev. xix. 19-21.

ISRAEL is delivered, xii. 1. Compare Jer. xxx. 7; Isa. x. 20-27.

RESURRECTION, xii. 2. Compare Ezek. xxxvii. 1-14; Hos. xiii. 14; Luke xiv. 14; Acts xxiv. 15; Rev. xx. 4-6.

KINGDOM and GLORY, xii. 3. Compare Matt. xiii. 43; xxv. 34, 40; Mal. iv. 2; Isa. xxxv. 10.

In 1. Time. 2. Blasphemy. 3. Self-will. 4. Power. 5. Career. 6. Persecution. 7. Doom with God—It is unreckoned in Prophetic Chronology. (See Pember's "The Great Prophecies.")

—This passage is the Key to Hebrew Prophecy.

(26) And after the Sixty and two Sevens an Anointed One shall be cut off, and there shall be nothing for Him. And the City and the Sanctuary shall the people destroy of a prince that shall come; and his end shall be in the flood; and, until the end, there shall be war, a decree of desolations.

(27) And he shall confirm a covenant with the many for One Seven; and during half of the Seven he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease, and upon a wing of abominations he shall come desolating, even until the consumption and that that is determined, which shall be poured upon the desolated.

have been steadily increasing in power ever since. There is not, I suppose, a throne of Europe to-day that does not feel the challenging and opposing—often undermining and ruining—actions of democracy and socialistic movements. Power has been, through all these Gentile centuries, working down toward the ground-level—toward the “feet,” toward the “masses.” “*Vox populi vox Dei*,” is the cry of more of earth’s multitude every day. Any rightly-instructed believer knows it is the cry of the very pit; for it is the arrogation of *en masse* divine inspiration by the rebels of a Christ-hating and Satan-ruled world. But it is the cry, nevertheless; and it shows the truth of Daniel’s prophecy.

The final, yet future, form of the revived Roman empire of the last days is shown in the ten toes of the image, which are seen in 2: 44, to represent the ten kings of “the time of the end.” In the descending, destroying, enlarging stone we discover plainly the second glorious advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. Compare Isa. 8: 13-15; Matt. 21: 44; I. Cor. 2: 6, R. V.; Rev. 1: 7; Psa. 118: 22-23; Isa. 28: 16-17-21; Zech. 3: 9-10.

We are aware that many efforts have been made to show that this “stone” is not the Lord Jesus Christ; just as efforts are ever made by the powers of evil to take away from Him all His divine offices and proper glories. One answer alone need be given to all the theories that men have advanced against Christ’s being this rock; they are not based on Scripture, but on human reason. And human reason, in matters prophetic, is ruled out of court. The following references show to whom the “Rock” of the Word of God refers: Ex. 17; Num. 20—compare I. Cor. 10: 4; Deut. 32: 4, 15, 18, 30, 31; I. Sam. 2: 2; II. Sam. 22: 2, 3, 32, 47; 23: 3; Psa. 28: 1; 31: 2, 3; 42: 9; 62: 2, 6, 7; 71: 3; 78: 35; 89: 26; 92: 15; 94: 22; 95: 1; Isa. 8: 14; 17: 10; 32: 2; Psa. 118: 22, 23; Isa. 28: 16; Dan. 2: 34, 35; Zech. 3: 9; 4: 7; Matt. 21: 42; Mark 12: 10; Luke 20: 17, 18; Acts 4: 11; Eph. 2: 20; I. Pet. 2: 4, 6, 7, 8.

This prophecy of chapter 2 is basal. The others, we shall find, I think to be but the enlargement and explication of the outline Nebuchadnezzar’s image gives us of the whole course of the “times of the Gentiles.”

We should note the fact that the end of Gentile governments is not to be in a gradual process of social and political improvement up to such a state of excellence that Christ finally comes to take charge of them; but in a crisis, a crash, a catastrophe—the stone crushes to powder the whole Gentile fabric, and, when it is blown away utterly, there is set up the kingdom of heaven and power and glory. All the modern dreams of millennium before Christ comes are heresies begotten of vain

human self-confidence or of Satanic delusion direct. Such an idea is never hinted at in Scripture; was not dreamed of by the early church (as all church historians admit); has not been held by any of the great Spirit-taught reformers, and is not preached to-day, to my knowledge, by one really thorough, godly student of the prophetic Word. Such men as Luther, Calvin, Knox, Baxter, Wesley, Whitfield and Spurgeon, as their works plainly show, were looking for the advent of Christ, not for a reformed world. I would commend the tract "Wesley and Premillennialism," by Nathaniel West, as a high surprise for some of his followers who have departed from his pith and doctrine to preaching the heresy of post-millennialism, which, at best, is scarce two centuries old, as it is advanced to-day. (Find its inception in the works of Daniel Whithy, of the eighteenth century.) It is time men were realizing that post-millennialism is a heresy pure and simple, and a deeply deadly one. Christ sent us, not to convert, but to evangelize, the world; and to look for His coming again to judge those that reject and to deliver us from all evil. (II. Thess. 2, Luke 17, Matt. 13, Rev. 19, II. Peter 3.) But men, in their self-righteous complacency and in their deep ignorance of the desperate case that sin has brought men into, fondly dream that they will yet "bring the world to Christ," ere He comes back—if, indeed, He will ever need to come back at all. And if one tell them that this is not the plan of God—that the Church are only to be witnesses of Christ, and that God's Word says plainly that all will not accept the message of salvation, they cry, forsooth, that such a thought dishonors the Holy Ghost and denies the power of the Gospel. But will men never learn that God's plain statements about His plan, and God's open prophecies of the course and end of this age, will yet, perchance, be honored and fulfilled above and before the dreams of these followers of human tradition and blind reason? That the world will be saying, "Peace and safety," when sudden destruction is just ready to fall upon them, is sure (I. Thess., 5). But that teachers of God's holy and sure Word should join those who are saying, "Peace, peace!" when there is no peace, is sad enough. May God rouse His own out of sleep! It is high time! (Rom. 13: 11, 12.)

In the next great vision (chapter 7), Daniel is shown the same succession of empires that the king of the first of the Gentile powers saw in the second chapter. The king saw the empires, apparently, from the human view point—that of governmental value; the prophet from the divine—that of moral character and attitude. Ferocious beasts of prey now set forth the world-empires. In the eagle-winged lion is seen all-conquering Babylon, "majestic, swift, irresistible." In the devouring bear, the vast life-wasting hosts of Persia; the overthrowing of the triple alliance (Lydia, Babylon and Egypt) that opposed her

victorious progress being marked by the "three ribs" of 7:5. The four-winged leopard aptly sets forth Greece-Macedonia, with the agility, adroitness and celerity, as well as stealth and cunning, of Alexander and his successors, whose fourfold division of their master's empire, so well known to the historian, is seen in the four heads of the leopard.

The terrible nondescript monster of 7:7, undoubtedly sets forth Rome, as the iron of the image has done (2:40). Between verses 7 and 8 of chapter 7, must be remembered the long interval represented by the iron legs of the image (see in Daniel 9), with their two-fold division, exhibiting the eastern and western divisions of the Roman empire. Right on through the feet-period of the image—the present time—we are carried in this interval, down to "the time of the end," as in chapter 2. For in the last words of verse 7 we see "ten horns," which in verse 24 are explained as "ten kings," corresponding to the toes of the image, which will flourish just before Christ comes to set up His kingdom on earth (2:44).

The "little horn" of 7:8, is the last great king of Gentile dominion. (See verses 24-26.) The description of this person and his career is the great addition of this prophecy to that of chapter 2. He is the last emperor of the revived Roman empire, for this beast represents the fourth world power, as it will finally be. It is not generally known, but is plainly revealed in prophecy, that in the last days the Roman empire, though now for centuries subdued by Satan's mystery of iniquity, the harlot-church, in order that his opposition of God may be more effectively carried on, will then reassert itself as the Roman empire, the mistress of the world. This last emperor will be the Antichrist. A careful study of Rev. 17 will reveal these things to the unbiased mind. Note carefully the character of this final king of Dan. 7: Diverse from others, verse 24; wise or discerning, verse 8; warlike and universally victorious, 8, 24, 25; blasphemous, 8, 25; persecuting, 25; self-willed and presumptuous, 25; triumphant for $3\frac{1}{2}$ (1 plus 2 plus $\frac{1}{2}$) years, 25. Compare Dan. 9:27; Rev. 12:14; 13:5; 11:2-3.

The Son of Man in the midst of the Antichrist's period of earthly blasphemy is seen receiving the promised kingdom at last from His father, the ancient of days, 7:9, 10, 13, 14 (Compare Rev. 4:5; Psa. 2:7, 8); the beast is thereupon destroyed—7:11, 12, 26 (compare Rev. 19:19-21); and with Christ, the faithful saints those of the "high places"—7:22 (Rom. 8:17; II. Tim. 2:12; Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21); possess the upper kingdom; and the remnant of Israel, the "people of the saints," the earthly people, 7:27 (Compare 12:32; 22:29; Matt. 25:32, 34); possess the kingdom "under the heavens," or on earth.

LESSON XXXIV.

Daniel's Third Prophecy

Chapter VIII.

We should now have, from chapters 2 and 7, the outline of Gentile times clearly in mind. Four great world-empires, with the last one prolonged, in a covert or mystery form, down to the closing days of the age, for a closing time of sovereignty. Its form will be that of a ten-membered confederacy, which is finally made a unified power by the accepted emperor of the end, the Antichrist. We have seen the tremendous importance of the days of the end, in the prophetic scriptures, and the prominence of the figure of the lawless king, throughout the word of prophecy.

In chapter 7 of Daniel, and the twelfth verse, we see that, even after the Antichrist and his dominion have been destroyed, there will be preserved, in a submissive, powerless state, the other three Gentile powers. Whatever the object or manner of that preservation will be, we will not here discuss. But it is evident that these kingdoms, in order to be thus preserved, must be in existence in some recognizable form or other. That is, their identity has in some way been preserved by God, and will continue to be so preserved. Although each of these empires was absorbed, successively, by that which followed it, yet it was not lost beyond future reappearance as a recognizable kingdom—not, indeed, as a world-power again, but as a "sovereign state," as we say.

Now we know that the revived Roman empire will be the world-power of the time of the end. If these other kingdoms, then, are to regain sovereignty, it will be, apparently, only for a season before the final heading up of things under the Antichrist and the fourth empire. There can scarcely be two "world-powers" on earth at once! And we know that to the Antichrist will be given, for a season, unlimited earthly authority, just as was given to Nebuchadnezzar. (Compare Dan. 2: 37, 38, with 7: 23, 25; 8: 9-11, 24; 11: 36; Rev. 13: 5, 7; note especially the last passage.) Indeed, he, doubtless, is the one referred to by Christ in John 5: 43; and he will likely receive the same offer

from Satan that Jesus did in Matt. 4: 8, 9; and he will accept what Jesus refused, and, according to Rev. 13: 2, 4, be directly beholden to the arch-enemy of God for his power. When we reflect that Satan is called in Scripture both the prince and god of this world (John 14: 30; II. Cor. 4: 4), we may easily see how unlimited will be the earthly power with which he will invest his chosen vessel, the Man of Sin. Indeed, we might well be startled at the use, in II. Thess. 2: 9, in our English Bibles, of the same words, "all power," to describe the terrible energizing Satan will give the Antichrist, as are used in Matt. 27: 18, by Christ to signify His own resurrection-inheritance. But we need to remember that in Matthew the word for power is *exousia*, which signifies actual authority; while in Thessalonians the word is *dynamis*, which means mere power or energy. Thank God, if even for a little season Satan was unrestrained through earth and heaven to exercise to the full the fearful hold sin has given him over men, the Lord Jesus will yet maintain all the real authority, and He will shortly deal, and duly, with Satan and all his host. See Rev. 20: 1-3, 7-10; Isa. 24: 21, 22.

But now, in the eighth of Daniel, we have before us the same great character, I cannot but think, that appears in chapter 7. Study carefully the chart we have given, comparing the general features of "the time of the end" in these chapters. There can be little doubt that the little horns of chapters 7 and 8, the "prince that shall come" of chapter 9: 26, 27, and the willful king of chapter 11: 36-45, are one and the same person. A careful comparison, as I suggest on the chart, of (1) their time; (2) self-will; (3) blasphemy; (4) power; (5) career; (6) persecution of the saints; (7) final and supernatural doom, will, I believe, convince the student of this. Make this study thoroughly and prayerfully, for these things vitally concern our times, inasmuch as we are verging right on toward these things, the elements of the end being already everywhere apparent.

Chapter 8 points out that particular part of revived Roman empire from which the Antichrist, the last emperor, will arise. For the Word of God would leave no possibility of error concerning the identification of this great false messiah, who would have such power and guile in his day as to deceive all the earth, and the very elect, if that were possible. Rev. 13: 8, 14; Thess. 2: 9-12; Matt. 24: 21-24.

That Dan. 8, then, is meant to indicate the general quarter from which the Antichrist will arise, and not to portray either a past character of history or a future one distinct from the last head of the Roman power, is likely, from the fact that Greece the third empire, was formerly part of the Roman domain, and will no doubt be so again at the end; that, as formerly a Roman emperor could rise from ob-

security to the throne, and that from any part of the realm, so it will even more likely be in the clay-iron days of the end, when the "little" horn shall arise into power; and, finally, that history seems to point to this consummation. When we remember that the former time of the sovereignty of the four divisions of Alexander's empire — Greece, Asia Minor, the East and Egypt—ended in B. C. 31, when the last was absorbed by Rome; and that the "latter time of their kingdom" has now begun, after nearly twenty centuries, we begin to see the light. The first of these divisions, Greece, became a sovereign state in 1827. The others are looking toward it already. That the revival of the sovereignty of these branches of the second world-empire synchronizes finally with "the time of the end" is seen in 8: 17, last part, and 19. The "time of the end" is the expression used in scripture to indicate the closing days of the times of the Gentiles, or of our present age. Inasmuch as the Roman empire revived will embrace the territory of the old Grecian empire, the "king of fierce countenance" of 8: 23, may easily arise from one of the divisions of Alexander's domain and yet be the last head of Roman rule. And what would be more likely, if, as the symbol of the third empire (the leopard) shows, that power represents especially the craft, guile and treachery, as well as the intelligence and cunning, of the earth? For we know that just these will characterize the Antichrist.

But the chief argument for the identification of the little horns of chapters 7 and 8 is the fearfully blasphemous and persecuting character of each, and God's direct dealings, in connection with their careers, as well as the unlimited power of each. They cannot but be the same person, it seems, if they flourish at the same period—and they do, apparently.

LESSON XXXV.

The Seventy Sevens

Daniel IX.

In chapter 9, which is one of the great chapters of the Bible, Daniel is given the key of Hebrew prophecy, to make him "skillful of understanding" (verse 22). The wonderful revelation of verses 24-27 opens to us the divine plan regarding Israel during their rejection, and gives the mystic chronology which explains not only the prophecies of Daniel, but throws light on all the prophetic word. Without this key, as one has shown, Daniel was unable fully to understand the former revelations God had given him. See 7: 15, 16, 28; 8: 15, 27; and then compare 10: 1. How Israel's final return from bondage, according to Jeremiah's predictions (Jer. 25: 11, 12; 29: 10), could be accomplished at the end of seventy years, and yet the long cycles of Gentile domination revealed in chapters 2 and 7 was, very likely, the cause of the deep perplexity we saw in Daniel's mind when, after these previous visions, he meditated on their meaning.

But this, as we see in chapter 9, did not prevent him from laying hold of God in prayer for the fulfillment of His plain promise by Jeremiah that His people should return from Babylon after seventy years. He well understood that the great principle upon which God fulfils His promises is in answer to the believing prayer of His saints (see Ezek. 36: 37), and he began to pray as, perhaps, even he had never done before.

The prayer of 9: 4-19 is one of the most remarkable recorded in scripture. Study it carefully. We have (1) realization of possible blessing, verse 2; (2) determination to secure it, verse 3; (3) humiliation, verse 3; (4) confession, verses 4-14; (5) petition, verses 15-19. (Note here Daniel's three great pleas: (1) God's past deeds in their behalf, verse 15; (2) God's character, verses 16 and 18—"Thy righteousness," "Thy great mercies"; (3) God's honor and glory—"for Thine own sake," verses 16-19). (6) Importunity, verses 18, 19.

Note the capital O's. This is a wonderful picture of the order of real prayer. No wonder it was answered. We cannot see how it could have been refused. Indeed, it could not, since it was made by "a man of rectified life" (James 5:16), was based upon the Word of God (verse 2) and had proceeded in God's order. And how sweet is the answer when it comes—how blessed the message, and how satisfying the revelation! Surely it pays to wait upon the Lord! Compare it with Moses's prayer in Ex. 32, with Jehoshaphat's in II. Chron. 20, and with Ezra's in Neh. 9.

We should make a thorough study of this prophetic outline given by the angel to Daniel in verses 24-27. We have given Pember's literal translation upon the chart, but will repeat it here for convenience:

24. Seventy Sevens have been severed off upon thy people and upon the holy city, to shut up the transgression, and to seal up sins, and to cover iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophet, and to anoint a Holy of Holies.

25. Know, therefore, and understand: From the going forth of a commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto an Anointed One, a Prince there shall be Seven Sevens and Sixty and two Sevens; it shall be built again with street and moated wall, even under pressure of the times.

26. And after the Sixty and two Sevens an Anointed One shall be cut off, and there shall be nothing for Him. And the city and the sanctuary shall the people destroy of a prince that shall come; and his end shall be in the flood; and, until the end, there shall be war, a decree of desolations.

27. And he shall confirm a covenant with the many for One Seven; and during half of the Seven he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease, and upon a wing of abominations he shall come desolating, even until the consumption and that that is determined, which shall be poured upon the desolated.

The prophecy is at once seen (verse 24) to concern Daniel's people, or the Jews, and their city, Jerusalem, and, we may say, the Jews as connected with their city. It must be so interpreted.

Six great results are to follow for Israel upon its fulfillment (verse 24), the first three regard the putting away forever of the nation's sin, and the last three the establishment of the nation in everlasting righteousness and accepted temple-worship, in a state when prophecy would be no longer needed. Compare Zech. 12:10; 13:1-2; Isa. 32:24; 44:21-23; 60:21; Jer. 30:33; Mal. 3:3, 4; Zech. 14:20, 21; Ezek. 40-48.

Since such a blessed state is not now, nor has ever since Daniel's time, been true of the nation of Israel, we know that the fulfillment of

this prophecy lies yet in the future. Verse 24 is evidently a summing up of millennial conditions. The further terminus of the prophecy, then, is the setting up of the millennial kingdom, when, and not before, these six great facts will be realized for Israel.

The period of time declared by God as "severed off" out of Gentile times for that discipline of His sinful nation, Israel, which should result in this blessed sixfold consummation is called "seventy sevens." We shall see that seventy groups or periods of seven years each are meant. (The translation "weeks" is an adaptation; the Hebrew word does not itself reveal the unit of time.) If years are meant the whole space of discipline would be 490 years. Verse 25 tells when the seventy sevens begin. Cyrus' proclamation (Ezra 1) was in 536, B. C. But it simply concerned the rebuilding of the temple, not the city or the wall. That of Artaxerxes Longimanus recorded in Neh. 2, given in the month Nisan, B. C. 445, alone fulfills the requirements of this twenty-fifth verse. Nehemiah's request, as we will remember, was to restore and build "the city of his fathers' sepulchres." See Neh. 2: 3, 5. And his work concerned the wall and the city, just as Zerubabel's had concerned the temple. See Neh. 2: 8, 13-18; 3-6: 15; 7: 4; 11: 1, 2; 12: 27-43. This seems plainly to be the starting point of the 490 years. The first sub-period (seven sevens, or forty-nine years) probably refers to the time occupied in completing the rebuilding and peopling of the Jerusalem of restoration times—a task begun and carried on under "pressure of the times," as we remember from our study of Nehemiah. See Neh. 2: 19, 20; 4: 6; 14, 17-19.

The second sub-period (sixty-two sevens, or 434 years) brings us to the end of the sixty-ninth seven of the prophecy, or within seven years of its glory-bringing fulfillment. And the point we reach with the end of this sixty-ninth seven is an "Anointed One," or as the A. V. transliterates, "Messiah." The Lord Jesus is meant, of course. But that particular point in Christ's life which probably is taken as the ending of the sixty-ninth seven has been a matter of some question; but it may be seen in the little "Prince," given Him in the prophecy. The occasion on which Christ was formally revealed to Israel as the Nation's King or Prince was undoubtedly the triumphal entry. (Compare Zech 9: 9 with Matt. 21: 4-5, etc.) The date of this was the 10th Nisan, A. D. 32, according to the best chronology. The time intervening between Artaxerxes' decree (Mar. 14, 445, B. C.) and the triumphal entry (April 6, 32) has been shown to be 173,880 days. That is, 476 (years) by 365 days plus 24 days (Mar. 14 to Apr. 6, both inclusive) plus 116 days for leap years. (See Anderson's "Coming Prince," Hodder & Stoughton, London, for full discussion.)

But 173,880 days precisely equals 483 years of 360 days each—the length of the scripture or prophetic year; which latter is seen from Gen. 7, 8, etc.

This shows that these periods called “sevens” are periods of seven years each. The sixty-ninth seven, or 483rd year, then, as we have seen, closed with the triumphal entry; when did the seventieth begin? This is an all-important question. In verse 26 of our prophecy we are told that after the second sub-period of sixty-two sevens the Messiah should be “cut off” with “nothing,” as far as His royal claims were concerned. Christ on Calvary, with only mocking inscription of royalty above Him, certainly fulfills this. Now, so far as regards the crucifixion, which happened but four days after the triumphal entry, the seventieth seven may have begun immediately after the sixty-ninth. But the very next statement of verse 26 absolutely forbids such a conclusion. It refers, as we see at once, to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus in A. D. 70, nearly forty years after the ending of the sixty-ninth seven. Now, the twenty-fourth verse of our prophecy promises that only these seventy decreed sevens were to pass over Israel, and then at once the great kingdom-blessings should come in, and their temple be rebuilt with an anointed holy of holies. So we are compelled to conclude that there is a great interval here. That the seventieth seven must have been postponed. That the Jewish rejection of their Messiah at the triumphal entry (Matt. 21: 15-17, etc.) stopped for the present the flow of God’s mercy toward them and the speedy fulfillment of the great sixfold promise of verse 24 of Dan. 9. That this final seventieth seven could not by any possibility have begun immediately upon the close of the sixty-ninth. For instead of a temple and its worship established in everlasting righteousness we have now, in verse 26, the temple and its worship, as also the city of Jerusalem, *destroyed*, amid terrible judgments, long after the completion of the seventieth seven, if that followed directly upon the sixty-ninth. Since the seventieth seven was to complete and finish Israel’s trouble we know it could not have begun at the close of the sixty-ninth; and we know, just as certainly, that it has not yet begun. For Israel, nationally, has to-day none of the blessings promised in verse 24; but the veil of II. Cor. 3: 14-15 still hangs upon them; their city is yet trodden down by the Gentiles (Luke 21: 24); their temple is not even rebuilt as yet; and, moreover, they are, as a nation, out of their land, where they must be when these great millennial promises are fulfilled to them.

But we now begin to see the import of this remarkable passage. The people who destroyed Jerusalem in A. D. 70 are called the people

of "a prince that shall come." Here the dark shadow of the Antichrist, the last great head of Gentile dominion, the final godless emperor of the revived Roman world, is again projected across our path. We know that the "prince" spoken of here is the final emperor, from the doom that he meets; "His end shall be in the flood" (verse 26). The word "flood" here is the same used in Isa. 10: 22; 28: 15-18; 30: 28-31, and it refers to the outpouring of divine vengeance at the second glorious advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. Compare II. Thess. 1: 7-9; Rev. 19:11-16, 19-21. The character and actions of this "prince" also betray him as the same person that we find blaspheming, persecuting, arrogating and prospering at the time of the end in chapters 7 and 8. We will see him again in chapter 11. Chapter 9, we may say, gives us more particularly the Antichrist's direct relations with Israel; because this revelation is the answer to Daniel's prayer regarding his own people.

The details of verse 27 of chapter 9 ought to be very carefully studied. Several difficult points will be found. Of course it is the Antichrist's career with Israel that is being traced—his wily seven-year covenant (cf. John 5: 43; Isa. 28: 15, 18) with the godless majority of the restored but as yet impenitent (cf. Zeph. 2: 1, R. V., marg.; Isa. 66: 1-4) nation of Israel at the beginning of this last seven years; his rude suppression of the revived Jewish temple-worship in the midst of the seven years' league, probably in the effort to abolish all that can speak of God, Christ or propitiation by blood, in order to exalt himself alone; then the apparent horrible imitation of the second advent of the Messiah in Mal. 3: 1, in order to deceive, if possible, the very elect, which we believe is seen in his descending to the temple through the ærial agency of demons ("abominations," as see I. Kings 11: 5-7; I. Cor. 10: 20; and compare Luke 4: 9-11); then the awful desolation which his perhaps resisted claims bring; and his fearful course till the time of Israel's judicial consumption because of their sin (Isa. 10: 23) is accomplished—till then, wrath will be poured upon the sinning nation. Israel will, indeed, be "the desolated," in those days (verse 27).

We find our seventieth seven, then, in this twenty-seventh verse, and it is one and the same with "the time of the end."* It is ahead

*Note.—That the expression "the end" and "the time of the end" may have a closer technical significance, I do not doubt. The whole final seven years may be included in the term; or but the latter half, or even the closing days only. For the present, however, the end and the seventieth seven may be regarded as synchronous. The details of the prophecies of the time of the end are a field of study, I may say, quite distinct from, and beyond, our present object.

of us yet—just how long none can tell. See Acts 1: 7. But the signs of the times are terribly suggestive of its nearness at hand. And we dare not neglect such indications as we may see all about us. Luke 17: 26-30; 21: 29, 30; Matt. 16: 1-4, etc. Christians should have their lamps trimmed in such days as these.

The last clause of verse 26 traces the exact prophetic history of the present age, from the destruction of Jerusalem to the time of the end. All the fond dreams of international arbitration and universal peace are mere earth-born fancies. The Lord Jehovah who knoweth hath told us what will be. See I. Thess. 5: 2-3.

It is significant that while the Czar cries "peace" with one breath, he orders an increase of armament with the next!



LESSON XXXVI.

Daniel's Last Vision**The Scripture of Truth**

The divine title of the great closing revelation made to Daniel, as recorded in chapters 10 to 12 of his book, is very significant, both as regards this remarkable prophecy itself and the whole book of Daniel, of which it is a part. In the last verse of the tenth chapter, which is introductory to the prophetic disclosures, what is to follow in 11 and 12 is called "the scripture of truth"; and in 11: 2, again, "the truth." A careful comparison of Dan. 11: 2-33, with profane history from Cambyses of Persia to the destruction of Jerusalem, will convince any candid mind that the title of "truth" is most marvelously merited by the prophecy. Beginning with verse 5 we have a minute, accurate chronicle of certain strategic events in the Græco-Macedonian kingdoms of Syria and Egypt, between which lay Palestine. The deeds foretold here of the sovereigns of these two kingdoms, almost all of them, therefore, would concern the Jews, the chosen people. So astonishingly correct are the details of this prophecy that infidels and rationalists, from the heathen Porphyry of the third century to the destructive critics of our own day, seek with desperate, unflagging efforts to show that its author did not live at the time of Daniel at all, but 200 or 300 years later. Their endeavor is to escape the thought—terrible to unbelief—that this book of Daniel, especially the wonderful passage now before us, was written centuries in advance of most of the facts of history with which it deals so minutely and unerringly. For if infidelity once admits a prophecy it has unmasked its own falsehood—it has destroyed itself, for it has come face to face with the Omniscient Deity it denies, who alone is able to reveal the future to man. (See Jehovah's great challenge in Isa. 41: 21-29; 44: 7, 8, 24-28; 46: 9, 10.) Not being able, therefore to deny the accuracy of these Daniel prophecies, to attack their authenticity has been the constant resort of those who could not bear their blazing light (John 3: 19).

But we need not fear. "I watch over My word to perform it," is God's assurance to Jeremiah (1: 12, R. V.); and not only the triumphant preservation of the book of Daniel through all the attacks of evil men upon it, but the steady fulfillment of its predictions to this very hour, witnesses that this book is part of that "Word" to which divine watch-care is pledged. Of course one might in addition show that the weight of candid, honest, human scholarship has constantly stood with Daniel. But such human defense becomes in the light of the divine facts just mentioned a mere putting forth of the hand to stay God's ark.

This great closing prophecy, then, of Daniel's book, is meant to seal his whole revelation as "truth," because the perfect accuracy of this passage is so easily traced out, and so absolutely established, from historical sources. As such we ought to study it, and that most thoroughly. It will thus prove a very sheet-anchor to faith in God's simple word of truth.

The time of the vision of chap. 10 was Cyrus' third year, B. C. 534 (verse 1); the circumstances much like those that preceded the revelation of chapter 9, Daniel—beloved man of prayer (9: 23; 10: 11, 12, 19) is seeking God, apparently for deeper divine fellowship and instruction in the heavenly counsels than he had yet received; but from the answer to his prayer we know it must have concerned the welfare of his people Israel. Two years before, the proclamation of Cyrus had permitted a band of Jews to return to their land (Ezra 1, etc.). But there were many adversaries, not only in Palestine, but also in Persia, and adversaries not only terrestrial but heavenly, as this present chapter reveals (10: 13-20). Evidently a great contest of the powers of darkness (who hate not only Christians but Israel as well) was being waged at the court of Persia (10: 1, 13, 21) to turn the heart of King Cyrus away from its kind attitude to the Jews, toward whom God had made him favorable (Ezra 1: 1-4), according to Prov. 21: 1. To resist this Satanic effort God seems to have aroused His faithful servant Daniel to intense, prolonged humiliation, prayer and supplication (10: 2, 3, 12); for only through prayer may Satan be resisted or prevailed against when he makes certain desperate stands. (See Mark 9: 29; 14: 32-42; Eph. 6: 10-18.) In God's wise economy this is so.

The vision of heavenly and hidden things accorded to Daniel after his three long weeks of prayer is one of the most remarkable in the Bible (10: 4-19). The spiritual realm is fairly uncovered, for a little, before our astonished eyes. The person described in verses 4-9 seems to me too much like Him who stood in the midst of the seven golden

candlesticks in Rev. 1: 12-18, to be, as many think, only an angel—Michael, perhaps.* The hand, I think, which touched Daniel, in verse 10, may have been the hand, not of the person of verses 5 and 6, but one sent from him (verse 11). Verse 16, however, does seem to show again to us the Mighty One; and verse 18, once more, the messenger. For note the exact difference in their descriptions. And it is the first vision that overwhelms Daniel, saint that he was, with the consciousness of his utter corruption. Compare verses 8 and 17 with Isa. 6: 1-5, Job 42: 5-6, Rev. 1: 17. When it comes to absolute holiness—burning, searching, man-revealing—“there is none holy as the Lord,” “for there is none besides Thee.” (I. Sam. 2: 2). Compare Ex. 15: 11, Psa. 99: 3, 5, 9; Hab. 2: 20. The only verse that keeps open the least question in my mind as to the identity of the great person in this vision is verse 7 of the eleventh chapter, where he is again before us. God can swear by none greater. Heb. 6: 13.

But the revelations of Dan. 10: 13, 20, 21; 11: 1, and 12: 1, are most significant to those who have hearts so subject to God's Word as to believe His testimony against all the vain, sin-blinded dreams of men, with reference to the actual state of things, politically and governmentally, in the world at present. We see, according to 10: 20, that there was one of Satan's under-princes, a spiritual yet actual being, in such proper charge of the kingdom of Cyrus as to be called the “prince of Persia.” In the same verse the imminent coming, apparently to help this prince of Persia in his resistance of God's purposes and angels, of the “prince of Greece” is revealed. While the next verse tells that the only help the angelic revelator to Daniel will have against these combined foes will be “Michael, your prince,” an expression cleared up by 12: 1, where we learn that Michael, the archangel's (Jude 9) peculiar earthly commission is as spiritual head of the nation of Israel, which alone God has “taken out” from among the Satan-ruled nations of earth (Deut. 4: 34, etc.) and given to it as head and champion one of His own mighty angels (Ex. 14: 19; 23: 20, 23; 32: 34; 33: 2; Num. 20: 16). All the other nations are, by implication, as well as by illustration in this tenth of Daniel, ruled

*The teaching of some that Michael is the Lord Jesus is revolting. In Dan. x., 13, Michael is called “one of the chief princes.” Christ is the Son of God, the creator of princes, as well as of realms. A careful study of Heb. 1. would cure us of such thoughts of Christ. Then, too, when Michael disputed with the devil he dared only say, “The Lord rebuke thee” (Jude 9), because, as the context shows, Michael was only one in an order of “dignities,” and apparently even below the original rank of the adversary. But when Jesus rebukes Satan He commands him “hence,” or “behind Him,” with all the authority of the Deity. Satan's rank meant nothing to our Lord; it did to the archangel.

by angelic beings who are under the command of and closely confederate with the "prince of this world" (John 12: 30; also his in no wise vain offer in Luke 4: 6). God still allows Satan the government of the world, just as he suffers evil human rulers for a time.

How terrible the angelic contests concerning the people of God and their testimony for Him in this rebel-ruled earth must be, sometimes, is now shown in 10: 12-13, where we see that three whole weeks of fearful supernatural conflict intervened between the divine acceptance of Daniel's prayer for his people, and the giving way of the fiendish angels that resisted its fulfillment in the establishing of Cyrus' heart in favor to Israel. And even then the battle was only kept in abeyance by Michael's power, till Daniel's informant could get back to Persia from his apocalyptic errand to Daniel (verse 20). Then, as we have seen, the battle was to be renewed, with hellish reinforcements from another part of Satan's realm.

The fact that the angel who gives us this great prophecy stood up to help Darius in the beginning of his reign (11: 1), will be seen, when we remember the friendliness that this king showed toward Daniel (5: 31, 6: 1-28), and his probably thus paving the way to subsequent Persian favor toward the Jews. And the terrific struggle of Satan to overthrow this Persian dynasty that God was thus through his angel holding out of his power for the moment is seen in the quite supernatural cunning and persistence that brought, though only for a few brief months, the Magian usurper Smerdis to the throne, after Cyrus' successor, Cambyses. For this Smerdis was one of that old Babylonian cult whose organization dates back to the time of Nimrod (see recent archæological discoveries), and the whole center of which is Satan-worship.

These are grave themes. We have spoken so largely of them, because they need to be understood by the saints in these days, when, as never before, the people of God are called to such a hand-to-hand wrestling with these very powers of darkness as even Daniel knew nothing of. Read most prayerfully and in the light of this lesson, Eph. 6: 10-16. I believe that never since "the days of Noah" have the people of God been called to face such terrific efforts of the powers of darkness along every line as to-day. And it is bound to increase hourly. The apostasy of the end is fast approaching. (II. Thess. 2). Let us watch and be sober. We must not be ignorant of Satan's devices. II. Cor., 2: 11:

LESSON XXXVII

The Scripture of Truth

Chapter XI.

Dan. 11, 12, we are told, primarily concern what shall befall Daniel's people, the Jews, in the latter days (10: 14). Although this is the theme, we find it tracing in detail, as we have seen, the history of an extensive period of time, immediately succeeding the revelation of the vision to Daniel (B. C. 534), for the purpose of establishing Daniel's authority and accuracy as a prophet of God—"to exhibit his credentials by a prophecy in which speedy fulfillment would be necessary."

The three Persian kings of 11: 2, are, of course, Cambyses, Pseudo-Smerdis and Darius Hystaspes, the immediate successors of Cyrus, in whose reign the vision was given (10: 1). "The fourth * * * far richer than they all," is Xerxes. Justin, the Roman historian, says of his expedition against Greece, foretold in the latter part of this second verse: "There was such abundance of riches in the kingdom that, while rivers were being drained by his army, the royal treasures, nevertheless, remained unexhausted" (Hist. 2: 10).

The Persian monarchs who followed Xerxes are now passed over, and Alexander the Great, whose expedition against Greece was professedly to avenge Xerxes' invasion, is set before us (11: 3); the aim of the prophecy being, apparently, to get at once to the narrative of those two divisions of Alexander's empire with whose history that of the Jews would be particularly concerned—Syria and Egypt. Accordingly, the remarkable history of Alexander is concluded with a verse, and the four-fold partition of his empire ("not to his posterity," since through treason and murder they became extinct within fifteen years after his death) with another verse (verse 4). And then we enter on the wondrous minutiae of verses 5-32—the passage, be it said again, that drives rationalists crazy because of the exactness of its fulfillment.

It will, of course, be quite impossible for us, in a sketch like this, to undertake anything like a detailed historical exposition of this elaborate passage. We can give but a few general hints and refer

the student to the sources where a thorough comparison of these verses with profane history may be found. Absolutely marvelous confirmations of the literal truth of this prophecy have been gathered from Justin, Appian, Livy, Polybius, Diodorus Siculus, I. Maccabees, Josephus, etc. Almost any good work on Daniel will give them in greater or lesser completeness.

The kings of the south, of the passage before us, are the Ptolemies of Egypt, as we see at once from 11: 8. We know at once, from profane history, that those of the north are the Seleucidæ of Syria. Between these constantly warring kingdoms lay "the glorious land" (8: 9), and thus the prophecy could become a bulwark to the faith of those living there in the troublous times with which it deals, as well to us who look back upon its fulfillment.

With verse 21 begins the remarkable career of Antiochus Epiphanes, "the illustrious," called by many of his time Epimanes, "the madman," because of his character and actions. (Polybius.) The "prince of the covenant" of verse 22 was probably Onias III., the Jewish high priest whom Antiochus deposed. His anti-Jewish side-campaign of verse 28 saw 40,000 Jews slain, as many enslaved, and the temple plundered (II. Macc. 5: 11-21); while verses 30-32 foretell his later and still more horrible deeds of atrocity, so vividly portrayed in the first chapter of I. Maccabees. In a blasphemous spirit of self-will this monstrous tyrant commanded unified idolatry throughout his realm, and sacrificed a sow upon the idol-altar he had built upon that of Jehovah in the temple at Jerusalem. (I. Macc. 1: 47, 59.) The "abomination" of Dan. 11: 31 was probably the idolatrous image set up above the altar of God. And in verse 32 we have the king's course of Hellenizing or "profaning" of those Jews who forsook the God of their fathers at this time for idolatry. It is an intensely interesting story, and should be read carefully in the apocryphal books of the Maccabees and in Josephus. The heroic resistance to this godless apostasy by Mattathias and his sons, Judas, Jonathan and Simon, the "Maccabeans"—those that "knew their God," forms one of the most thrilling and instructive tales of all history. Many who then perished were worthy of record among the noble army of the martyrs. Paul so catalogues them. (Heb. 11: 34-38.)

The first half of verse 33 evidently predicts the ministry to the oppressed Jewish people of such divinely taught "Israelites indeed" as Simeon and Anna (Luke 2), and, a little later, of John the Baptist, then the Lord Jesus, and His apostles. To their precepts and warnings, however, while "many" listen and are "instructed," the majority of the nation would evidently refuse to hearken; and the na-

tion, declares the latter part of this verse, should, all impenitent, "fall by sword, flame, captivity and spoil, many days." Here is the Roman destruction of Jerusalem (A. D. 70).

The following two verses (34-35) sketch the exact state of the Jewish people since the destruction of Jerusalem, as one who is familiar with their sad tale of exile will recognize at once. The latter part of verse 35 carries us right on through this age—the great interval of chapter 9—to "the time of the end." And from verse 36 to the end of chapter 11 we have again before us the terrible figure of the last emperor, the Antichrist, of whose person, character and career Daniel is, as we have seen, the great revelator.

That the willful king of verse 36 is the Antichrist most thorough students of prophecy, I think, admit. But many claim that from verse 40 to the end of the chapter the Antichrist disappears, in the contest between the king of the north and the king of the south. But a close examination of verse 40 seems to reveal simply a new detail regarding the terrible emperor of the end—that is, that one of the kingdoms of Alexander's successors, from which he will arise. We saw in chapter 6 that it was to be from one of these four divisions; we find here that it is from Syria or the East, the kingdom of the Seleucidæ. For, throughout the chapter we have been dealing with the kings of the north and we naturally look for the sequel of all these particulars. Here they are seen to have been introductory to the career of the last king of the north, the Antichrist, who would arise in the northern kingdom and enter upon the marvelous career which would bring him to the headship of the Roman earth.

The simple solution of verse 40, then, seems to be, that the monarch called "the king" in verse 36 is called by his local name in verse 40; especially since it is the final renewal at the time of the end, of the ancient rivalry of the kings of the north and south, that is before us in this verse. I may say, also, that the apparently supernatural end that this last king of the north meets, in verse 45, is a strong argument for identifying him with the Antichrist, whose sudden destruction at the Lord's advent has been before us in chapters 7, 8 and 9. Compare II. Thess. 2: 8; Rev. 19: 19-21. And I may add that it seems very strange that so tremendous a personage as that in verses 36-39 should drop utterly out of sight in verse 40, in a quarrel between Syria and Egypt! Howbeit, there may be reasons that do not appear, and we do well to be free from dogmatic assertion in these things. I do not think what has been said proves the case of the identity of the king of the north with Antichrist; but it does seem to me to support such identity. However it may be, that the fearful course of the

Antichrist is before us in verses 36-39, I have no manner of doubt; and we ought humbly and prayerfully note every statement of it. It is God's word as to the trend and end of the present age. Let none of us who read it ever lift up the head of pride again, after seeing the end, the full fruit, of pride, in the Man of Sin here.

This passage (36-39) should be most carefully compared upon the chart, and still more minutely, with the other descriptions of this king in chapters 7, 8 and 9. Make a thorough study of the new details in this passage before us of the Antichrist's career. Some of these are deeply and gravely instructive in this day. The "strange god" of this willful king's honoring (11: 38, 39) is readily shown to be Satan. See Rev. 13: 1-4; II. Thess. 2: 9; Matt. 4: 8-9; II. Cor. 4: 4. The universal rejection of all other recognized deities of 11: 36, 37, should be compared with I. ohn 2: 22, and Rev. 17: 18. Even the apostate church of present-day Christendom, so suited to the adversary's purpose in the present age, when he must oppose the "mystery of Godliness" (I. Tim. 3: 16) with the "mystery of iniquity" (II. Thess. 2: 7, an important part of which the Romish "church" is), will not be of longer use to Satan when the real Church of God has been raptured out of the world to meet her Lord. The devil will then need a new form of evil; or, still more to his liking, he will find things ripe for the bringing in of what he has so long been working toward—the open acknowledgement of himself as the "god of this world." This he has long been, in *fact*, according to Scripture (II. Cor. 4: 4); but then he will claim openly the homage and service he has so long possessed practically. So we see, according to Dan. 11: 36, 37, as well as from II. Thess. 2: 4, and Rev. 13: 6, and other passages, that the Antichrist and his confederates are yet to destroy the papacy, only to set up a vastly worse system—deification of Satan and his chosen one, the Man of Sin. It is an ominous fact that avowed Satan worship is very much on the increase to-day. There are already in Paris temples to Satan, with regular intelligent worshippers. God's word will be fulfilled, but the outlook for this world is awful indeed. The writings of such people as Mme. Blavatsky, Anna Kingsford and T. L. Harris are fast preparing the way for the open acknowledgement of the "god of this world." "Among the gods there is none like unto him," blasphemously cries the second named of these servants of darkness, and multitudes shout applause, even among highly cultured people. Spiritualism, theosophy, Trance-evangelism, Mormonism, and revived Buddhism are all the harbingers of the last great revolt against God.

Verse 36 introduces the last head of Gentiledom very summarily, with the simple phrase, "the king." It is as if enough has been told

us in previous prophecies regarding the importance of this tremendous figure of the last days to warrant proceeding at once to his career, without any further personal description or even any distinct designation in this place. For in verse 33 we passed the Messiah's cutting off of our outline in chapter 9, in verse 34 and the first part of 35, covered the present interval age; and the closing words of verse 35, "to the time of the end," "the time appointed," bring us right down where we look for the shadow of earth's emperor, and here he is, in verse 36, moving right on in his own will.

We know from verse 36 also, that its "king" cannot be Antiochus Epiphanes. For this king is to prosper right up till the "indignation" (or divine wrath upon Israel) is accomplished, which cannot be till the Lord Jesus comes; whereas Antiochus fell over twenty centuries ago. And in verse 40 "the king" of verse 36 is directly seen to be existing at "the time of the end." Besides, as Dr. Moorhead has well said, we have here (in verses 36-39) all too great a picture for that of Antiochus; or, for that matter, we may add, for that of any of the great ones of earth so far.

We can hardly fail to connect the arousal to action of the archangel Michael, the spiritual prince of national Israel (Dan. 10: 2) in chapter 12: 1, with the great contest of Rev. 12: 7-12. The unequalled tribulation that follows the expulsion of Satan and his hosts from their heavenly holdings (Eph. 6: 12) reveals the desperate effort of the prince of this world to destroy all that may yet be loyal to God upon earth. His fiercest onslaught will be, evidently, upon the faithful remnant, "the elect" of Israel, whom, through his incarnate representative, Antichrist, he will seek to ensnare, betray and annihilate. See Matt. 24: 21-28; Rev. 13, etc. But, as we see in Matt. 24: 29-31, it is "at that time" (Dan. 12: 1) that the long-persecuted "elect" will be delivered. Luke 18: 7, 8; Mark 13: 27, etc. From the untold, undreamed-of horrors of these last days of trouble, now, as we must believe, so close upon the world (Luke 21: 25, 29, 30, 28); II. Tim. 3: 1-7; James 5: 3, R.V.), the faithful Church has a blessed promise of deliverance in Rev. 3: 10. Let us only see to it that we are among those who fulfill its great condition of holy, faithful patience. For Israel, however, the only way into the glorious millennial kingdom will be through the purging fire of tribulation. Compare Jer. 30: 4-11; Isa. 10: 20-23; 4: 2-6; Ezek. 22: 17-22; Zech. 13: 9; 14: 1-9; Mal. 3: 1-4; 4: 1-2. Doubtless, some of these passages relate to Christ's personal cleansing of the remnant of Israel at His advent in glory at the end of the tribulation; but they all show how severe will be the final discipline ere Israel is received again as "life from the dead" (Rom. 11: 15).

Verse 2 of Dan. 12 reveals a first or "select" resurrection of Israelites (distinct from that revealed for Christians—e. g., Phil. 3: 2)—before the second, or resurrection of the "unjust" of the nation. The verse, literally rendered, seems to show that those whose destiny is "shame and everlasting contempt" do not rise with the righteous, but at some time subsequent. Psalm 1: 5, has the same truth: "Therefore the wicked shall not rise (Heb.) in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." This first resurrection of righteous Israelites was well understood by the Jews, as distinct from that of the wicked, as witness Luke 14: 13, 14, and Acts 24: 15. It must be noted that it will be only those Israelites who are finally found written in God's book who will participate in this glorious first resurrection. See Dan. 12: 1. Every circumcised Israelite, apparently, is therein written, unless excided by his own sin. Lev. 7: 20, 21, etc. Of course uncircumcised Jews are cut off from all hope of Israelitish blessing. Gen. 17: 14. This resurrection of "the just" of Israel is, of course, for the purpose of their having part in the kingdom that will then be set up. A study of Ezek. 37 will reveal the order of things at this time. 1. The literal raising up of the "whole house of Israel" (i. e., real Israel, Rom. 9: 6-8) out of their graves, verses 11-13. 2. Their restoration to their land, verse 14. 3. The final uniting into one of the divided nation, verses 15-22. 4. Their complete sanctification, verse 23. 5. Their final establishment as an all-righteous nation, with David, their former king, as their perpetual earthly prince, (verses 24, 25 cf. Ezek. 34: 23, 24; Hosea 3: 5; Zech. 12: 7, 8). 6. The New Covenant and its blessings, verses 26-28 cf. Heb. 8; Jer. 31; Rom. 11: 27; Isa. 55: 3; 54: 10; 59: 21; 61: 8).

In verse 3 of Dan. 12, the glory of the humble, wise, faithful ones of Israel at the final coming of their Messiah to them is revealed. Compare verses 34, 35, where we see them at Christ's first coming. They testified and served there, they triumph and shine here—at "the resurrection of the just" they find their "recompense." Luke 14: 13, 14. See Matt. 13: 43, where it is "the righteous" who shine forth as the sun in the kingdom. While, of course, all these Israelites were justified before God, just these Israelites were justified before God, just as are we, "by faith," yet in their character as the earthly people of God they are constantly spoken of as "the just," the righteous, etc.; for, as toward men, that is their character and as contrasted with the unjustified, wicked of earth, they are so named. Besides, Israel still, in a way, stands for the law and for "righteousness." It is the Church that is particularly to be the exhibitor of God's grace. Eph. 2: 7. I do not remember a passage where those of the Church are called "the righteous." We have done with the

law. Rom. 7: 4, 6. Another is our Righteousness. I. Cor. 1: 30; Phil., 3, 9. We may do "good works" and shall, Eph. 2: 10; but as such they are to be done, not as "works done in righteousness." Tit. 3: 5.

The next verse (Dan. 12: 4) contains a most significant injunction to Daniel. We see, first, that the prophecy was open to him, that he apparently saw its meaning; but, second, that to the remainder of his people it was to remain secret till "the time of the end," This verily has been fulfilled. The Jews have upon them that veil that keeps them from knowing even Moses when he is read. II. Cor. 3: 15. And it will not be until they have "turned to the Lord," as the succeeding verse shows, that they will be enlightened. When that will be we know from such passages as Hosea 3: 4, 5; Zech. 12: 10; 13: 1; Acts 15: 14-16; Rom. 11: 25-27. Till then Daniel, as well as "all vision," is become to poor Israel as "the words of a book that is sealed." Isa. 29: 11. Thank God, when the dark time comes that they need its light, this and all the wonderful prophecies of "the time of the end" will be opened up to them for their comfort and stay in the terrible days of the willful king (Hab. 3: 16, R. V. marg.; Psa. 17: 4, etc.).

Concerning the remainder of the chapter (verses 5-13) I may say that I do not care to speak. Except where definitely explained (as in chapter 9), times and seasons (with which this passage abounds) have been hid from the present dispensation. See Acts 1: 7. In the face of these words of our Lord I feel it is very perilous, not to say highly presumptuous, for men to be exercising their unquestioned but much too fruitful ingenuity. Especially in their application of dates and eras to the present age have such prognosticators constantly proven their folly. Aside from their incessant inaccuracies in historical statement and mathematical computation, such writers as Dimbleby, Totten and the author of "Millennial Dawn" are proceeding upon directly unscriptural ground in their reasonings. Against the last-named book it seems scarcely necessary to warn true Christians, since its indiscriminate jumble of all kinds of dangerous heresies is so easily recognized. But many think the other two to be very latter-day prophets. I verily believe their speculations are vanity, where they are not actually dangerous; and that the Anglo-Israel theory, which they and others are variously propounding, is one of the most subtle and deadly delusions of this century. That these dates of the time of the end found in this twelfth chapter of Daniel are not to be understood I do not for a moment claim. "God's Word is not a riddle, but a revelation." Nor do I forget that my own

ignorance or uncertainty is no indication whatever of a like condition among Bible students generally. But verses 4 and 9 give a specific epoch for the full unfolding of the mysteries of this "writing of truth." And while we may enter upon its study, as we have done, by the aid of history and of the other prophecies of the Word, yet its exact final import can only be entered into by those to whom it is, as it were, addressed. To these it will be as the chart and compass to the mariner, in the time of overwhelming tempest; then, indeed, in the tribulation of the end, "neither sun nor stars shall be visible for many days" (Acts 27: 20); and these sure words of dated prophecy will "shine in a dark place till the day dawn and the Day-Star arise" (II Pet. 1: 19) with the every wisdom, counsel and encouragement of God.

From verse 7 we see that the end of the oppression of Israel will see the conclusion of the events which Daniel's prophecies describe—in other words, that he is strictly the prophet of "the times of the Gentiles"; and that the duration of the great "time of trouble" will be three and one-half times, as in chapter 7: 25. This interval, as we saw from 9: 27, is the last half of the seventieth seven, or three and one-half years. It is a great principle of God's government that is revealed in verse 10: The holy, the saints, the "wise" will understand the times and God's plan in them; "but none of the wicked shall understand." And the fearful hardened persistence of the sin of the days of the end is seen in the full words, "The wicked shall do wickedly." Compare Rev. 9: 20, 21; 16: 8-11, and also 22: 11.

It is a sweet and most blessed word that the angel has for Daniel in the last verse of the chapter. There is a mysterious depth of meaning in it, too. This much we know, that this beloved servant of God is "resting" now—grateful, encouraging thought! But what his "lot" at the "end of the days" may mean is not so easy to see. But that they foretokened to the prophet a full, glad reward, in that bright future resurrection of the righteous that had just been unveiled to him, we cannot doubt. And we know the ways of our God in judgment well enough to be assured that no mean reward will be bestowed on this faithful servant of Jehovah. But what a heavenly mind he must have carried through the rest of his pilgrim walk! In the midst of the honors of great Babylon, and the thronging cares of state, he lived high and calm above it all, in that far vision of "the end of the days," and in that sure word of promise, "I shall stand in my lot"!

The life, character and work of Daniel ought to be most thoroughly and prayerfully studied. About him there is not in the Bible

a single derogatory word. Thrice he is called "greatly beloved" by God. Dan. 4: 23; 10: 11, 19. Perhaps no Old Testament saint, except perhaps Moses, was let into divine secrets more deeply. And the utter simplicity and childlike humility of his early youth (Dan. 1) is seen to the very end of his long life of upward of 100 years, despite the fact that he was honored again and again with the highest place within the gift of the world's greatest monarch, and elevated by God to repeated interviews with the mighty angels of light, and admitted by Jehovah into such power of intercession with Himself as has been enjoyed by few indeed of the sons of men. Study the man and his life for the explanation of these things. Do not rest till you know this man intimately. Find the keys and secrets of his character. Like David, he is so great that he seems very simple. But this kind of man will impress your heart and life more than any other, as he may exercise your brain less.



LESSON XXXVIII.

The Inter-Testament Interval

It will be well for the student to familiarize himself with the history of the Jewish commonwealth during the "400 years of silence" between the close of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New. Indeed, there are many things in the gospels that are not really clear till one has some knowledge of this period. It ought to be studied quite thoroughly, also, for its own sake, as we have already intimated. Part of the history is a glorious one in Jewish history—the Maccabean period, B. C. 167-135.

First and Second Maccabees (Apocrypha) are the primary historical authority for the period just mentioned; the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth books of Josephus, the Jewish historian, being next, being largely based on the former, however. Concerning the earlier and later time—that is, before and after the Maccabean wars, Josephus is often the sole authority. Profane historians (e. g., Livy, Tacitus, Appian and even Polybius), speak sparingly of these Jewish matters; largely, doubtless, because of their Gentile contempt for the chosen nation, and also because they often did not understand the nature of the conflicts that constantly arose between the Jews and their idolatrous neighbors, after the restoration. The student should read carefully through the two books of the Maccabees, and, if possible, the books of Josephus just mentioned. But it will be necessary, or, at least, very practical, to read also a good historical resume of the whole period between the Old and New Testaments. It will be well to secure some such handbook as "The Historical Connection of the Old and New Testaments," by John Skinner (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh), which will be found very helpful. "Judas the Maccabee" (Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia), is also excellent. A book published in England, called "Four Hundred Years of Silence," is said to be about the best book on the subject. In any Bible history the general facts will be given; Dr. Smith's *New Testament History* or *Blaikie's Manual of Bible History* are examples. In many teachers' Bibles, also, a good resume of this important period will be found.

But what one needs, after the securing of the facts, to get into the spirit of them, as nearly as possible. Especially is this true regarding the times of the Maccabees. Study these men carefully. It should be remembered that the voice of the prophecy was silent during these centuries. The wail of Psalm 74: 9, covered the period. Then it was that the faith of Mattathias and his sons blazed so brightly. Then it was that the devotion of the hundreds and thousands of martyrs in the Syrian persecutions led them to death. There is hardly in the Old Testament nor in the Christian centuries a more noble outflashing of the fire of real jealousy for God than we find in these times.

Especially, too, should the rise, character and history of the great Jewish sects and parties, the scribes, Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Herodians and the Essenes, be most carefully noted. This is peculiarly necessary for the study of the Gospels.

A word here about these. Judaism, properly speaking, did not exist till after the restoration. The returned captives, as we have seen in the lesson on the restoration, had only their law and their history left them. They treasured both. They built synagogues throughout the land for instruction in the law. The order of scribes (Sopherim) arose, "a body of trained experts who made study of the law the great business of their lives." Their great work was to apply the teachings of the law to the particulars of people's daily lives. Their details soon ran into the thousands—it was an endless task. Opinions of former scribes were handed down—thus the "traditions of men" gained, shortly, tremendous weight. Unspeakable bondage resulted, then externalism, then hypocrisy.

For there were some Jews who made it the business of their lives to perform all that the scribes laid down. These were the Pharisees. The mass of the people gave it up, and were finally content to be sinners. But the Pharisees first undertook, then failed, then performed outwardly, then excused outward performance only, then secretly sinned and still outwardly professed. And the people still revered them; and they still despised the people. And things grew daily worse and worse.

The Sadducees were the rebels against it all. They were eclectic. They were rationalists. They believed what they chose, and chose to believe what consisted with their reason and with earthly ease. They were the aristocrats. They were, in the latter time of the interval, the prevailing political party, for theirs was, generally, the priestly caste; and, from the restoration on, the high priest gradually stole the place the prince, for political reasons, was deprived of by the Gentile masters. By truculency abroad and arrogance at home the

high-priest and the Sanhedrim became pope and cardinals. And even Rome found it easier to use this machine than to smash it.

The Herodians were worldlings, pure and simple. They apparently cared nothing for religion or creed. Even the Sadducees could be zealous Jews. The high-priest could rend his clothes. But the Herodians were ready to sell out everything. They were temporizers. Now it was Greece, then Syria, then Rome. For they probably descended from the apostates of Antiochus' time. (See Dan. 11 : 35). The Herodians, accordingly, were despised—abhorred, by the Pharisees as wicked and irreligious, and by the Sadducees as base and unpatriotic and as dangerous partisans of Herod, their enemy. That the Pharisees could ever have taken counsel with the Herodians against Jesus proves eloquently the depth of their hatred of Him. Matt. 22 : 15, 16.

The Essenes were practically monks. They fled from the formalism of the Pharisees on the one hand and from the rationalism of the Sadducees on the other, and were lost in the woods of fanaticism. There were not many of them.

The Zealots, also a minor sect, were at the antipodes from the Herodians, and fought everything foreign to the death. The Lord had one of them among His disciples. Luke 6 : 15, R.V. They probably largely caused the broils that finally led to Jerusalem's destruction.

The publicans were not a sect, but renters from Rome of the privilege of collecting the imperial taxes. The Herodians truckled to foreign power politically; the publicans fattened on it financially. It might be hard to say which class was the more despised, but the publicans probably were; and certainly they were most cordially hated. Hatred was flourishing in those days in Jewry. The flesh, under the law, had brought forth a vast crop of sin.

Such were the people to whom Jesus came. As for the masses, they were in bondage hard and fast to ecclesiasticism and ignorance; and as for the ecclesiastics, they were in harder and faster bondage to their self-complacency and self-righteousness, and to the awful pride that would not permit them to confess themselves sinners.

There were exceptions. Zacharias and Elizabeth, Joseph and Mary, Simeon and Anna—even before John's baptism had awakened the nation, reveal to us the "remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11 : 5) that God always kept in Israel. And after John's baptism we find such as the Galilean fisherman, Nathanael, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea—earnest men, men seeking for light, loving the truth, "looking for the consolation of Israel." And in such our hearts are refreshed.

But the coming of Jesus among them was the real test of the nation. And under that test the revelation of their condition was awful. From the light His presence shed in their midst they sullenly, hatefully turned away—first priest, then people; first partly, then fully, then finally. And wrath has come to the uttermost upon them. I Thess. 2: 15, 16.

And what Israel did with Jesus then the Gentile world is now doing. And there is the same sequel.



The Prophested One

I have waited for **THY SALVATION, O LORD!**

—*Jacob, in Genesis 50 : 18,*

The **LORD** thy **GOD** will raise up unto thee **A PROPHET** from the midst of thy brethren, like unto me; **HIM** ye shall hearken.

—*Moses to Israel, in Deuteronomy 18 : 15.*

The God of Israel said,

The **Rock** of Israel spake to me :

There shall be **ONE** that ruleth over men, **A RIGHTEOUS ONE**,
That ruleth in the fear of God.

HE shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun ariseth,
A morning without clouds.

—*David's last words, 2 Samuel 23 : 3, 4, R.V.*

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven **ONE** like unto a **SON OF MAN** and there was given **HIM** dominion and glory and a kingdom, . . . which shall not pass away.—*Daniel's prophecy 7:13, 14.*

But first must He suffer man things and be rejected.—*Luke 17 : 25.*

He was despised and rejected of men.—*Isaiah 53.*

Being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.—*Acts 2:23.*

And they shall smite the **JUDGE** of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.

—*Micah 5:1.*

And **HE** shall bear their iniquities.—*Isaiah 53:11.*

And they shall kill **HIM**.—*Matthew 17:23.*

For they . . . in Jerusalem, and their rulers, knew Him not, nor the voices of the prophets.—*Acts 13:27.*

But God raised **HIM** from the dead.—*Acts 13:30.*

And . . . charged us to preach . . . and to testify that this is **HE**
which is ordained of God to be the **JUDGE** of quick and dead.

To whom bear all the prophets witness, that through **HIS** name every
one that believeth on **HIM** shall receive remission of sins.

—*Acts 10:42, 43.*

Dost thou believe on the **SON OF GOD**?—*John 9:35.*

HE THAT BELIEVETH HATH **ETERNAL LIFE**.—*John 6:47.*

WM. R. NEWELL

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Formerly Professor of Chemistry in Texas State Normal

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