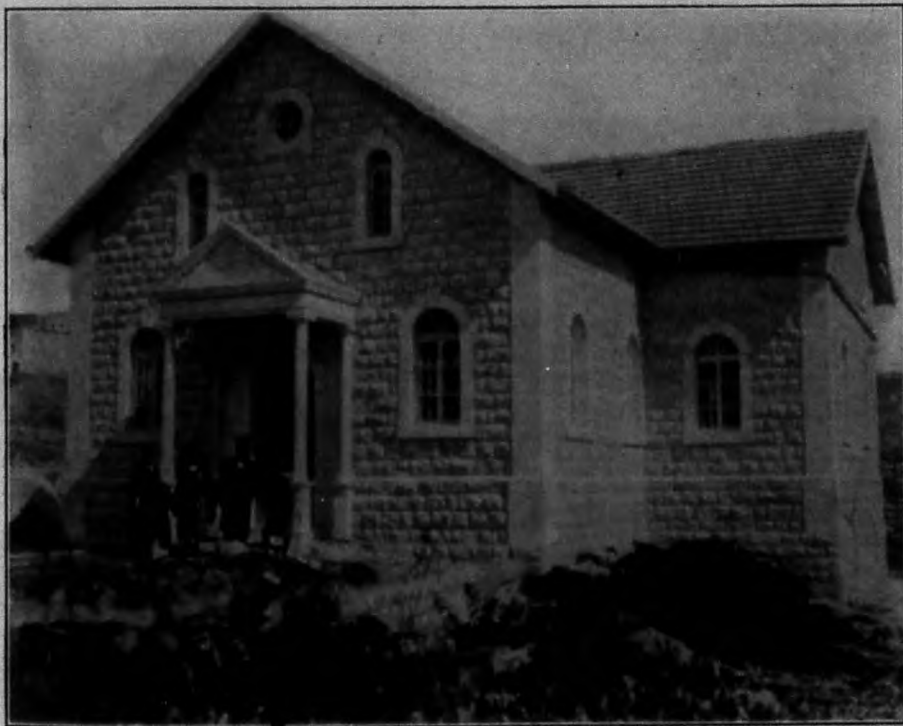


HOME DEPARTMENT MAGAZINE

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION SERIES
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

APRIL, MAY, JUNE, 1928



NEW BAPTIST CHURCH IN NAZARETH

Home Department Magazine

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MARK YOUR RECORD EVERY WEEK IN THE BLANKS BELOW

Record of _____ for _____ Quarter

Writer _____

Month of _____

Dates of Sundays _____

Lesson for this Sunday Studied _____

Attended Sunday School Today _____

Offering Inclosed, cents _____

You have agreed to study the Sunday-school lesson for half an hour each week. The other items are voluntary. Please mark this record each week, and have it ready for the Visitor, who will call at the end of each quarter.

Quarterly Total: Lessons Studied _____ Time present in Sunday school _____ Amount Contribution \$ _____

Home Department Magazine

HIGHT C. MOORE, Editor

April, May, June, 1928

Beside the Still Waters

BY FLORENCE JONES HADLEY



MARGARET DALTON threw down the sewing she had held up for critical examination, springing up to walk the floor in quick, nervous strides. Every nerve in her body seemed on edge, tingling, stinging, for everything she had tried to do that morning had gone wrong. Yes, every single thing, so she declared to herself as she paced back and forth, her lips quivering, her fingers working nervously together.

She was a little late in rising, she had burnt the breakfast rolls, the baby had broken her favorite dish, she had spoiled the dress she was cutting out for Helen, the sixteen-year-old daughter, and now, to crown it all, Aunt Katherine had been unusually trying.

She had given it as her opinion—and Aunt Katherine had been in the habit of having her opinion respected, so she would tell you—that a woman of Margaret's age ought to be more modest than to wear a dress as gay and girlish as the one she was making for herself. A dark dress, made for service, made modestly, was what women who were married and the mothers of grown children, ought to wear. And Aunt Katherine not only gave this as her opinion, but she kept up the subject until Margaret felt that another word would make her do something desperate.

A few minutes before John's aunt had left the room in silent displeasure, and Margaret went on with her work, or, rather, she tried to go on with it, but outraged nature would not permit. Then it was she flung down her sewing, feeling that it was all more than she could bear.

Passing the big window of the living room, she glanced out into the beautiful summer morning, at the distant hills and fields, at the river that moved along, singing its own song that no one could stop or change if one would.

A sudden impulse took possession of the desperate woman, and slipping out of the door, she made her way across the back garden and out of the yard to where a path led across a meadow and down to the river.

She did not know just where she was going, nor why, exactly, but go she must, to ease the tension of overwrought nerves. On and on she kept, until at last she reached the broad, deep stream, that in some places seemed to scarcely move, in others, gave a little rippling sound as it ran over some obstruction that was not allowed to hinder its progress.

Flinging herself down under a big oak, Margaret sat unconscious for a while, of the beauty around her. She just wanted to rest, rest, not to see or hear or feel, just be, for a little while, at least, like the dumb animals in the far pasture.

Then gradually a feeling of peace stole over her, and she felt that, after all, she was really alive, as she took in the scene around her. It was beautiful, beautiful, and she drew a deep breath, for her soul loved all that was beautiful, harmonious.

There below her was the river, so still, except for its little monotone of peace and comfort, and as she listened, the words came to her, "He leadeth me beside the still waters." Yes, the still waters—what else could so quiet the

unrest of the soul as the sight of those quiet waters fulfilling their destiny, calmly, serenely going on, "the still waters, the still waters," and Margaret found herself singing the words to herself.

Half an hour passed, and in some way, the burden she had brought with her had lost itself, and again the world was a different place. The skies were really blue and cloudless, the day was truly one of June's fairest, and over there came a rollicking bird song that made her feel as if she wanted to clap her hands as it finished and flew away.

"The still waters—" she kept repeating,—"He leadeth me beside the still waters." "Yes, he led me, surely, for no other place would have quieted me." Then, like a small voice, came the refrain, "He restoreth my soul." Yes, that was it—everything she had lost, of faith and hope and determination, was restored, and life seemed good once more.

Away in the distance were the hills, wood-covered, beautiful in their varied shades of green, outlining themselves against the blue of the sky. And as she watched them, there came to her the words, "I will lift mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." Yes, she could get help from those strong, silent trees, that seemed to reach up to the face of God, himself.

And what is there about the hills that should comfort her? She could not guess, unless it was their strength, their stillness, their everlastingness. But comfort her, help her, they did. Long did she gaze at the hills, God's hills, her hills, then, with clear eyes and a bit of song on her lips, she arose, and following a different path that took her through a broad meadow, she hurried on.

But as she came into the place where the grass waved its tall plumes in the soft breeze, she stopped. There, at her feet, was a lily, scarlet and gold, its face turned to hers.

"Oh, you beauty," and she stooped to gather it, looking down into its very

heart as she held it caressingly. Then, another mystery. There came to her the words, "Behold, the lilies of the field." There it was, the lilies of the field, her lily, God's lily, a thing of beauty in its glorious coloring. Even Solomon in all his glory, she remembered, was not arrayed like one of these.

A lily of the field, a lily that delighted him with its gorgeous beauty. Surely he loved beauty, all beauty, even that of a lily of the field. Its colors were not too gorgeous for him, there was no wrong for that lily to blossom forth in such wonderful raiment, for he admired it, loved it, called attention to it. The lily of the field!

She hurried home, scarce conscious of anything but that the world seemed a different place. Why, it all seemed so foolish, now, so trifling—all the little worries and frets of the day. Her hills, her river, her lily, had changed everything. How wonderful it all was. She had been led by the still waters, and if she had been led, he must have led her. His hills had given her help, his river had restored her soul.

As she entered the house, she whispered to herself, "I shall make my new dress now. It is not too bright, it is not too youthful or foolish, for I have learned from the lilies of the field that all beauty is good in his sight. How wonderful that he should stop to gather a flower that was so common those around him had very likely never noticed! And yet he loved its bright colors, its gaudy beauty, even comparing it to Solomon in his greatest glory.

Surely then, he would approve of her feeding her soul with the beauty as commonplace as that of a pretty dress, with its bright colors, its tasteful arrangement. And she could be so kind, so charming to Aunt Katherine to make up for flouting her opinion, that she would soon forgive her. And with a song on her lips, Margaret Dalton went about her work, stopping often to look with a smile at the distant hills, the river and the fields that held the scarlet and gold lilies.

The Need of Reverence

By JULIA W. WOLFE



HE relation of the family is the first of which the child is conscious. He finds himself under the care of father and mother. His weakness is supplemented by their strength, his ignorance is guided by their wisdom. It is natural and right that he should look up to and revere this superior power and knowledge. We believe that if every act of the parent were in the highest sense worthy of the respect of the children, reverence would be the natural possession of every child. Parents must be worthy to demand that which it is their duty to insist upon. We may feel that it does not matter much to us whether our children treat us with respect or not, that the achievement is not worth the effort which it costs us; but it matters to the children. Their own well-being demands that they reverence father and mother. There is world of philosophy in the old Mosaic law, "Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long." He who honors father and mother will honor the laws, both human and divine, under which he lives, and so only can he live long, and happily under them. Indeed, were that honor gone, the very land itself, in so far as its institutions go, would pass away. The American babies in their cradles breathe in the air of freedom and individual rights. No land on earth so recognizes the rights of its children, and that that recognition is not always a wise one, witness the army of precocious, self-assertive children who infest public places, and destroy the comfort of those about them, and are growing up to blighted futures. The very little child can understand the disapproval of father and mother, can be taught that disrespect cannot be tolerated, that it puts him out of touch with those about him. Do not laugh at or repeat before the child the things which are bright and funny in the little boy, but which will be disre-

spectful and in bad taste when he is a few years older. When the change in your attitude comes, the child is cruelly hurt. He does not understand why the things which a little while ago were laughed at and applauded now bring only reproof. All that leads to an unhealthy self-consciousness in the child must be avoided. The things that he says and does should not be repeated in his presence. He is not a plaything. He is a human being, with all the rights and the dignity that you have. He is worthy of respectful treatment at your hands. The very essence of reverence lies in a proper sense of proportion. Never let a child grow up with the feeling that he is the center round which the universe revolves.

If the child learns respect and reverence for authority in his home, he will naturally extend it to the larger community about him. It is natural for him to reverence the laws of the land in which he lives, and all her insignia of authority. Here, too, the parent's attitude is of great importance. If there is in the home a scrupulous regard for law and order, a reverence for the laws of the community, the child is in little danger of becoming a law-breaker. Every time the mother evades a street-car fare for the child, after he is too old for the privilege of riding free, she not only blunts his sense of honesty, but injures his reverence for law. Every parent who wittingly breaks even a small point of the code does the same. Let the child from the very beginning know that law is for the good and the blessing of mankind. Never let him feel that it is his enemy. Tell him stories of the suffering of the Middle Ages, when might alone made right, when no beneficent law arose for the protection of the lowly and oppressed. Lead him to understand what his country is to him. So he will grow up to the right and worthy sense of citizenship.

There still remains for our thought the highest of all forms of reverence—reverence for God. How shall we teach that? Ah! here, more than at any other point, nature comes to our help. We do not need to teach it. The germ is in every human soul. We need simply to give it the proper conditions for growth. What little child ever looked into the starry heavens at night, or at the glories of the sunset or the sunrise, without a sense of awe and sublimity? As soon as the child is old enough to notice the world about him, he begins to feel the presence of some unseen power behind that which is visible, some cause for that which he sees. And does not this fact give us a suggestion of method? Take the child to nature. Let him live with her in intimate and close communion. Let his little heart be filled with a sense of sublimity, her beauty, her grandeur. Teach him to see the infinitely beneficent purposes of nature, and the wonderful adaptation of means and end. Show him that God reveals through nature just as certainly as through human life or in the Bible his great love for the children of men. Reveal to him the wonderful provisions of nature whereby not only is life preserved, but our comfort and well-being are secured. It will surely prove that the fuller and truer his knowledge of God in the world, the deeper will be his reverence for the wisdom and goodness which he sees. But it is not only in nature that God reveals himself. Teach the child history as a constant and continually revelation of God to man. In such study take him back to the beginnings, to the childhood of the race, for there God's dealings are upon the child plane, and within the understanding of the child. Teach literature, too, from the same standpoint; the Bible, the myths, as the searchings of the human soul after truth. Be sure that whatever reveals the true God—not necessarily our conception of him, but the true God to the child, strengthens his reverence. And that leads us to say, Do not fear the truth. Face it squarely yourself, and give it honestly to your child. If the child comes to

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truly reverence God then he will reverence the works of God in the world; which God alone can create, whether it be human or in animal form; the rights of those about him who are with him the children of God; his own body as the temple of God, the climax of all His wonderful works. Teach him to so reverence his body that he will not be tempted to neglect or abuse it.

No mother can teach reverence to her child whose own soul is not filled with it. Only that home which has the atmosphere of reverence can produce the reverent child. Let the mother's tone and manner, as she talks to her child of these things be serious and patient. Let her teach her child a reverent posture and a stillness of body when he says his prayers, for the posture in turn reacts very strongly upon the baby mind, and strengthens his dawning feeling.

The Christian's Holiday

By J. M. HALLENTYNE

Jesus in the morning,
When the dew is on the rose,
When the eastern sky's aglow,
When the day star faintly shows,
When the mist floats frail and low:
I pray to thee.

Jesus in the noontide,
When the day is large and wide,
When the sun burns through blue haze,
When life's struggle's at high tide,
When the world crowds all the ways,
I lean on thee.

Jesus in the gloaming,
When the dreaming lights gleam out,
When the evening hush comes down,
When the playing children shout,
When sweet peace is sunset's crown,
I joy in thee.

Jesus in the midnight,
When the vast black night's around,
When the far-off sky fires shine,
When the world's in slumber bound,
When my love is lost in thine,
I rest in thee.

HOME DEPARTMENT MAGAZINE

Marylynn

By B. M. CARTWRIGHT



MARYLYNN kept her eyes on her bowl of bread and milk, and appeared to be completely occupied with her breakfast, but the little ears had not missed a word of what her elders were saying. Indeed, picnics did not happen so often that they were matters of small consequence in Marylynn's life.

Aunt Mamie was talking to grandmother, "I am very sorry the school picnic comes just now," she said. "It will mean putting up sandwiches and fussing over cake, and this is the busiest time of the year, with getting things ready for the spring cleaning."

Marylynn thought to herself, "If only Aunt Mamie knew what fun it was going to be she wouldn't mind the bother so much." But Aunt Mamie never seemed to understand. Picnics or parties, so seldom enjoyed, meant nothing to her but the expense of a new frock for Marylynn, or the annoyance of putting up lunches and making cakes. Grandmother always agreed with Aunt Mamie, so it was useless to look to her to share one's enthusiasm.

After breakfast Marylynn hurried through the appointed Saturday morning tasks, dusting the sombre, mahogany furniture in the darkened front rooms, putting her own room in order, and then finally donning her little coat and cap to do some errands for grandmother. It was quite exciting to be able to run out into the bright sunlight of this lovely spring morning, and to think of the picnic that was to be held the following Saturday. After she had delivered grandmother's message to Mrs. Barber, she would drop in at Luisa's for just a moment and chat about the picnic.

Luisa was Marylynn's best friend, and in spite of Aunt Mamie's distaste for the little Italian girl, Marylynn liked her better than anyone she had ever known. It was true, of course, that Luisa's home was very poor, and Luisa's mother, left a young widow in a strange

land, had found it difficult to earn more than the bare necessities for her little girl and herself. Luisa did not have the crisp, fresh frocks and dainty ribbons that Marylynn had, but what meant far more to both these little girls, Luisa had such a very sweet mother to whom she could go with all her childish troubles and be sure at least of the comforting kiss and a word of encouragement. Marylynn too, had discovered she could tell Mrs. Lucca of her own little worries, and that her enthusiasm would never be dampened by, "Don't bother me now, Marylynn," which were the words which fell so often from Aunt Mamie's lips.

So it was with a thrill of pleasure Marylynn turned in at the tumble down gate, which Mrs. Lucca was always going to have fixed, and up the raggedy path that lead to the cottage.

"Luisa!" called Marylynn. But Luisa did not answer, and Marylynn poked her curly head around the door which stood partly ajar. Then she stood dismayed at the sight which greeted her. There in the low chair by the sewing machine, sat Mrs. Lucca, and in her arms she held the sobbing form of Luisa.

"Come in, bambina," Mrs. Lucca said softly as she caught sight of Marylynn. "My poor little one weeps so," and she fell to comforting Luisa. The latter, hearing her mother speak, looked up with tearful eyes, and smiled at her little friend.

"Why are you crying, Luisa?" asked Marylynn, almost ready to weep in sympathy.

"I can't go to the picnic," gulped Luisa, and another flood of tears followed. Mrs. Lucca petted her and spoke comfortingly.

"Now, Luisa, dry those pretty eyes, and play in the sunshine with Marylynn. Is it not that we have always found a way, just when everything was darkest?"

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Marylynn breathed a sigh of relief. Whenever Mrs. Lucca said a thing could be done, there was no doubt whatever but that it would be done. However, after the two little girls had gone out to play, Mrs. Lucca's face lost its expression of cheery confidence and the widow clasped her hands nervously.

"Dear Lord," she said, "it seems too little to plead for. But my poor little baby, she has so few happy days, and she wants so much this picnic." For a moment she sat silent, wondering if she could finish Mrs. Austin's dress and receive the money for it in time to get the necessary sandwiches and salad and cakes which Luisa had been asked to bring to the picnic. It would not require any great sum, but such articles were a luxury in the Lucca household. How Mrs. Lucca longed to be able to afford a pretty new dress for Luisa, so that her little one could play happily with the other girls who came from homes where it was not so necessary to save and scrimp. But this idleness would get her nowhere—she must hurry with Mrs. Austin's dress, then summon all her courage to ask for the payment as soon as she had completed it. Mrs. Austin was Marylynn's aunt, and while scrupulously honest and exact in all her dealings, would not pay one penny before it fell due. She had said not to return the finished garment to her until the fifteenth of the month, which would be the Monday after the picnic, and of course too late for Mrs. Lucca's plans. The little widow sighed and bent wearily over her work.

In the meantime clouds had been gathering at Marylynn's home. Mrs. Austin had just received word from the woman who usually did the spring cleaning at the Austin house, that she could not come at the usual time, and that if she came at all it would have to be during the coming week.

"I have never known Emma to disappoint me before," Aunt Mamie had said to grandmother. "But I will just have to take her on her own terms, for she does better work than anyone else in town." And Aunt Mamie had drawn her brows into a dark frown, and

started to "pick up" in anticipation of Emma's arrival the following Monday.

Just about this time Marylyn came tripping gaily home. She and Luisa had had such a delightful visit, making their plans for the following Saturday, confident in Mrs. Lucca's promise that she could arrange to have Luisa go. Marylynn stopped her skipping as she entered the house. Aunt Mamie did not like noisy little girls, but the anticipated pleasure a week hence kept Marylynn's lips curved in a little smile, as she went about setting the supper table.

At supper that night, Aunt Mamie was still fretting about the necessity of having Emma so early this spring. That was the trouble with Aunt Mamie, one little annoyance could upset her whole day, and make her cross with everyone. It was with a great effort that Marylynn screwed up her courage to speak.

"Aunt Mamie," she said, "may I have a blue dress for the picnic? Mrs. Lucca showed me the picture of the prettiest blue dress."

Aunt Mamie frowned. "I don't see how I will have time to worry about getting you ready for the picnic now, with Emma coming Monday." Terror fastened itself upon Marylynn.

"Oh," she said hastily, "I don't really want a new dress. I would like to wear my old flowered one." But Aunt Mamie did not heed her.

"And then there will be the cake to make, and it will take a lot of time to put up sandwiches, and I don't see how I can spare the time to take you to the picnic grounds. 'No, I am quite sure now, Marylynn, that you will have to stay at home this time.'"

Poor little Marylynn. Her heart sank. Aunt Mamie had made up her mind, and the little girl knew that argument would only strengthen her decision. That night she cried herself to sleep.

The following day she walked home from Sunday school with Luisa.

"You come home and tell mamma," counselled Luisa. "Mamma can always make things come right." But this

time Mrs. Lucca had no suggestion to offer. The thought that Mrs. Austin was not sufficiently interested in the picnic to take even the small trouble required to send Marylynn presented more difficulties to Mrs. Lucca's plan for obtaining the money with which she hoped to be able to get the things needed to send Luisa. The two little girls spent a mournful week at school with all their playmates gleefully planning the picnic.

On Friday morning Mrs. Lucca finished Mrs. Austin's dress, having spent every minute available on the fine embroidery with which it was covered. With some misgivings, she put the carefully wrapped bundle under her arm, and started for the big Austin house.

Mrs. Austin opened the door, and was surprised to see who her visitor was.

"I am right in the midst of house-cleaning, Mrs. Lucca," she said, "and if it is anything that can wait for a few days I would be much obliged."

Mrs. Lucca hesitated. It was hard to approach this grim Mrs. Austin. But the memory of Luisa's tearful face came before her. No, she could not disappoint her little girl.

"It takes but one minute, Mrs. Austin," she said, "and it is important."

Mrs. Austin showed her into the living room, and impatiently waited for the message.

"You see, I finished your dress today, and immediately I brought it back." A vivid flush was covering the little widow's cheeks. She did not like to have to ask for money.

"But I did not want it until Monday." Mrs. Austin was impatient.

"Please take it back until then. I do not like to cause you an extra trip, but I do like to have my wishes respected in regard to work being done for me."

Mrs. Lucca made one more effort.

"But tomorrow the little ones have their picnic. I promise Luisa she may go, but unless I have the money for this dress I cannot send her. Mrs. Austin, I should like that you take the dress please." Mrs. Lucca's English failed her when she was very much in earnest, and Mrs. Austin seemed much annoyed.

"Why, it is ridiculous to fuss about a child's picnic," she said. "Marylynn is not going. It is not necessary to humor children so."

"Ah, but it is not ridiculous," said the little mother vehemently. "It is something very good to make the little ones happy. It is not right that we should say, 'I am busy, I will not bother.' My baby I love to see happy. It is more to me than the bother. So little I can do for her, that even I would come to ask you for the money you do not care to give me until such a time as you have said to return your dress." Tears stood in Mrs. Lucca's eyes. "These picnics, these little faded dresses, they seem so little to us, but to the children, oh, they are everything."

Mrs. Austin was genuinely moved. If this little woman would toil over her sewing and deprive herself of comforts so that her child could have a few joyful hours, surely it was harsh and selfish not to go to the slight trouble that would enable Marylynn to have the same pleasure. She remembered the drooping lips and tear-dimmed eyes of her niece.

"Mrs. Lucca," she said, "will you help me make up the picnic baskets for our two babies? Marylynn's aunt has been very selfish."

The two women stretched out their arms to each other, and in that moment a friendship was formed which lasted through life. Mrs. Lucca was the first to speak.

"The babies, when they come home for lunch, they must be made happy with this news. I will meet them at the schoolyard and tell them of it."

"Bring them both back with you," said Mrs. Austin. "We will have lunch here, and then we will get right to work on those cakes and sandwiches. And I wonder if we would have time to make them each a new frock."

"When parents disagree over the discipline of a child it is wise to keep this from the knowledge of the child. Such matters are better discussed and settled in private."

"We Thank Thee for Disappointments"

BY FRANK STRICKLAND



AST Sunday at our Men's Bible Class, our teacher, the pastor of the church, said, in the course of his prayer, "And we thank thee, too, for disappointments, for we feel that even they are for our ultimate good."

Knowing the pastor as I do, I was sure that he meant what he said, and I was aware that he possessed the amount of trust and bravery and largeness of mind and heart to feel and to say that he was thankful even for disappointments.

I have heard of a book called, "Forges in which the Soul is Made." I have never read it, but I imagine I make a good guess when I surmise that one of the "forges" mentioned in the book is disappointments. Nobody would attempt to explain in detail the "hows" and the "whys" and the "wherefores" of it, but every observant Christian will assure you that somehow there truly is "a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we may." Aside from the infallible principles of cause and effect, action and reaction—natural law—in other words, we have all had definite experiences that prove beyond any shadow of doubt that God himself does often intervene in our lives, and we almost always live to see where and why the divine intervention was wise and loving, and that our own plans, had we been left to carry them out, would have proven ineffectual and perhaps harmful. Everyone who reads these lines can, with a little thought, recall some episode in his life where his intentions, which seemed altogether prudent and best, were thwarted, and I believe that a little more deliberation will convince him that the disappointment, bitter and cruel though it seemed for the time, was in love and mercy and wisdom sent.

Christian optimism or optimistic Christianity doesn't deny that there are hardships and struggles and disappoint-

ments in life; but certainly there is nothing of the spirit of silly make-believe in striving to reach that point where we can find and apply the better, brighter side to unpleasant conditions. Why not look thus at life? It is good philosophy, good sense, and mighty good religion. This attitude makes people love us more, and it makes us love people more. If the final aim and end in the life of the Christian were mere material gratification, with utter disregard of everything and everybody but self, we might not be able to see so clearly the beauty and advantage even in disappointments; but as conditions are, I am made more truly your brother by having experienced defeats and failures and reverses similar enough to yours that I am enabled to enter sympathetically into your hardships.

How little depth and significance life must hold for the person who has never suffered! Think of the many conversations, prayers, sermons, songs, poems, books, and splendid people that mean absolutely nothing to them.

A little episode out of my own experience will be pardoned here, I am sure. Years ago it was my privilege to "preside at the piano," as they say, in an entertainment for a certain worthy cause. "Presiding" over us all was a splendid woman who had the entire musical end of the affair in charge. Among those chosen to render selections for the occasion was one young woman, about nineteen, apparently coddled, petted, pampered, and self-centered. She was one of those indulged individuals of whom we say that they never had a serious thought. One day, at one of the rehearsals, she handed me a copy of music, informing me that it was the song she intended singing. The song proved to be one of those most beautiful, pathetic creations that speak of suffering and bitter heartache, and you know how terrible it is to have to lis-

ten to a beautiful thing like that, misinterpreted, or what is better, not interpreted.

"You can't sing that song," I said, with a degree of positiveness.

"I don't see why," the young miss said with no little resentment.

"I see why," I replied unmoved. "It takes a person who has suffered to sing that song, and you've never suffered."

The girl indignantly appealed to the lady in charge, but all this lady said was, "He's right; that's not your kind of song; get something light and airy."

What are we here for anyhow? Do we want to miss the most precious privilege which our relationship with our fellows offers—that of sharing their lot? Would we say to our brother, "I'm quite willing and glad to share your joys, but as to your sorrows, your hardships, your disappointments, *excuse me*"? How can I most completely share the disappointments of my friend? By having been similarly disappointed; by having gone through the same thing.

When right now you recall—as I feel sure you do—hardships and reverses that certainly did hurt, and when you look deeper into the matter, recalling—as I believe you can—how, later in your life, some dear friend or loved one was subjected to a similar heartache, you gladly, eagerly went to that friend, gripped his limp hand in your own warm palm, and assured him of your genuine sympathy, and that you had had the same experience, and when you recall the tear of relief that inevitably falls when we know we are understood—I say, when you recall all that, aren't you strongly minded to say with our Bible class teacher and pastor, "We thank thee for disappointments"?

"Avoid discussing a child's dreams with it as this increases the tendency to dream."

"Kindness to pets will help the child to be thoughtful of dumb creatures and of companions as well."

Fuchsias

BY JANE TAYLOR DUKE

All the way to town Alice Carson kept adding to her shopping list, as the little suburban train puffed along through the sweet green meadows and fragrant woods. Alice would have preferred to look out of the window, to enjoy the white dogwood blossom which made a lovely picture against the darker foliage of the pine trees. There were so many things to remember: five yards of material for Anne's dresses, three for Jean's, belting, snappers, seam binding, lace edging; garters and shoe-strings for Jimmie, an egg beater, and a new clothes line. Alice jotted down each item and then opened a fashion sheet to plan some dresses for her girls. It would save time at the pattern counter if she could select her design.

Alice had hoped to get the spring sewing done early this year, but the children had had mumps and colds, and then Aunt Laura came for a visit, and now it was the last of April and her work all before her. She felt oppressed when she thought of the many garments to be made. Commencement would be here before she realized it, and Anne's graduation from high school.

It was a wearisome day, and the stores were more crowded than usual. Alice walked from store to store trying to match a particular sample Jean had liked. Finally her shopping was over, and she went across to the market to replenish the family larder. It was a relief to get away from the heated atmosphere of the shops; Alice enjoyed choosing fresh vegetables and fruits from the market men along the street, and from the country carts. There was yet half an hour before time for her train, and the station was just around the corner. Alice had saved the best for the last, and she lingered over the flower stalls outside of the large brick market building. There was a beautiful array of spring flowers of every hue of the rainbow: hyacinths, tulips, jon-

quils, narcissus and lilies. Alice feasted her eyes on the lovely sight, and her soul was uplifted. Suddenly her eye fell upon a pot of graceful, bell-shaped flowers, "Fuchsias!" she murmured. "I don't know when I have seen any."

"Would you like to buy them, lady? Only fifty cents, and they will bloom all summer." The young florist held them out in a tempting manner.

Alice hesitated, and cast longing eyes at the bright nodding flowers. Then, with a feeling of reckless extravagance, she handed half a dollar to the florist and bore the pot of flowers off with her to the station. In a little while she was seated on the train for her homeward journey, with the fuchsias placed carefully on top of her bundles on the opposite seat. "I could not resist them because they remind me of mother," Alice was thinking. "I remember how she loved fuchsias, and how she kept them growing on a shelf in the bay window of her flower room. How pretty and bright the bay window used to look on dreary winter days with the geraniums and jessamine and ferns!" Alice could almost see her mother bending over the flowers. "Mother used to spend a great part of her time at her sewing table, with six girls to sew for." Alice remembered the great bundles of gingham and challies and lawn that would come to the sewing room every spring, and what fun it would be to "choose" the pattern one liked best. How had her mother managed to accomplish all she did, and at the same time keep the calm unruffled spirit that was hers? She was always ready to settle a childish grievance, or to bind up hurt toes or fingers, in truth 'a heart at leisure from itself, to soothe and sympathize.' Her flowers were her great relaxation, her out-of-door garden in summer and her bay window during the winter. It was comforting to think of the pleasure they gave her, and how she did love to give them away! There was never a wedding or a funeral, or a sick bedside in the village that did not have a share of her mother's flowers.

As Alice stepped off the train at her station, she carried the pot of fuchsias

carefully in her arm. "I will keep these flowers beside me while I do my spring sewing," she decided, and somehow the burden which had oppressed her in the morning seemed to lighten. "After all, what is my sewing compared with what mother used to do? At any rate I am not going to worry over it. And the children are such dears, what would we do without them?" As Alice walked home in the rosy sunset glow, she felt a realization of the torch that had been handed down to her from her own parents, and which she, too, must hand down to her children, of ideals which must be upheld and sustained to make the perfect home.

Why Not Have a Fernery?

By L. E. EUBANKS

There is no better way to use a shady corner of the flower garden, where few blooming plants will grow, than to fill it with native ferns. As many of these are evergreen, they may be recognized when you are in the woods on a late winter day before the frost is out of the ground. As soon as the frost is gone, often in early April, large plants may be lifted and a splendid growth secured the first summer.

Ferns thrive in moist, cool, shady places. Look on the northern sides of the hills; many varieties may be found, some growing in the higher ground, others in the borderland between hill and swamp where cool springs nourish them, and still others in the wettest parts of the swamp.

A light sandy soil well mixed with compost and leaf-mold is desirable for the fern bed. Many varieties like to reside among rocks, provided the interstices are well stuffed with rich earth.

Remember from the very first that ferns need moisture much more than plants that grow in the sun, and if it does not rain enough you must use the watering pot daily. If you will be faithful with frequent and thorough sprinkling, your fern bed will be a source of beauty and delight all summer.

Most common in moist woodlands are the osmundas—the flowering ferns, so named because the fruiting fronds lift from the green of the others in a dense mass like a real flower. The fronds are not evergreen, but their growth is so strong that the brown leaves of the previous year readily reveal them.

Three varieties are almost universal in temperate regions, the *osmunda regalis*, or royal fern, the *cinnamomea*, to be known by the cinnamon-colored fuzz of the leaf-stalk, and the *claytonia*, very like it but lacking the fuzz. All these grow tall, often five feet, and are very hardy, especially the cinnamon fern.

Put these large plants in the back-ground of your fern bed. A big cinnamon fern has a tough woody trunk, and digging it is not easy. You may loosen the outside roots without much trouble, but better take along an axe for the trunk.

Almost as common as the osmundas, and next to them in height, are the aspidiums, "shield ferns," whose broad, feathery, close-set fronds will do well at the feet of the osmundas.

In rocky places the *aspidium marginale* does well, growing to a height of about two feet. It holds its last year's leaves with a good green color until this year's leaves are well formed. With it, in the moister places, is the *spinulosum*, almost as evergreen and fully as large, with more delicate and feathery leaflets.

There are some flowers that will thrive without much sun, and you can select several which will add wonderful beauty to the fern bed. Along the margins nearest the sun the delicate *smilacina bifolia* will flourish and put forth pretty white spikes in the latter part of May.

Among the lower growing ferns you can plant wild *cypripedium*, the showy lady's slipper, which has beautiful rose-margined white blooms in July. The lady's slipper is a rare find today, as is the wild maidenhair fern. As one writer has well said, a mingling of these two gives a rare beauty to the wild fern bed.

Prayer for the Children

By CLARENCE E. FLYNN

Dear Master, watch above them
These little ones of ours.
Thou knowest how we love them
That are as tender flowers.
We turn with eager vision,
And scan the years to be;
But this our one decision—
We leave them all to thee.

Help us in every duty
Of hopeful tenderness
Who love them for their beauty
And for their helplessness.
If our poor hands should falter,
Our eager hearts grow still,
We leave them at thy altar,
And fear for them no ill.

The River Road

By PEARL H. CAMPBELL

In the dim stretches of time, the road along the river had been only a faintly marked trail penciled out by the hoofs of deer and made smooth by the padded feet of timber wolves and bears and the soft shuffling of moccasins as the tribesmen and the fur traders went to and fro on forest errands. The cliffs on either side echoed to gay ballads and boat songs, for the *coureurs de bois* were a light-hearted lot, careless of the morrow and indifferent to danger.

Then the settlers, pushing back the frontier, moving ever westward as progress bit at their heels, found the path along the river a convenient highway toward the land of their dreams and used it more and more.

In the late forties the trees that hugged the bank clutched at the tops of prairie schooners or, growing resentful when some horseman trod on their exposed roots, leaned low and struck him smartly across the face with a slim branch. Years passed and still the road followed the winding reaches of the river, serving an ever increasing population as farms developed and prosperous towns took the place of tiny hamlets.

It was a thing of beauty in the late spring when the wild crab-apples dropped their scented petals into the palm of the wind or launched them like tiny caravels, on the swiftly moving current far below. It was lovelier still in the fall when fringed by gentians and golden rod, when the wild grapes festooned their purple clusters from branch; but the road was ever a treacherous one. The bank on the landward side was steep and subject to sudden slides. The veils of silvery mist, in which, at certain seasons, the river delighted to drape itself, made it doubly dangerous at the elbow turn just before the bridge was reached.

At various times the more enterprising farmers in the neighborhood had wished to abandon it and buy a right of way through the Willesden farm. It would shorten the route to the city by several miles, be much easier to keep in repair, and benefit the entire community. Of that they were all agreed. The one obstacle in the way was Nathan Willesden, queer, crabbed Nathan Willesden.

He had built his house far back from the river road for two reasons: first because there was the spring, welling out from the rocks, clear, cold, and never failing; and second because he liked solitude. And he had it in huge, undiluted doses.

The Willesdens had always been queer, the neighbors said, a strange, aloof people who preferred the society of their flocks and herds and fields to that of human kind, and they marveled when Nathan married Martha Potter, a town-bred girl, and brought her to that remote place. "How would she ever endure the solitude?" they asked. It was bad enough in summer, but folks did pass on the river road far below, and occasionally a traveler would follow the winding path between the hollyhocks Martha planted to the house and ask for a drink of spring water or a glass of buttermilk. But it was infinitely worse in winter when the drifting snow choked the road and walled them in for weeks on end.

What battles Martha fought out there in the solitude only the silent hills knew, but she grew used to it in time. Then there was Dorothy, their one wee daughter, the pride of her crotchety, queer father, and the very heart core of her mother.

The spring she was twelve years old three things happened. First, a Sunday school was started at the cross-roads school, but it did not long confine its activities merely to Sunday. It soon became the center of a great many neighborhood activities. The men folks found that it was pleasant to come together, now and then during the week to discuss problems that were uppermost in their minds. The women folks liked to exchange recipes and household helps and the young folks welcomed the opportunity for wholesome recreation.

Second, out of these neighborhood meetings grew the renewed agitation for the abandonment of the river road and the purchase of a right-of-way through the Willesden farm. Martha was strongly in favor of it. She could see the advantage of early mail delivery. She pointed out to Nathan how more than once they had lost substantial sums through delayed market reports.

To which Nathan retorted that if the road followed out the desired course her cherished flocks of white chickens would be endangered by the passing cars.

"Nonsense, Nathan," she returned. "What's a chicken, now and then, compared to the advantages of news and neighbors and all the other things?"

But Nathan remained "sof." He fixed a price for the purchase that the others thought exorbitant and refused to pay.

"Let 'em come to my terms," he said with a thump of his cane. "The road's been there since pioneer days. What's good enough for my grand-daddy's good enough for me."

"But Nathan," said Martha, "that isn't quite true. I haven't noticed you refusing any modern machinery because your grandfather didn't have it. You were one of the first to put in a milking machine and only the other day I saw you and Dorothy with your heads to-

gether over a radio catalog. I wouldn't be surprised any day to hear you tuning in for New York or Africa."

"The road's different," he retorted, stubbornly holding to his point.

"Indeed it is," Martha answered. "It is dangerous, with the fog dropping down as it does and the autos whizzing by, some day there's going to be a terrible accident, mark my words, and you'll be sorry you held out this way."

Nathan's answer was a shrug of his shoulders as he turned toward the barn.

"He's a rock in the way of progress," thought Martha. "Some day there'll be some sort of dynamite that will blow him away. T'aint in nature for things to stay that way. I wonder what it will be? I'm sure I can't say or do anything more."

The third epoch-making event was the closing of the cross-roads school of the district and the consolidation with one just over the border. It meant greater opportunities for the children of both sections, and a saving of money that appealed to their practical parents. But it also meant the purchase of a bus and the transportation of the children and the selection and hiring of a careful, conscientious person to drive it. Of the contestants Muriel Davis was the unanimous choice of the committee.

She was the daughter of a neighboring farmer. She was cool, clear-headed and cautious. She could take a car to pieces and put it together again and she was desperately in need of the money for the fund she was accumulating toward a course in dairying at the agricultural college.

Above all, she loved the work. To start out in the early morning, pick up a load of laughing children, and skim away on swallows' wings over the hill and through the valley was pure fun. But she soon discovered it had its element of danger. The first autumn morning that she encountered the mist along the river road she never forgot.

They came down the hill in the mellow sunshine to find the fog dancing along in front of them like a playful cloud. The sport of the wind, it rose and fell as gracefully as any nymph.

To Muriel, guiding the car with strong, deft fingers, at first it was a new playmate. Then suddenly it grew heavier. It dropped straight in front of them, cold, damp, sinister, muffling the sounds of approaching traffic. Her lights bored little channels into it, but could not penetrate far. Mindful of the precious lives entrusted to her care, she crept along at a snail's pace with a little prayer for safety on her lips, sounding her horn constantly. Then swiftly the wind veered, the river drew its long, lacy veils once more to its bosom. Muriel dropped her passengers at the school and turned homeward with no further adventures.

Yet the river road had lost its delight. Muriel had never been afraid of anything in all her eighteen years, but she did fear the mist, not for herself, but because of the children. Once she narrowly escaped collision with a huge truck going in the opposite direction. As she traveled the road, day after day, and fought the fog, her anger rose against Nathan Willesden.

"If it weren't for him," she thought, "we could go in peace and safety. How perfectly foolish to follow an old Indian trail just because our ancestors did! If anyone is ever killed on this road it will be Nathan's fault."

One night when she had delivered the last child at its home and was wondering if her mother would have supper ready when she turned it at the driveway and if there would be baked potatoes and sausages, she saw Martha signalling at the end of the Willesden lane. She was waving an old plaid shawl with all the force of her slender, wiry body.

"I wonder what is wrong?" thought Muriel. "I didn't pick up Dorothy this morning, but I thought maybe they'd all gone into town on a shopping expedition. Martha looks worried."

She put on the brakes and brought the school bus to a standstill opposite the lane.

"Oh," panted Martha, "I was so afraid I'd miss you. Nathan has gone to the city and he won't be home until tomorrow. Tom Morton's helping with the chores. I'm terribly worried about

Dorothy. I think she's coming down with diphtheria. I've tried all the home remedies, but she's grown steadily worse. I kept the wires hot this afternoon trying to get a doctor, but they're all at that convention, except Doctor Jones and he can't leave his office. He said to bring her in. Nathan's got the car and I couldn't drive Old Nance and hold a sick child. You were my only hope."

"Wrap her up well and bring her out," said Muriel, swinging the bus around. "We'll have her there in a jiffy."

Martha sped toward the house while Muriel turned her attention to the brakes. She had raced with the mist all the way home, glad to be free of its cold, clinging fingers. She had seen it settling down over the river as she climbed to a higher level. Now she would have to face it again with the added responsibility of a sick child, yet she did not falter.

"I guess we'll get through, somehow," she thought. "Poor Martha! I can't add to her worries. Here she comes now."

Martha had bundled the child up well. Then she and Tom Morton had improvised a stretcher so that they could carry her down the long lane. Gently they laid their precious burden on one of the seats. Muriel caught a glimpse of a pain-tortured little face as Martha climbed in beside her. Then she started the engine and they were off on that wild ride for life.

On, on they sped until they reached that sea of fog, white and terrible. Martha was seldom on the road at night and as they plunged into it, she drew her sick child a little closer to her and pulled up the blankets.

"I've told Nathan, more than once, that he'd live to regret his stubbornness about this road," she shouted to Muriel.

"It's all right," Muriel flung back over her shoulder, "so long as we are alone on it. We'll soon be there now."

Foot by foot they crept on, the horn sending out its warning as they forged ahead in the white, woolly fog. Muriel had swung the bus close to the extreme right in order to avoid anyone going in

the opposite direction. Then suddenly the thing she had feared so long came to pass.

The road ran down a steep decline. There was a car in front of her, two of them, and coming up the hill was the chug, chug of a heavy truck. The car that was leading the little procession stopped without any warning, forcing the second one back. Muriel jammed on her brakes and swung to one side, honking with all her might. With her heart on her lips she waited for the crash that would come when her light bus struck the heavy truck there on Death Hill.

And then the miracle, or at least it always seemed like one to them. The truck stopped just in time. And out of the dim, unnatural light came Nathan's voice.

"I was worried about ye," he said. "I left the car in town to be overhauled and came on with Joe Price. I never knew before what this river fog was like at night. Tomorrow we start work on the new road, Martha. It shall never be said that Nathan Willemsen's foolishness sent anyone to their death."

Shaken out of his apathy, for a moment he gathered the two he held dearest in his arms and held them close. Then he turned to trembling Muriel, who still grasped the wheel of the bus.

"You are a good sport, Muriel Davis, and a brave girl. If you need any more money to complete that course of yours, you just call on me. Now you just get back there with Martha and Dorothy. I'll drive them into town."

Beneath the Stars

By L. D. STEARNS

Far in the sky, like points of flame,
The stars proclaim Jehovah's name;
While watching them all fear and doubt
Are washed, by some strange process, out;
Forth from the darkness, still and deep,
A million voices seem to creep:
Wee flitting things—the trees—the sod—
Fling back, in chorus, one word—"God!"
Whither and why, and whence and how,
As low beneath the stars we bow,
Fade into nothingness, and cease;
God's voice has sounded. *There is peace!*

Obedience

By FAYE N. MERRIMAN

"How did you train Billy to such splendid obedience?" Mrs. Perkins asked wistfully, watching her neighbor's child pick up his books and play things and put them away when quietly spoken to. "I have a regular struggle to make Jessica mind at all."

Mrs. Gordon laughed. "It was a funny thing that started me to thinking about Billy and this matter of obedience," she said. "Eight months ago he was just as bad as Jessica about minding. I accepted my struggle with him as one of the necessary incidents to motherhood, for other mothers seemed to be experiencing the same trouble."

"Then one day I visited a friend who had followed too literally and liberally the old saying, 'An apple a day keeps the doctor away.' She had started in with one apple a day and a distaste for them, but when she had cultivated a liking for the humble, wholesome fruit she had carried the matter to an excess and was eating so many a day that other food was neglected and when I visited her a doctor was doing the same, and with a grim face suggesting a more varied diet."

"But I cannot see the connection between Billy and the apples."

"Neither did I at first, but going home the words, 'A command a day' flashed into my mind—and stayed there. I thought it over and knew that if I gave Billy just one command a day and had him heed that that I was making more headway than if I charged him with a dozen commands and he obeyed none of them."

"But only one a day—surely you could not control him with just one."

"That was my first, despairing thought, but I resolved to try. I was surprised to find how many of my commands really were superfluous and unnecessary. Many of them were from habit. 'Pick up your cap' I would fuss, 'Put on your sweater'—'Don't tease the dog' without giving him a chance to do the things himself. When I had only

one command to give it began to be like playing a game with myself and him. I was forced to think of other ways to encourage him to do things. For instance I put a 'very own' hook behind the door and painted it a bright red, Billy's favorite color, and had no more trouble with his forgetting to hang up his hat. I found that if it was cold Billy had sense enough to come back and get his own sweater when he was not nagged into doing it. I discovered that what I considered teasing the dog was only rough play that Towser enjoyed as much as he did."

"But when you did command did he obey at once?"

"Yes, I was careful to give a reasonable command and explain to him why it must be done. I only had to do this for a short time before he accepted the command without the explanation for he knew that it was there. Sometimes he even surprised me by working out the reason for himself. Now when I speak to him he knows that I am not telling him to do anything merely to be saying something and he does it quite as a matter of course and instantly."

"I see that he does. I am going to try your 'command a day' idea with Jessica. It will be hard at first, but I have a feeling that it will work."

Where Violets Bloom

By FLORENCE JONES HADLEY

In dreams I see my dear, old hills
Grow purple with their violets,
I know just where the first buds wake,
Just where the brown bee drones and frets.

I know just how the south wind steals
Across wide banks of purple bloom,
Bearing the incense in their cups
To one within a quiet room.

A fair, sweet room, shut from the world
By grassy slope and leafy aisle,
Where I, world-weary, come again
Just to forget a little while.

O blessed hills, hills of my youth,
What though my feet no more may go
Along your paths all blossom-starred?
In dreams I see your violets blow!

An Errand of Importance

BY LEAH A. KAZMARK



GED MRS. ROSS was dipping candles in her tiny back yard one spring day. It was slow work, dipping one candle after another and hanging them up in neat rows to harden until they could be dipped again. It made her back ache to bend down and the sun hurt her eyes.

"Dear me, dear me," she sighed. "Would that a body could have time to sit in the garden and watch the pinks and poppies. But with such a plenty to be doing, no woman ever gets time to be just sitting."

"What a lot of fine, fat candles you be going to have, neighbor Ross," spoke a voice behind her.

The old lady straightened up, setting her cap in place and looking sharply around. "Oh, good-day, neighbor Smeeds. It is indeed a fine lot of candles daughter Betsy and I started this morning. Then she was called away, and what could I do but finish them up. And in truth it's a hard job. Dipping wicks is a man's work, but they won't any of them be doing it."

The caller from the tiny-gabled house next door leaned closer to Mrs. Ross and in a most confidential way inquired, "I saw Betsy setting out in haste with her basket. I trust no bad news has come to you to make her hurry so away in mid-morning from her work and shop."

"No bad news at all," answered Mrs. Ross, glad of the chance to gossip a bit and rest her back from the constant bending. "She had word by little Sarah that Mrs. Franklin is this very minute packing a box to send by next boat to her good husband. Dr. Franklin is, you know, gone to France on business for this poor, needy land of ours. His wife is packing him some fresh linen and putting in a bite to eat; some fruit like raisins and apples and a sack of his favorite buckwheat flour, and such things."

"When daughter Betsy heard of it from his little daughter nothing would

do but that she leave her shop and this dipping and bake cookies. She has a recipe which Dr. Franklin says can't be beat. So off she goes to help pack the box and put in a goodly baking of the wee spiced cakes. You know how Betsy is, Mrs. Smeeds."

The neighbor nodded her head. "Indeed, it's a good girl she ever is. And I say her spiced cakes are of the best. But can she keep them fresh on the long trip by boats? 'Tis weeks and weeks they will be gone."

Mrs. Ross tapped the floor with her cane. "She has packed them in her best tin box, the one in which she kept her papers. But there is nothing she would not give to Dr. Franklin or do for him. You recall how kind he was to her when her dear husband was taken. That was before I came to live with her, but she never tires of telling me how he treated her and cared for my poor son, John."

"Aye, but I recall it well. Dr. Franklin is the best body in the whole city of Philadelphia and none will deny it. And his wife is just the same. No wonder Mistress Betsy be leaving her shop to do them a bit of a favor. I was but atinking—"

But whatever Mrs. Smeeds was thinking was never heard. With a loud clamor that resounded through the garden, the brass knocker at the shop of Mistress Ross sounded. Mrs. Ross, taking firmer hold of her hickory cane, hobbled off to answer it without as much as minding her manners and excusing herself. She was that excited that her daughter-in-law had likely a customer.

But it seemed that there was not one customer—but three! Peeping out the front window through a trim linen curtain, the eyes of Mrs. Ross saw three fine horses tied to the tree at the side. At the door three soldiers, all of them officers, talked earnestly together while they awaited the opening of the door.

"Alack-alack," moaned Mrs. Ross, wringing her hands. "Why must Betsy

go away and leave her shop. Its little I know about upholstery and fine needlework. And with business so bad and no trade at all with the war on, here are three fine customers at once and she not at home."

There was nothing to do about it. Again the knocker sounded with emphasis. It must be answered.

"Is this 239 High Street?" inquired the tallest of the gentlemen, doffing his hat and making a low bow. "And is this the shop of Mistress Ross?"

"That it is, indeed," replied the Madam, making the best curtsy her stiff back would permit. "Please that you step inside and be seated."

"Do we address Mistress Betsy?" further inquired the spokesman. "It is she that we come to see on business."

"Gentlemen, my daughter is not at home. She had gone on a errand down the street to the home of Benjamin Franklin. But I pray thee to wait for at any minute she may return."

"Our time will not permit of that, Madam," one of them made answer. "But on the morrow we will again call. Our errand is most important. We require the skilled fingers of Mistress Ross on a valuable thing. She has been recommended to us as a needlewoman of unusual taste and ability."

"That forsooth she is, good Sirs. Right behind you hangs the sampler made by her hands when she was but nine. Even then she showed her carefulness and patience."

With polite interest the officers inspected the neat sampler which hung over the mantle and which bore the name of Betsy, age nine, in neat, cross-stitched pattern in one corner. Above it, in gay colored thread, ran the little verse chosen by Betsy to show how skilled her fingers were:

"This needlework of mine can tell
That in my youth I learned well,
And by my Elders also taught
Not to spend my time for naught."

"Very fine, very neat and carefully made. Reminds me of the one my sister, Betty, did so long ago," said the spokesman. "Only Betty hated to apply herself to her needle. She had much

rather ride my pony." And he laughed musingly as his blue eyes lighted up with past recollections.

"Well, Madam," he continued, "we bid you good-day. Tell Mistress Betsy she may expect us on the morrow at nine sharp. It is important business we have to transact with her and we are in sore need of her skill and advice."

With low bows they withdrew from the shop and soon the clatter of the horses' hoofs sounded on the cobbled stones of the old street.

But hardly had the last echo passed away before the back door of the tiny house opened and a merry voice called, "Mother Ross, see what I bring you. Mrs. Franklin sends new paste buckles for your shoes. Her good husband sent them in a box of presents from Paris. He writes that they wear such at the fashionable court. You must liven up your old slippers with them and go out to the meeting house on sabbath."

"You should never have left your shop in mid-morning," excitedly chided her mother. "Business is scarce and whilst you were away three fine soldiers had need of you. They will call tomorrow at nine."

"Tut, mother, dear," soothed the gentle voice of the little seamstress. "All they want is me to sew a patch on shoulder or sleeve. They perhaps wish that I match with my goods their uniforms. It was not at all important."

"Aye—but they said that it be. 'It is business of importance,' said the tall officer."

Mistress Ross laughed softly as she removed her cloak and straightened her trim bodice. "Well I'll wager you, mother, that the important errand has to do with putting a neat patch on the handsome officer's sleeve. It's not the first one I have patched, nor is it likely to be the last. The war keeps on and Congress has little money for new uniforms. Dr. Franklin writes home that we all must be even more than usual frugal. Matters are uncertain."

"All the more reason you should stay home to mind your shop. The good Mr. Franklin himself would not approve of your leaving it on a Monday in mid-

morning. He is always the most frugal and practical. His paper is full of advice of the like. It is, besides, best to be on hand to mend the soldiers. You need the shillings and they have sore need of your skillful stitches." And with this sound advice emphatically given, the good old lady shuffled back to the row of hanging candles in the garden.

Alone, Betsy sighed aloud. "Mother does try me at times. But it's a good soul she is, after all. I know well what the officers want, but I can't change her mind. What else could a poor woman like me do but mend their clothes? Oh, I wish that I might do something for the land; it has need of good folks. But alack—what could a body like me do? There's no use wasting time longing for some deed to do for one's country. Just tending to business and doing your best is all I can, that's what Dr. Franklin would say if I asked his advice.

"Well, I'll finish that red petticoat I am making for myself and then help mother with the candles. I must to bed at candle-light so that I can be up early to tidy the shop ere the callers return. And I'll get out the blue stuff right now while I think of it. Then I'll be all ready and waiting to sew up their holes."

Forsythia

BY ALICE THORN FROST

Like a golden fountain, ever splendid springing,

Glowing in the sunlight, sure a joy to see.
Lighting garden spaces that would be in shadow,

Happiness you're bringing to the heart of me.

Welcome will we give you, sturdy in your beauty,

Come with gentler weather and sweet winds that blow,

Memories you're bringing, childhood's days and precious,

Kind old friend that loved us, in the long ago.

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O Ye of Little Faith

BY EFFIE E. BAKER

Glenn was starting off to school the morning of examination day. It was near the close of the term and he understood what it meant if he did not "pass."

"Mamma, tell me, will I pass?"

"I hope so, Glenn."

"But will I? I want you to tell me I will. Will I mamma?"

"But, child, how can I tell before I see what answers you give to questions asked? If you answer them correctly, you will pass."

"But will I pass?"

His beseeching tone changed to one of half-threat.

"I won't go one step out of this house until you tell me I'll pass. Every time you tell me the bigger boys will let me alone on the way to school, they do. Every time you tell me I'll come home early and not play along the street and get into trouble, I do just what you say I will. Every time you tell me I'll do what the teacher wants me to do and not get scolded, it happens just that way. Now, mother, I want you to tell me, WILL I PASS?"

"Yes, Glenn, YOU WILL PASS."

There was no hesitation in her voice as she now gave the desired assurance. With a hasty kiss he banged the door and struck the sidewalk, running to make up the time he had lost wrestling with the person who knew most in all the world.

The light of sudden discovery shone in her eyes.

"I never dreamed it meant so much to him."

Mother's assurance of her faith in him was all that was needed to bolster up his self-confidence to the pitch necessary to remove fear of the dreaded examination and bring him triumphantly through the ordeal.

Does the incident need further comment to point out the superior value of positive declarations of coming good rather than threats of impending failure?

O ye of little faith!

HOME DEPARTMENT MAGAZINE

The Atmosphere of the Home

BY RAYMOND W. SETTLE

According to the dictionary, "an atmosphere is any surrounding element, or influence." In a psychological and spiritual sense this means the type of homelife which is developed in any given family. Long ago men recognized the fact that the atmosphere in which one lives will do more to influence and mold his life than anything else. This is a fact that is true wherever one may look. In the vegetable kingdom plants are profoundly influenced by the atmosphere which surrounds them. If it be pure, the life of the plant will find its fullest expression. If some external influence enters in and contaminates the atmosphere the plant will droop and possibly die. Certain plants are adapted to definite kinds of atmosphere. Plants whose habitat is the tropical zone never flourish in any other. Again, there are plants which thrive only on certain kinds of soil, and if placed in any other they fail to grow and develop. These general facts as applied to nature are true where human life is concerned. Child life requires a certain kind of atmosphere in which to develop to its fullest powers and can not thrive when denied it.

The home affords the atmosphere which will either be conducive to the proper development of child life, or a detriment to it. After all is said the homes of men are the most permanent and far-reaching influence that ever can touch their lives. History reiterates over and over again that it is the atmosphere of the home which counts for most. The home may be an humble cottage or a king's palace, yet the same applies to both. The size of the building or the quality of the furnishings have little to do with creating the atmosphere. This comes from the lives of those who live there. It is the quality of life, the spirit of the family, the fundamental principles which operate daily that creates the atmosphere.

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The atmosphere of the home should be such that those who dwell there are inspired to live nobly. One can hardly be at his best in an environment that is not conducive to high living. Noble lives are developed only in an atmosphere of noble thoughts and ideals. To this end good books exert an immeasurable influence. Every home should be as well stocked with good reading matter as its resources will allow. There are no better associates for young people than good books. Money invested in them is money well spent. It is an investment that will return rich dividends by and by.

Cheap, sordid literature is a liability rather than an asset—a detriment rather than a help. As much, or more, harm can come to young people from reading harmful books as from association with undesirable companions. In fact, books are in a very real sense one's companions and their influence upon life is the same as in both cases. There is so much good reading matter in the world of literature that it is indeed a pity that the minds of the young become contaminated with the putrid stream that flows monthly from certain types of printing presses. The best the world has to offer is as ready at hand as the worst. Good books are as cheap, and in many cases cheaper than bad ones. The child lives more truly in the company of fictional characters than do older people. Therefore, if the atmosphere of the home be all that it should be the door should be closed against questionable or downright evil characters from fiction, and thrown wide open in a hearty welcome to those whose presence will be a benediction and a blessing.

To be truly helpful the atmosphere of the home should be one of harmony and peace. Child nature is quick to respond to and be profoundly affected by a disharmonious spirit in the home. "Neuroticism may result if the home atmosphere is an atmosphere of harsh and ugly thoughts. Or out of this atmosphere may result the transformation of a tender, affectionate child into a harsh, cold, selfish, and even cruel

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adult." Home should be too sacred a place for quarreling and bickering. Such things should never be allowed to intrude their ugly presence within the limits of the family circle. Love at its best should sanctify and influence the relations of the members of the household.

The atmosphere of the home should be Christian to a high degree. Nothing will so cast a halo about the home and shed a beneficent influence upon it as a genuine spirit of Christianity. These represent everything that is high and holy, proper and good, sacred and sensible. Where the spirit of Christ dwells only the best of everything can enter and remain. Christianity affords the only substantial, permanent basis for the building of home life. It conserves the best and fortifies against the worst. It supplies the only known atmosphere which will guarantee beautiful, useful lives. A Christian home is the nearest approach to heaven of anything this world knows. It supplies just those incentives which people need to make their lives an undoubted success. Boys and girls who grow up in a real Christian home will at least have come in contact with the best there is in life.

In creating and maintaining the right kind of an atmosphere in the home the parents must bear the bulk of the responsibility. As heads of the household they determine not only the policy of the home in things general, but the very spirit and atmosphere of the home. As are father and mother, so will be the sons and daughters. The sole solution of the problem for them is a devout Christian life. If their lives are all formed and molded by the spirit and ideals of Christ the atmosphere of the home will be supercharged with those forces which make for the right kind of living.

The skilful mother teaches by the positive method. She says "Do" in place of "Don't."

The Geranium Sermon

BY MRS. W. THORBURN CLARK

"What lovely geraniums!" exclaimed the Home department visitor as she came out on the tiny porch of Mrs. Matilda James' home.

"Yes'm they *are* pretty," returned Mrs. James, who was familiarly known in the village as "Aunt Tilly," "and I love to look at them, but the prettiest part about them is the sermon they preach."

"Sermon?" queried the visitor.

"Yes'm, a regular *sermon*, and they've been preachin' it to me right on through the summer; of course 'tis the *same* sermon, but it is such a good one that I don't mind it bein' the same. I tell Dan'l—he's my husban' you know—that I'd rather hear the minister preach a *good* sermon over any time than to give us a fresh one that was poor."

"I'm sure your sermon must be interesting," remarked the visitor, "for I never saw such rich foliage and luxuriant blossoms, the very biggest clusters I have ever seen."

"It is interesting said Aunt Tilly, and if you would like to hear it take a seat here in this rocking chair and I'll sit on the steps and tell you about it."

"Of course," assented the wise visitor, who knew just how to win the hearts of the members on her circle by taking an interest in their affairs, "I shall be delighted to hear it."

"Well," began Mrs. James, "the text of the sermon is that verse in the Bible which tells about givin' and havin' more and holdin' fast to what you've got and yet bein' poor."

"There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty," quoted the visitor.

"That's it," said Aunt Tilly, "I knew you'd understand what I meant."

"As I started out to tell you, maybe you remember that last winter was jus' middlin' cold until long about the last of February, when it turned cold suddenly and caught most folks nappin'. You see it was when we had gotten used

to thinkin' that winter was about over, lots of folks were almost out of fuel and things just froze up generally; I had seven pots of geraniums which I kept on a window shelf in the livin' room. We kept a fire goin' in there all the time and every night I'd pull the shade down, so they were all right as long as I kept them in there. We had a few days of bright, warm sunshine jus' before the blizzard struck us and most all of my neighbors put their plants out and then moved them into a different room or hall and that is how it happened that they lost them—yes they lost them, every woman in the neighborhood, I was too busy to put mine out. It sometimes pays to be busy, doesn't it?"

"Well, when it got warm sure enough so I could put the geraniums out in the sunshine, they were that puny and pale that Dan'l said they looked like they had had a spell of typhoid fever with one or two relapses, and it was about this time that the 'procession,' as Dan'l called it, started.

"He said it must be like the bread line you hear about in the cities, only this procession wasn't comin' for a loaf of bread or a bowl of soup, but jus' geranium cuttins'.

"The first to come was the black girl who cooks for Mrs. Ward, she says 'Mrs. Jeems, Mrs. Ward says please mum send her a *teeny* cuttin' off of your geraniums, she says she seen you had some when she passed here yestiddy; and she is nigh about *crazy* for somethin' green to look at.'

"Why," I said, 'I thought Mrs. Ward had a lot of lovely plants.'

"Yes'm she *did* have,' the girl said, 'but she done loss 'em *ev'ry* one, she lef' 'em out in de hall, when the blizzard come and de las' one done *frez*.'

"All right," said I, stepping back in the kitchen for a knife, 'I'll send her a cuttin'; and Dan'l smiled over his paper at me and says, 'You know Mrs. Ward wouldn't give you no flower cuttin's.'"

"I know it," says I, 'but now is my chance to heap coals of fire on her head and I'm goin' to do it too,' so I sent Mrs. Ward *two* cuttins'. The neighbors

kep' sendin' and I kep' givin' until at last there was not a single branch left on those geraniums but jus' the bare stalks.

"About this time we moved and if you know anythin' about the movin' business you will understand that I didn't have any time to nurse the stalks of them geraniums, but jus' gave them a drink of water when I could think of it.

"By and by they began to put out new shoots and it seemed to me that where I had cut one slip *two* came and every shoot put out blossoms, and the leaves were twice as large as the little pale ones that had been on the cuttins' which I had given away, and the clusters of blossoms were larger and finer than any I had ever had before. They have not stopped bloomin' all through the summer, and I tol' Dan'l it all came from givin' away so many cuttins', and he says it is a right good sort of a sermon, though he hadn't thought about it before."

"I certainly agree with you," said the visiting lady as she rose to take her leave, "it is a lovely sermon and teaches us a beautiful lesson on generosity."

A Little Winding Path

BY LAURA CROMER HEMINGWAY

I know a little winding path
That seeks a treasured spot;
This way and that, it leads me to
A pleasant garden plot.

There cares are safely tucked away
With seeds beneath the soil;—
The Master's plan to ease for me
Man's heritage of toil.

This little path,—it seems to seek
A place of fairest flowers;
But more it finds,—a priceless gift,—
The source of happy hours!

I would that every restless heart
Would set about to find
A little winding garden path
That leads to peace of mind.

Charity Work in the Home Department

BY HILDA RICHMOND

There are few live, progressive Home department organizations that do not have one or more charity patients on the list. Usually they are old people who have had means in their younger days, and lost out through misfortune or illness. Generally they belong to that class that think it a disgrace to have to accept aid, and are extremely sensitive. If any thing is given it must be done with delicacy and tact. Of course occasionally there is a childish elderly person who has passed that stage, and is pleased to be remembered with gifts of food and clothing, but for the most part it is the other way.

Another thing Home department workers have to keep in mind is that it will never do to let anyone suspect that charitable work is going on. One enthusiastic young worker ventured to tell of a basket she had delivered to a needy member, not mentioning any name, but the old lady to whom she confided the news withdrew at once from membership. She let it be known that she did not wish to be mixed up with a charitable organization, as she was able to support herself. She was childish and feeble but she could not be persuaded that doing charity work was not the purpose and aim of the department. If relief is given to young or old it should be done with the utmost secrecy.

Christmas, Easter, Harvest Home and Thanksgiving furnish occasions when aid can be given with the least danger of offense. An old friend may sometimes be trusted to present fruit or food, or the gift is sent under cover of darkness with no name attached. The visitor has the chance to note what is needed, and whether real want is in evidence, and acts accordingly. In one instance coal was stealthily put into the old wood house, and like the widow's oil and meal of Bible days it gave comfort and cheer. The near-sighted old gentleman only knew that his ton of coal

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outlasted any he had ever bought before. A dollar bill sent in a letter occasionally from "A Friend" cannot antagonize a member, or even give a clue as to who sent it. In one case a man presented himself at the door with supplies at a ridiculously low price and a needy member eagerly bought what he had. "You don't need to pay me now. I can collect later as I'm in a hurry," said the man, and never went back for the pay. Of course these little make-shifts are all prearranged and they do not harm anyone.

Then there is the trusted woman who presents something that belonged to her parents or a relative now gone to the other world, and requests that it be accepted as a gift. She doesn't want anybody and everybody to be wearing her relative's things, so the gift is cheerfully accepted. Of course the visitor has noted the need and solicited the gift, but the member is serenely unconscious of that fact.

Even with younger folks who fall into misfortune it is well to use all the tact and wisdom at command. Nobody likes to have it known that an emergency has found them unprepared. Some day we may need aid and shall be grateful for the kindly courtesy that gives it unobtrusively. The Home department sees life in many phases and is able to minister to many needs. The visitor is often regarded as an angel of mercy, and there are always well-to-do people who are glad to co-operate in helping worthy people who have fallen into difficulties.

My Apple Orchard

BY ALIX THORN

Spring and her smiles and tears caught in the trees,
Spring and her fragrant breath held by the breeze,
Sudden my orchard ways are pink and white
As if some fairy trod them in the night.

Promise of treasure hid in each frail flower,
Kissed by the sun and freshened by the shower,
And though sweet petals fall, alas, too soon,
Over the months I glimpse the harvest moon.

HOME DEPARTMENT MAGAZINE

Daily Home Readings and Lesson Studies

Recommended for Daily Worship in the Home

Prepared by J. D. MOORE

Jesus the Suffering Messiah

GOLDEN TEXT—*If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (Mark 8: 34.)*

DAILY READINGS

March 26 to April 1
Preparing for Lesson Study, April 1

MONDAY, MARCH 26

Read Mark 8: 27-37—**JESUS THE SUFFERING MESSIAH**

"He began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things."

As expressed by Peter, the faith of the disciples in Jesus was accurate. They believed he was the Christ, the Anointed One, the promised Messiah. They were willing to confess their faith in him. They needed to do so in order to define their private relations to him. But their faith in him was more accurate than their knowledge of him, as the Christ. They shared the popular notion of a Messianic world ruler, and thought that the Christ would assert his divine power over wicked men and establish a kingdom of righteousness on earth by the renovation of states and civil governments. But they did not fully understand the prophecies concerning the Messiah which had portrayed him as a spiritual sovereign instead of a temporal ruler. That he should suffer was, therefore, contrary to their ideas of what the Christ would do. He had to teach them the truth about himself by giving them information concerning what it takes to be his follower. He told them plainly, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself."

May the spirit of self-sacrifice lead us to a richer and better knowledge of Jesus, our suffering Redeemer.

TUESDAY, MARCH 27

Read Hebrews 6: 13-20—**THE CHOSEN SERVANT**
"Jesus made an high priest forever after the order of Melchizedec."

The promise to Abraham was made under divine oath. It was therefore un-

changeable. An elect Seed was chosen. A line of spiritual posterity was indicated and set up. That covenant was always considered Messianic, referring to a Descendant of Abraham, as God's chosen, in whom the promise of universal blessing was to be fulfilled. That promise of God is the ground of our hope in Jesus Christ. It is such a hope as "enters into that which is within the veil." It is an unseen, eternal and unchangeable anchorage. Yet the Chosen Servant was an individual, separate and apart from a mere Abrahamic genealogy. He was a son of Abraham, but was more than the descendant of a patriarch. He was a priest after the order of Melchizedec, who was not of a priestly ancestry and who did not have either a predecessor or successor in office. His individuality was that of a divine personality.

Since Jesus Christ is the chosen of God, may we sincerely and devoutly make him our choice.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28

Read Isaiah 50: 4-11—**THE COURAGEOUS SUFFERER**
"I gave my back to the smiters."

Perhaps Isaiah is describing his ideals for himself, and yet in doing so he portrays the character of the Messiah. His inspired imagination views afar the Ideal Life of the Lord's Anointed in whom strength and courage, righteousness and peace are combined. He has the courage of speech, for to him is given the "tongue of the learned." It was said of Jesus, "How knoweth this man letters having never learned?" In him there was the absence of resentment or retaliation, for he "gave his back to the smiters," and "turned the

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other cheek" to the ruffian. His was the bravery of innocence not only, but also of knowing that God would help and vindicate him. Opposition will be short lived. As a garment, it soon becomes old and moth-eaten. The smiters ere long cease their smiting. He who fears God walks in the light. His pathway is sufficiently illuminated. But those who kindle their own fires, walking in their own righteousness and according to the light of their own eyes, have only "fox-fires" and are following an ignis fatuus, and must eventually come to sorrow and death. In the light of the joy which was set before him by his own divine vision, Jesus endured the cross.

May we have the courage of knowing the truth at it is in Jesus, which alone can make us free.

THURSDAY, MARCH 29

Read Matthew 26: 36-46—THE SAVIOUR FORSAKEN
"He cometh to the disciples and findeth them asleep."

Indescribable was the agony of Jesus in the Garden when he was left alone to suffer the tortures of that hour. Even his lovers failed him. They slept "for sorrow," but they slept. They could not know the depths of his anguish. But he yearned for their sympathy. In the season of his greatest trouble, he wanted their sleepless companionship. "Must Jesus bear the cross alone?" Although the chosen three disciples loved him, they missed their opportunity to watch while he prayed in the garden, and thus to share his burden with him. They knew he was praying, for three times he came to them from the place of prayer. We wonder how they could sleep. But the flesh is weak even when the spirit is willing. Hence the spirit must be more than willing, it must be deeply anxious, in order to overcome the weakness of the flesh. And prayer must be constant and unceasing.

May our eyes be sleepless and our hearts broken while Christ and his cause are languishing.

FRIDAY, MARCH 30

Read John 16: 25-33—THE COMFORTING SAVIOUR
"These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace."

The disciples were grieved to hear the Master say that he was going to leave

them. But he sought to comfort them with words of instruction and promise. He taught them that his going would not mean their bereavement but their advantage. They could not understand how it could be so. But he assured them it would mean the larger revelation of the Father to them and of the Father's love for them. They were also forewarned concerning the afflictions and persecutions which awaited them. He bade them not to trust too much even to their faith in him, because their faith might waver. In him directly and immediately, they should seek their peace. They were to believe in him rather than in their belief in him. It was through their faith, rather than in it, that they would find their comfort. He himself is the great Comforter, revealed by the Holy Spirit, the other "Comforter." In the face of tribulations, they were bidden to be of good cheer. Because he had overcome the world, they who were in him could be victorious.

May Christ himself be the unceasing source of all our happiness and peace.

SATURDAY, MARCH 31

Read John 11: 33-44—THE COMPASSIONATE FRIEND

"Then said the Jews, Behold, how he loved him."

At the grave of Lazarus, Jesus wept for those who wept. His tears were shed for the living and not for the dead. The Jews who saw him weeping thought he wept in sorrow for Lazarus. But they did not know Jesus. They perhaps shared with Mary and Martha the thought that had the Master come in time he could have prevented the death of his friend. Jesus went forthwith to the grave, the place about which their sorrow gathered. The crowd that followed him thought he was going there to weep. But when he commanded the sepulcher to be opened, they were struck with consternation because mourners usually wept at the grave, not inside the tomb. His prayer at the open sepulcher was uttered "because of the people who stood by." He himself needed not to pray. With imperious voice, before which death and hell stood back, he cried, "Lazarus, come forth."

In life and in death, may Jesus Christ be our friend, when all other friends are powerless to befriend us.

SUNDAY, APRIL 1

Read Isaiah 53: 1-9—THE SYMPATHIZING SAVIOUR
"In all their afflictions, he was afflicted."

The prophet describes the Conqueror returning victorious from the conflict with his enemies, with his garments dyed red with their blood. The day of the Redeemer's victory is the day of defeat and destruction for all his foes. He will save his people though he must destroy all others in order to do so. His lovingkindness toward them turns the cutting edge of his judgments on their oppressors. He makes their afflictions his own. He identifies himself with them. Before they can be overthrown, their enemies must first overcome their Saviour and their Lord.

May we rejoice in the sympathy of Jesus who is touched with a feeling of all our infirmities and makes common cause with us in our distresses.

LESSON STUDY

Sunday, April 1

Topic—Jesus the Suffering Messiah (Mark 8: 27 to 9: 1; 9: 30-33; 10: 33-34).

Lesson Text

Mark 8:27-37

I. CONFESSING THE MESSIAH

27 ¶ And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?

28 And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets.

29 And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

II. MISUNDERSTANDING THE MESSIAH

31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

33 But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

III. FOLLOWING THE MESSIAH

34 ¶ And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them,

Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me.

35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Lesson Comment

1. *Confessing the Messiah.* In the region of Caesarea Philippi whither Jesus had gone with his disciples for private conference and instruction, he drew from them the great confession that he was the Messiah. Peter voiced the faith of all the rest when he said to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ." That faith was given them by the Father. They could not have had it of themselves. It was a revelation. As highly as they esteemed their Master for his wisdom and power, they perceived him as the Messiah only by divine and direct inspiration. After having had this faith, their first duty was to confess it. They did not then need to tell others but they needed to acknowledge to Jesus, what they believed. They were forbidden to tell any man of him for the time, but upon their own private confession of him and to him would rest the future structure of their usefulness and power in his service.

2. *Misunderstanding the Messiah.* Though they believed in Jesus, they did not know him fully. Their faith was greater than their knowledge. Their knowledge was their own, while their faith was God-given. That made the difference. That distinguished their faith as correct and their knowledge as faulty. Peter seriously objected to what Jesus told them about his impending sufferings at Jerusalem. He did not think it at all becoming that the Messiah should submit to indignity and disgrace at the hands of wicked rulers. His idea was that Jesus, as the Messiah, should make the despotic authorities feel the weight of his divine power, and should compel recognition at their hands. However, Jesus told him that his doctrine was according to the ways of men but not according to the ways

of providence; nor according to what the Messiah must endure.

3. *Following the Messiah.* Jesus defined his character in stating the terms of discipleship. Only they who deny themselves can follow him. And if self-denial be the pathway in which his followers must travel, the inevitable conclusion is that he himself is the epitome of self-sacrifice. The self-assertive or self-indulgent know not the way of the

Lord. They do not know him, nor can they follow after him; for he has not gone their way. In him was demonstrated the principle of gaining by losing one's life. In suffering death he did not throw his life away, but gave it for the sublime cause of man's redemption. Having given it for such an object, he did not lose it. Neither will they lose their lives who live and die for him.

The Resurrection

GOLDEN TEXT—*Because I live, ye shall live also.* (John 14: 19.)

DAILY READINGS

April 2 to April 8

Preparing for Lesson Study, April 8

MONDAY, APRIL 2

Read Matthew 21: 12-17—THE DAY OF AUTHORITY
"Jesus went into the temple of God and cast out all them that bought and sold in the temple."

At his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the procession of people singing his praises followed him even into the temple area. Such a demonstration in his honor aroused the fear of his enemies that "all the world would go after him." It was a movement of great significance. The money changers and merchants had revived the custom of buying and selling in the stalls or corridors of the outer courts of the temple. Jesus drove them out and overturned the tables of the money changers. They knew they were violating the sanctity of the Lord's house, and when Jesus asserted his authority, they were compelled to recognize it. But the question was raised, By what authority did he do this? What right had Jesus, his critics asked, to upset arrangements to which the temple authorities had consented? Though they might have admitted that there was good reason for what he did, how did he come in possession of such authority? It was his right, because he was the Son of God for whose worship the temple was set apart. The Son has authority in the Father's house.

May our churches recognize the authority and presence of Christ, the Lord and ruler of the temple.

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TUESDAY, APRIL 3

Read Mark 12: 28-34—THE DAY OF DISCOURSE
"No man after that durst ask him any question."

In the temple, Jesus had answered the Sadducees concerning the resurrection and had routed their insidious attack upon him. Then one of the scribes asked him which was the greatest of the commandments. Even though he was put forward to ask the question, it was doubtless a matter of sincere inquiry with him. Jesus replied that the two commandments (corresponding to the two tables given to Moses on Mount Sinai, the first of which was the first four laws of the Decalogue dealing with man's duties toward God, and the second consisting of the last six laws dealing with the duties of man to man), were both summed up in the one word,—love. The inquirer assented to this interpretation of the law as a spiritual rather than a ceremonial matter. Then Jesus told him he was near the kingdom. But his assent could only bring him near it. By faith alone could he enter. To both the sincere and insincere inquirers the answers of Jesus that day were final and authoritative. He left no ground for further inquiries.

May we willingly accept the word of Christ as the last thing to be said on any subject.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4

Read Psalm 130: 1-6—WAITING ON GOD
"My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning."

Out of the depths of his nature and his need, the singer raised his cry to God. He pleaded that God's ears might

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be attentive to his supplications. He acknowledged that the Lord does not mark iniquity against the penitent petitioner who besieges his throne with prayers and entreaties. God is a wonderful forgiver. Therefore, we should patiently abide the coming of his mercy and goodness. Yet, even in the face of divine assurance, our waiting on God is wakeful and anxious, as the bedridden sufferer, haunted by the horrors of a sleepless night, longs for the break of day. On the fourteenth night of the storm on the Mediterranean, Paul and his ship-wrecked companions cast four anchors from the stern of the vessel, "and wished for day." God had promised them a safe landing, but yet they longed to see the light of dawn. Be our faith ever so strong, we yearn for the circumstances and manifestations of God's goodness to us, and for the coming of light and knowledge.

May we therefore hope in God, and wait patiently in hope of his redemption and mercy.

THURSDAY, APRIL 5

Read Luke 22: 39-46—THE DAY OF AGONY
"His sweat was, at it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

In agonizing prayer, Jesus, prostrate and alone in the Garden, prayed that the bitter cup might pass from him if it was the Father's will to remove it. Yet he prayed that the Father's will might be carried out. Though his anguish was unutterable, he would drink the cup of sorrow to its last drop if the Father so willed. An angel came and ministered unto him, not to take away his cup but to strengthen him for the ordeals through which he must pass. But his agony must have been intensified rather than assuaged by the angelic ministration which could only confirm the sentence that he had to go through the ordeal and shame of a criminal's death. Again he prayed, more earnestly still, while the sweat drops of blood fell from his face to the ground. It was the bloody ooze from bursting capillaries in his face, and was the presage of that burst of heart by which he died on the cross and which was evidenced by the blood and water that issued forth

when the soldier's spear opened his side after his death.

How marvelous is the love of God who spared not his own Son that he might redeem mankind from sin.

FRIDAY, APRIL 6

Read John 19: 31-42—THE DAY OF CRUCIFIXION AND BURIAL
"A new sepulcher wherein was never man yet laid; there they laid Jesus."

The Jews' preparation for the sabbath day, mentioned here, was evidently Thursday instead of Friday, as has been thought; because, had the following day been the weekly sabbath it would not have been spoken of as a "high day." It must, therefore, have been the annual sabbath, or the first day of the feast of the Passover. If that be true, Jesus was crucified on Thursday, March 22, 34 A.D. (Correct Chronology). At the ninth hour, which was about three o'clock in the afternoon, Jesus expired. He "bowed his head and gave up his spirit." He died on the cross but not by the cross. Physically he died of a broken heart. But he actually gave up his spirit, after his cup of suffering had been drained. He died before the robbers, who were crucified with him, had been despatched by the horrible method of breaking their legs with mauls in order to hasten their death and thus permit of their bodies being taken down from the cross before the beginning of the annual sabbath at sunset. When the executioners saw that Jesus was dead they did not break his legs. But in order to be sure that death had taken place, one of the soldiers pierced his side with the point of his spear, from which blood and water issued. Joseph, a secret disciple, asked Pilate for the body. Nicodemus, one of the Sanhedrin, also a secret disciple, brought a mixture of aloes and myrrh, a hundred pound weight, and the two embalmed him and laid him in Joseph's new tomb near the place of execution.

May the death of Jesus for our sins be central in our faith and pivotal in all our Christian experience.

SATURDAY, APRIL 7

Read Matthew 27: 62-66—THE WATCH AT THE SEPULCHER
"Pilate saith unto them, Ye have a watch: so your way, make it as sure as you can."

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Since the crucifixion, in all probability, took place on Thursday, it was Friday, the day following, that the chief priests and Pharisees came to Pilate and asked that a guard be placed at the tomb of Jesus until after the third day. They remembered that he had told them he would rise on the third day. So they feared his disciples might secretly take him away and claim that he had risen from the dead. They knew that if his resurrection became an established belief among the people, his death would prove a greater foe to their traditions than his life had been. But their fears betrayed their guilt. If Jesus had been but a common criminal, why should they have feared any aftermath of his death? They readily got Pilate's permission to make the guard as strong as they wished, and perhaps four quaternions of soldiers were detailed for that duty. The stone before the sepulchre was sealed with the seal of the Roman authorities. The tomb was doubtless visited by the women and perhaps by others early that day.

How futile are the efforts of men to thwart the purposes of God, except to furnish extra material for his glory.

SUNDAY, APRIL 8

Read 1 Corinthians 15: 20-22—CHRIST THE FIRST FRUITS

"Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that sleep."

Christ's resurrection was the first of its kind. But it was an earnest of the resurrection of all others who sleep in him. In Adam all perished, or became mortal and are subject to death. But all who are in Christ shall be made alive. The atonement of Christ includes the body as well as the soul. His reign must continue until he shall have put all enemies under his feet. When death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed and is no more, the atoning, mediatorial work of Christ will be finished. At the resurrection, of which Christ's resurrection is positive assurance, death itself will be slain. Then life will be glorified and everlasting.

May God give us the full joy of the glorious hope there is in our risen glorified Saviour.

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LESSON STUDY

Sunday, April 8

Topic—The Resurrection (Mark 16: 1-20).

Lesson Text

Mark 16: 1-8, 19, 20

I. THE OPEN SEPULCHRE

1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

2 And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

II. THE RISEN CHRIST

6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

8 And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre: for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.

III. THE ASCENDING LORD

19 ¶ So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

Lesson Comment

1. *The Open Sepulchre.* Although the women were certainly not present at the burial of Jesus, they probably visited the tomb early on the day after, and before the Roman guard had been set at the sepulchre. As soon as they could procure spices with which to anoint his body, early in the morning of the first day of the week they set out for the tomb, thinking that the great stone which they had previously seen at the mouth of the grave would be their only difficulty in reaching the body. But as they drew near the place, they saw that the stone was already rolled away. Their imaginary difficulty was gone, but the removal of it brought them new

fear and fright. Entering the enclosure, they saw a young man sitting on the right, clothed in a long white garment. But the body of Jesus was not there. The tomb was open, and its gaping entrance haunted them with the vision of another than the one whom they sought.

2. *The Risen Christ.* The young man spoke kindly to the frightened women, telling them what their purpose was in coming to the tomb; and informed them that Jesus had risen, showing them the very place where he had been laid. He further commissioned them to tell his disciples that he had risen, and that he would be seen of them in Galilee, as he during his life time had said to them. They were amazed, and in great consternation fled quickly from the sepulchre and told no one what they had seen until they had reported to the dis-

ciples. What an honor was thus placed upon believing womanhood! as God's angel authorized these women to become his messengers to his messengers and to bridge the chasm between the Master and his men.

3. *The Ascending Lord.* The resurrection and the ascension of Jesus correlate. Just as his death would have been fruitless without his resurrection, his resurrection would have been meaningless but for his ascension. But he ascended, forty days after he rose, and went back to the Father at whose right hand he continues his mediatorial work as our intercessor. From Olivet where he went up from them, the disciples went forth preaching the resurrection of Jesus and the power of God. Their ministry was confirmed by divine sanction in the working of miracles of all sorts.

Transfiguration and Service

GOLDEN TEXT—*He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing.* (John 15: 5.)

DAILY READINGS

April 9 to April 15

Preparing for Lesson Study, April 15

MONDAY, APRIL 9

Read Mark 9: 2-13—THE TRANSFIGURATION

"His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow."

The Transfiguration was a delineation of the Christ. It was the shining out of his nature which, until then, had been concealed from human eyes by the flesh. His body became, for the time, transparent so that his divine nature shone through and transformed his vesture and bodily appearance. It was a season of glory which he had before he became incarnate. But it did not take place in order to convince Jesus of his divine Sonship, but to furnish the disciples visible and unmistakable evidence of it. By his supernatural appearance, by the presence of Moses and Elijah from heaven and by the voice which was heard in the cloud, his Sonship was certified. The three disciples were themselves supernaturally illuminated

by the glory of the scene. Their conscious minds knew not what to say, but under a transformed vision they recognized Moses and Elijah whom, of course, they had never seen in the flesh. They had the testimony of both sight and hearing. Concerning what they saw and heard, they never had any doubt whatever. However, they were commanded not to tell what they had seen until after the resurrection, when the glory of Christ would be permanent instead of temporary.

May we seek no glory except that which is ours in the presence of the glorified Christ.

TUESDAY, APRIL 10

Read Mark 9: 14-29—VISION AND SERVICE

"This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."

While the three disciples were in ecstasies on the mountain, the nine others were in deep perplexity in the valley below, brow-beaten in discourse by the scribes, and conscious of their inability to heal a demoniac boy who

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had been brought to them while Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration. How often human effort is powerless when Christ is absent, and we find ourselves unable to do that which we had hitherto done! The anxious father pleaded with Jesus to heal his son who, under the possession of an evil spirit, had become epileptic. It was a dumb spirit that afflicted him, not the talkative sort of devil which wanted to speak and which Jesus commanded to be silent. Jesus conditioned the son's cure on the father's faith. With what conquering faith, the man replied, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief." How great is that faith which laments its unbelief and prays for more faith! After Jesus healed the lad, his disciples asked him why they could not cast the devil out? His plain answer was because they lacked sufficient acquaintance and knowledge of him and because they were wanting in victorious prayer.

May we have such a vision of Jesus that we shall be empowered for his service even in the hardest tasks.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11

Read John 12: 20-28—GLORY THROUGH DEATH
"The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified."

Since his own people, the Jews, had rejected Jesus, the Greeks, as believers in God though they were not of Israel, sought to see him, no doubt in order to negotiate with him to become the champion of their cause. They approached Philip about the matter of having an interview with Jesus, but he hesitated to mention it to the Master until after he had conferred with Andrew. They together then told Jesus. He perceived that even in the minds of the Greeks, who wished to make him their chieftain, the idea of a world-ruler obtained. But his glory was not to be achieved by becoming the head of any sect or organization except that which was founded upon his death and resurrection. His tomb would be his throne from which he would ride forth a conqueror and a king. His was not a mere martyr's death. It had in it the germ of a spiritual reproduction into countless other

lives. It was substitutionary, expiatory, atoning, and therefore fruitful. The life he laid down for the world thus came within the reach of all mankind.

May we exalt the uplifted Christ as the magnet that will draw all men unto him.

THURSDAY, APRIL 12

Read Colossians 1: 9-23—PRE-EMINENT IN GLORY
"That in all things he might have the pre-eminence."

Paul argues Christ's pre-eminence in knowledge, and pleads that Christians walk worthily of Christ, in a knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and understanding; and thus to become powerful and fruitful. He is pre-eminent in sacrifice. It is by his blood that we have redemption and forgiveness of sin, which were impossible by any other sacrifice. He is pre-eminent in life, the first born of every creature, the image of the invisible God, the very Son of God. He is pre-eminent in creation, for all things were created by him, dominions, powers and principalities, and the material universe with its hosts of suns and planets. He is pre-eminent in the church, as the head of the body, its founder and support, its wisdom and intelligence. All fulness was imposed in him by God the Father. By his blood he reconciles all to himself, bringing people to unity and fellowship in him, even though they had been afar off from him and from one another, aliens and strangers to the covenants of Israel.

May we give Christ first place in our hearts, and everywhere accord him that pre-eminence which is his.

FRIDAY, APRIL 13

Read John 1: 9-18—THE TRUE LIGHT OF GLORY
"We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."

Jesus Christ is the light of heaven. There is no need of sun or lamp there, for the Lamb is the light thereof. He is the light of the world also. His manifestation in the flesh was his pre-existent glory made visible to the eyes of mankind. A true light enlightens every man, regardless of his circumstances or nature, whether good or evil. It casts no false colors nor partial shading. It is exact in its revelation of facts and con-

ditions. It is the judgment of the world because it brings every thing into the light. His is the glory of light that is original, as that of the noon-day sun. His is not the pale light of a borrowed glory, like that of a full moon that sheds its rays softly on a sleepy world. The true light is vigorous and life-giving. To them who received Christ, gave he power to become the sons of God. He is a light that heals as well as reveals. The evil in our hearts which is shown up by him, he has the power to remove. His light is curative and is the life of men. He is the Sun of righteousness that arises with healing in his wings. As the true light, he is gracious—full of grace and truth and mercy. The law was full of penalty. The light which shot from Sinai was that of the lightnings of God, threatening his vengeance upon the disobedient and sinful. But the light in the face of Jesus Christ is full of pleading and mercy, of love and compassion. "The law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ."

May we behold the glory of God revealed in Christ, and in the light of his life may we live.

SATURDAY, APRIL 14

Read II Corinthians 3: 12-18—TRANSFORMED BY BEHOLDING

"We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory."

We grow into the likeness of that on which we look constantly and with great admiration. Love begets similarities. Beholding the glory of God imparts it to our hearts. We thus assimilate it. On Mount Sinai, Moses' face absorbed the glory of the Lord which he beheld for forty days, so that when he came down his countenance was so radiant with a supernatural light that he had to veil his face before the people. But his was a reflected glory. Only the skin of his face shone. But in Christ, we have a glory within us. By him the law is written on the tablets of our hearts. It is with open, unveiled faces that we reflect the glory of Christ as it shines out in our lives. And as Moses bore the alloyed image of God's glory, much more can we who have Christ in our

hearts undergo a gradual but permanent transformation into the divine likeness. Such a likeness to God does not offend but delights the most timid or delicate eye of the beholder.

May the world see Christ in us, and may our lives exhibit the glory of his face.

SUNDAY, APRIL 15

Read John 15: 1-8—TRANSFORMED BY ABIDING
"He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit."

Fruitfulness in the Christian life is conditioned on abiding in Christ. By that is meant an unbroken intimacy and fellowship with him. There are many saved people who do not abide in him, whose religious life is rendered barren by worldliness. The Father is glorified when Christ's people bear much fruit. In Christ, much fruit is possible. Only a maximum production honors God. We glorify him when we do our best for him. He is not honored when we do as little for him as we can. A farmer does not boast of a yield of eight bushels of grain per acre on land that ought to produce twenty; though eight bushels would be a large yield on ground that could be reasonably expected to produce only six. Achievement is to be measured by the scale of possibility. And how vast are our possibilities and producing power if we will abide in Christ!

May we say with Paul, "For me to live is Christ."

LESSON STUDY

Sunday, April 15

Topic: Transfiguration and Service (Mark 9: 2-29)

Lesson Text

Mark 9:2-8; 17, 18; 25-29

I. WITH JESUS ON THE MOUNT

2 ¶ And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.

3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can whiten them.

4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus.

5 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let

us make three tabernacles: one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

6 For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

7 And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

8 And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

II. WHILE JESUS WAS AWAY

17 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

18 And whosoever he taketh him, he tear-eth him; and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

III. WHEN JESUS RETURNED

26 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.*

26 And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.

27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

Lesson Comment

1. *With Jesus on the Mount.* Peter, James and John were chosen by Christ to witness his glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. They alone of the Twelve were asked to attend upon him as he was transfigured before them. They needed to behold his glory in order that they might afterwards testify of what they had seen and heard. It came to them as a surprise. They doubtless had no intimation from Jesus concerning what would take place on the mountain top. When the garments and features of their Master became shining as the sun, and there appeared Moses and Elijah talking with him, they were bewildered and amazed. Peter ventured to suggest making three

booths, or temporary shelters, one each for Jesus and Moses and Elijah. He wanted to entertain such distinguished company, and to prolong the scene as far as possible. He wanted to say something but did not know what to say. Swiftly the cloud descended, as the shechinah hovered the Ark of the Covenant; and the voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son; hear him."

But the cloud suddenly lifted and Moses and Elijah vanished from sight, so that there was no one to be seen but Jesus appearing as he did before he was transfigured.

2. *While Jesus was away.* While Jesus was on the mountain, the nine disciples in the valley below were asked to heal a demoniac boy but found themselves unable to do so. But with faithful purpose, the lad's father remained in the company until Christ came down from the Mountain. He then presented the case to him direct and in person. He believed that Jesus could heal his son. The fact that his disciples could not do so did not deter him from laying the case before the Master himself. But it was embarrassing to the helpless disciples, facing their record of failure.

3. *When Jesus Returned.* As the father was leading his afflicted son to Christ, a multitude of people began running toward them, evidently expecting to witness a miracle. Immediately he commanded the deaf and dumb spirit to come out of the lad. The physical reaction that followed indicated to the spectators that the evil spirit had done as Jesus commanded. The boy lay as if he were dead. But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him up. The disciples, as soon as they had gone into the house, privately asked the Master why they could not cast him out. He told them that their failure had been due to a lack of prayer and fasting. In order to overcome such an evil case, the miracle worker had to be qualified to transmit the power of God in extraordinary measure.

Jesus and the Home

GOLDEN TEXT—*Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise).* (Ephesians 6; 2.)

DAILY READINGS

April 16 to April 22

Preparing for Lesson Study, April 23

MONDAY, APRIL 16

Read Mark 10: 1-6—JESUS AND THE HOME
"They twain shall be one flesh."

Easy divorce has ever been a great evil. Among Christian peoples it has been practiced quite as much as among nations less enlightened. Moses permitted a man to put away his wife at will, but, as Jesus said, he did so because of the "hardness of heart" on the part of the people. It was not a privilege granted them by divine sanction. It was the sort of permission which God gave to Israel to have a king, and the kind of privilege which was allowed Balaam to answer the call of Balak to curse the Israelites. There is often a vast difference between what God lets a man do and what he wills for him to do. The law of monogamy is that of one wife and one husband. As the husband can not rightfully put away his wife except for fornication, neither can the wife put away the husband except for the same cause. Polygamy is not only having more than one living wife or husband at the same time, but having them at different times. Therefore a causeless breach of the marriage tie is sin against one party or the other, and against God who has joined them together. Let marriage be considered a divine ordinance rather than a civil contract only.

May God bless our homes and may he be recognized as their founder and preserver.

TUESDAY, APRIL 17

Read Genesis 2: 18-25—THE FIRST MARRIAGE
"Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh."

In the very beginning of human history, God recognized the social needs of men. It is not good for man to be alone. As great as are the evils of divorce, the evils of non-wedlock are quite as seri-

ous. Celibacy is contrary to the divine law which provides for the innate desire and need of both men and women for companionship. The unmarried state is normally an unsocial one. The woman whom God gave to Adam was a "help meet for him," having a unity of nature with him, and capable of entering into life as his partner. She was of his sort and kind, though she was his supplement. The mixing of the races is therefore in violation of the divine order. For man a companion was created, "bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh." She was not an inferior order transmuted to a higher degree of creation. There was no transmutation of the species, but the creation of one out of another individual of the same species. A plurality of wives was not the original plan. God never instituted it, although among the patriarchs and kings it was extensively practiced. The marriage tie should take precedence over all other natural relationships. Both husband and wife should forsake father and mother and cleave to each other as one flesh, one in heart and in life,—a unit of the social order.

May the marriage altar become the sacred place where God unites two lives in sacred and holy union.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18

Read Genesis 24:61-67—ISAAC AND REBEKAH
"Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her."

Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, his first cousin. After the death of Sarah, Abraham was anxious that his son and heir should marry, and that he should get a wife from among his own kinsfolk. He was deeply concerned that in Isaac the family heritage should be preserved and that there would be no mixing with pagan peoples. In other words, he desired that Isaac should marry within his faith. It was necessary that he should do so in order to perpetuate the covenant bless-

ing begun in his father. Isaac was peculiarly and fondly attached to his mother, and therefore made a good, and perhaps an indulgent, husband. In the selection of a wife for him, divine guidance was sought and the divine choice determined. That should be the custom everywhere. The nuptials were a voluntary matter with Rebekah. She was not sold to Isaac, nor to Abraham as a wife for his son, but she was given to him upon her own consent. With becoming modesty, she met Isaac for the first time in the field as he went out to meet the returning caravan. She alighted from her camel and veiled her face. Isaac loved her as his companion and consort, in whom he could take pleasure as God's own choice of a wife for him.

"Let husbands love their wives and let wives reverence their husbands."

THURSDAY, APRIL 19

Read Proverbs 31: 10-20—THE EXCELLENT WOMAN
"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies."

Mother and home are sacred words. About them cluster the tenderest sentiments of the human heart. But both are combined in the excellent woman here described. She is trustworthy. Her husband can trust her, knowing she is true to him in every relationship of life. She is provident; and her husband has no need to hunt for spoils in order to provide for an extravagant household and "to bring in at the door as much as a wasteful wife can throw out the window." She is gentle and considerate toward her husband, not imperious nor self-willed, co-operant and sympathetic, recognizing his authority and position in the home. She is industrious, working willingly with her hands "in wool and flax" providing for the necessities of her household. She is home-loving, and "riseth while it is still night," giving food to her children and maidens. She is not a stranger to the needs of her own home, however much she may be concerned for the welfare of others. She is a producer and a factor in the means for the support of the family. By her thrift, economy and industry, day in and day out, she makes

garments and plants vineyards for the maintenance of her home. She is charitable, giving to the poor, and with her own hands she helps the mendicant that stands begging at her door.

God be praised for all true women and may he bless the world by greatly increasing their number.

FRIDAY, APRIL 20

Read Deuteronomy 6: 4-9—RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION
"Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children."

The law of the Lord should be the rule of the home. His Word should be taught by the parents to the children. It is the utmost wisdom to inculcate the principles of righteousness in the minds and hearts of children while they are young and before their familiarity with the world acquaints them with wrong ideals of life. They can be forewarned and fortified against temptation and sin only by being carefully trained in the Word of God. Besides the power of a godly example set before their children, parents should give them positive instruction in the ways of the Lord. Let precept be enforced by example. A knowledge of the Bible is more important than literature or science. It is more fundamental to the welfare of children than the highest mental culture that is godless. Educators today acknowledge that no man is educated who is ignorant of the Bible. But its cultural values are not to be compared with its influence upon character and its importance as the "power of God unto the salvation of all who will believe." People better not know the Bible than to know it and not be governed by it.

May we study and teach the Word of God that we may know and do his will.

SATURDAY, APRIL 21

Read Psalm 128: 1-6—THE PSALM OF THE HOME
"Thy children, like olive plants around thy table."

To the members of a God-fearing home, the promise of a livelihood is given. They are assured of a maintenance. The wife and mother, as a fruitful vine, contributes the wealth of her love and wisdom to its support. Though it may not be luxurious, she makes her home the garden spot of earth for her husband and children. Her

children are like olive plants around the table,—growing, vigorous youths, full of promise; and plenty of them. The atmosphere of race suicide is not there. She does not believe that "when poverty comes in at the door, love flies out through the window." God's blessings abide upon such a home,—the blessings out of Zion where the Ark of the covenant was and where special, close-up privileges of fellowship with God are to be had. Children are the greatest blessing and output of home life. Even economically considered, how much better is it to produce producers than to produce products?

May there be such home life as will insure both the economic and religious welfare of society.

SUNDAY, APRIL 22

Read Ephesians 6: 1-9—DUTIES IN THE HOME
"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

Respect for parents, even though they may be unworthy, is a virtue which undergirds an honorable career and a long life. But it is especially virtuous when parents are "in the Lord," and are therefore qualified to lead their children aright. Parental authority and discipline should be exercised in love and tenderness, and should be recognized and respected by the children. Fathers ought not to "provoke their children to wrath" by angry treatment or harsh discipline, and so neutralize the benefits of corrections or counsel. Both by precept and example, parents should bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

May all Christian parents be faithful and kind, and their children dutiful and obedient.

LESSON STUDY

Sunday, April 22

Topic: Duties in the Home (Mark 10: 1-16).

Lesson Text

Mark 10: 2-9; 13-16

I. THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE

2 ¶ And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.

3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

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4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorce, and to put her away.

5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.

7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife:

8 And they twain, shall be one flesh: so that they are no more twain, but one flesh.

9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

II. THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

13 ¶ And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.

14 But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.

15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

16 And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Lesson Comment

1. *The Sanctity of Marriage.* It was a captious inquiry which the Pharisees laid before Jesus when they asked him if it was lawful for a man to put away his wife. But since they had stated the proposition as a point of law, he answered them by asking, "What did Moses command you?" that is, what does the law say on the subject? They replied that Moses permitted it. They were not brazen enough to affirm that Moses authorized it; as they knew he had not done. Then Jesus stated what Moses did, and why. It was because of the "hardness of their hearts" that he permitted the putting away of a wife at the husband's own will or caprice. Such a thing was not according to the law of God, but according to the wish of people whom God had abandoned to their own ways. Jesus then told the Pharisees what God's order is, both in the creation of the male and the female; and his appointment that, in mating, they should consider themselves one flesh. Those whom God had joined together should not be put asunder by a mere whim of the man who may be disposed to turn out of doors one wife that he may take in another. Wives are not merchandise, to be bought or

sold, loved or beaten according to the imperious will of their husbands. That is the teaching of Jesus.

2. *The Rights of Children.* It is often true that "the child is father to the man." Childlikeness is becoming in grown-ups; while childishness is unbecoming in anybody. Children have rights which are often overlooked or neglected. They are to be regarded as gifts from God to parents and nurtured as such. Jesus was displeased with his disciples for having rebuked those who were bringing their little ones to him. The disciples thought the Master should not be bothered with a crowd of babies: he was too busy attending upon the

older folk! But the children had a large place in his heart, and he turned aside from the throng to take the precious little ones up in his arms and to bless them. However, his instructions to the people continued. He told them that they could enter into the kingdom of God only by such simple faith and trustful spirit as the children had, "for of such is the kingdom of God." It is the duty of parents to bring their children early to Christ. As soon as the little ones become accountable, they should be led to him in childlike confidence and trust. That they are capable of believing in him is as true as is their ability to trust a parent.

The Cost of Discipleship

GOLDEN TEXT—*Where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.* (Matt. 6: 21.)

DAILY READINGS

April 23 to April 29

Preparing for Lesson Study, April 29

MONDAY, APRIL 23

Read Mark 10: 17-27—THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP
"Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me."

What was the condition of the young man who came to Jesus asking what he must do to be saved? He was devout, for he came kneeling before Christ. He was sincere in his inquiry. He was upright and blameless on every point of the law. Does it seem that Jesus was hard on him in requiring him to give up all he had in order to be saved? But Christ merely stated the barrier which stood between the young man and the kingdom of God. That would, of course, have to be removed before he could enter it. Jesus required of him only that which he had asked his other followers to do,—simply leave all and follow him. But in giving up all, the young man was required merely to stop acquiring wealth. Christ did not demand that he give everything to the poor, but that he should sell all his property, and thus cut loose from acquiring further riches and abandon the business of money getting. The love for acquisition is the great point of difficulty

with rich men. They are often liberal and will give freely, but when they are called upon to give up money making,—there's the rub.

May we cheerfully surrender in Christ's favor our claim upon all we have and are.

TUESDAY, APRIL 24

Read Matthew 16: 21-25—SELF-DENIAL
"Whoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it."

No one has ever yet lost anything which was given to Christ. Yet one's individual claim upon the gift is completely severed when it is made to Jesus, else he does not accept it. All that he receives he keeps for the giver. Self-denial is self-preservation when it is done for Christ's sake. People often practice it in their own interests or for the sake of their loved ones, and are frequently rewarded only with bitter disappointment and failure. Though we may have but little to give up for him, it may become much when placed in his hands. Even though we may be altogether lacking, we can sacrifice our insufficiency as truly as we can deny ourselves an abundance. Self-denial is in the heart, and is an experience of love and trust in Jesus. Its outward forms are the varying shapes in which the inward motive may have opportu-

nity to express itself. Self-preservation is said to be the first law of nature, but self-denial is the fundamental principle of grace. Jesus taught it and practiced it, and they only can live in close fellowship with him who give their lives day by day to him.

May we esteem all values in life according to the standard of self-denial for Christ.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25

Read Luke 9: 39-45—TRUE OBEDIENCE
"The disciple is not above his master."

In discoursing to his disciples, Jesus had several things to say regarding their duties. Do not presume to lead when you should be led, else you will be a blind leader of the blind. Do not be dictatorial, assuming the place of teacher when you are merely a learner. Do not be inconsistent in perceiving faults in others when the same imperfections in a larger measure exist unobserved in yourselves. Do not be presumptuous and try to remove the minor faults of others while you leave untouched the bigger sins in yourselves. The only possible purpose of such an effort could be to try to make a show of your own assumed goodness. Spontaneity in doing God's will is the spirit of true obedience to him. It is not a sham of good behavior nor a show of righteousness while the heart is evil and corrupt. The inner life, whether good or bad, will soon or late bring forth its fruits and will be known by them. Character will come out. A false covering is very thin.

May we obey Christ from the heart, with all the spontaneity of a sincere and supreme affection.

THURSDAY, APRIL 26

Read Luke 19: 11-27—LOYAL SERVICE
"Unto every one that hath shall be given."

In the parable of the Pounds, three classes of people are described: (1) Those who deny the Lordship of Jesus over them, (2) those who acknowledge his Lordship but do not exercise themselves thereby, and (3), those who accept their responsibilities as his servants and perform their duties toward him to the best of their ability. The conse-

quences of their conduct are set forth: (1) those who rebelled were slain as rebels. Their Lord had a claim upon them. They owed him their service, and their insubordination was treason. (2) He who kept but did not use his lord's money was deprived of his trusteeship and responsibilities. (3) Those who used their pound were rewarded according to the degrees of their success. The principle of service is that of loyalty to Jesus Christ. He leaves to us certain tasks and positions, saying, "Occupy till I come." There is no promotion in his service except through his service. All executive offices are filled by the promotion of workers from the ranks. He that hath can have. He who has been proved faithful and efficient is qualified to take over those functions and duties which others threw away or neglected. This is so everywhere else, as in the kingdom of God.

May we be loyal and faithful in every charge which Christ may impose upon us.

FRIDAY, APRIL 27

Read 1 Corinthians 16: 1-8—FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP

"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him."

Concerning the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, Paul gave the same instructions to the church at Corinth that he had previously given the churches in Galatia. What did he suggest? (1) Regularity,—*"upon the first day of the week."* That meant, of course, every first day, as often as the Sundays came around during the time designated for the offerings for that cause. (2) Worship in Giving. On the first day of the week, Christians assembled for worship. They were to bring their gifts at that time and offer them as a feature of worship. (3) Giving should be proportionate, as *"the Lord has prospered"* each man. There was to be a voluntary accounting on the part of donors as to the amount which they would thus lay aside each week. Then two things would result: (1) there would be a liberal offering made by the church as a whole, and (2) his own coming to them would not have to be the occasion of a plea for money; but he could re-

joice with them in the liberality of their giving and give himself entirely to preaching the Word to them. He enjoined upon them the stewardship of distribution as well as that of giving. He directed that the church designate certain ones to carry their contributions to Jerusalem, and he himself would give them letters of introduction to brethren there, and, if necessary, he would go along with them.

May we be faithful stewards of Christ in the use of whatever means, great or small, he has placed in our hands.

SATURDAY, APRIL 28

Read Ecclesiastes 5: 10-17—FALSE AND TRUE USES OF RICHES

"He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver."

The love for money is not gratified with money, nor is the love of much satisfied with more. With increased possessions come increased demands, so that the owners merely glimpse their wealth as it passes through their hands. The wage-earner, though he has but little to eat, sleeps the better for a light supper, free from the worries of huge accumulations and heavy responsibilities. But the rich man is often sleepless, either from the rich viands which give him dyspepsia or from anxious thought concerning his investments and securities. The hoarding of money makes for the owner's own hurt. It is detrimental every way, physically, socially and spiritually. Wealth is often the curse of heirs who, because of vast inheritances, become spendthrifts. Just as we came into the world, we shall go away from it. We had none of the world's accumulations when we came, and we shall carry none of them with us when we pass away.

May we, therefore, be prudent both in the getting and in the use of money.

SUNDAY, APRIL 29

Read Isaiah 55: 1-5—ALL ARE INVITED

"Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness."

God's invitations are extended to every man, regardless of his record for good or evil, or for social eminence or lowliness. He alone can supply the universal needs of the human heart, and furnish that which can satisfy the hun-

ger of the soul. He only desires that men shall accept what he has to give them. He asks no remuneration except a grateful heart. Money cannot purchase his mercies. The wealthy and the poor alike receive his grace by coming to him with a thirst for the waters of life. Why should we seek satisfaction from sources which can never satisfy? Why spend our time and money for that which is not bread and of which we partake only with disastrous results? Those who drink of the water which Christ gives shall never thirst. They who eat the Bread of Life will never hunger.

May we both accept and proclaim abroad the gracious invitations of Christ to all mankind.

LESSON STUDY

Sunday, April 29

Topic: The Cost of Discipleship. (Mark 10: 17-27; 12: 41-44).

Lesson Text

Mark 10:17-22; 23-27; 41-44

I. WHERE GIVING ALL IS REQUIRED

17 ¶ And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.

19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross and follow me.

22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

II. WHERE GIVING ALL IS IMPROBABLE

23 ¶ And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26 And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?

27 And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

III. WHERE GIVING ALL IS COMMENDABLE

41 ¶ And Jesus sa, over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

44 For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all she had, even all her living.

Lesson Comment

1. *Where Giving All is Required.* In laying down the conditions of discipleship to the young man who came to him enquiring what he should do that he might inherit eternal life, Jesus merely stated the difficulty which was in his way. It simply had to be removed. That was all. But to the inquirer, that meant everything he had, because his entire possessions stood between him and the kingdom of God. His conduct was circumspect. But people do not go to heaven on their conduct. In order to accept what Jesus gives, we must lay

down what we have. It is a question of surrender to him unconditionally and with a whole heart.

2. *Where Giving All is Improbable.* Why is it so difficult for rich men to be saved? It is certainly not impossible, but, after they shall have accumulated great wealth, it is highly improbable. There are several reasons for it. The tendency of wealth is to monopolize one's affections and interests. It commercializes life, and brings everything to an exchange valuation. It develops a materialistic mind and thus renders faith more improbable. It fosters moral conduct on which one is tempted to rely for admittance into the kingdom of God. It trains the will to assert itself instead of surrender itself, as it must do before one can be saved.

3. *Where Giving all is Commendable.* The poor widow gave all her money in one gift to the Lord, as an act of worship. She did not do so under any requirements whatever. She did it because she wanted to do it. It was her love for God that made her gift great. Otherwise, it would have been small indeed. And love gives its best and its most, its everything. In comparison with its gifts, all others are insignificant and meager. Offerings are not to be measured in terms of coins, but in terms of the giver's spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion to God.

Greatness Through Service

GOLDEN TEXT—*The Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.* (Mark 10: 45.)

DAILY READINGS

April 30 to May 6

Preparing for Lesson Study, May 6

MONDAY, APRIL 30

Read Mark 10: 35-45—GREATNESS THROUGH SERVICE

"Whoever will be great among you, shall be your minister."

There is a vast difference between position and greatness. A king, occupying the highest official position in his kingdom, may be, as he often is, a very weak man. One may have a "big name" without having "a good name." One

may acquire fame who is at the same time infamous in character. Prominence may be achieved through the exercise of one outstanding quality for leadership or labor. It does not always imply greatness. It goes without saying that there are varying stations or positions in the kingdom of God. But the higher places are not won by ambitious efforts to get them. They are reached by those "for whom they are prepared." They are the incidents rather than the objects of service. Leaders in the king-

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dom are chosen of God. They are not self-constituted potentates. Among God's people, he is greatest who is servant of all. The topmost man is the chief among the underlings. He carries the biggest burdens and does the most for others. He does not think about being prominent, but about how he may help somebody. On this basis everyone can become greatest. For every man can serve every other. According to the worldly standard of greatness, only one person can be greatest in any group of people,—there is room for only one man at the top. But in the service of Christ there is space for everybody at the bottom, and each is both served and a servant.

May all our greatness be that of service rendered to our fellowmen in Christ's name.

TUESDAY, MAY 1

Read John 13: 12-20—HUMBLE SERVICE
"The servant is no greater than his lord."

Jesus washed the disciples' feet as an example of humility in service; not in order to perpetuate a custom, because the Passover supper was ending when he washed them. The fact that their feet needed washing was not his chief motive. According to custom, they should have washed his feet, at least their own, before they ate. Yet its lesson is that of doing needful things for others, however menial such a service may be considered. It is perverted by the pope of Rome who, once a year, makes an ostentatious ceremony of washing the feet of his cardinals after they had already scrubbed them clean! It is paralleled by all forms of service which we may render to one another when the needs of others and the sacrifice of our own pride are involved. Service is democratic. Pride is autocratic. There are servants who think they are greater than their superiors, but their self-esteem is proof of their littleness and disqualifies them as servants.

May we never be so haughty that we will not serve our fellowmen in any needful, helpful way.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 2

Read Acts 26: 12-20—THE CALL TO SERVICE
"I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and witness."

Saul's conversion included his call to the ministry. Before King Agrippa, he made his defense as a minister of Jesus Christ by relating his Christian experience. To a definite service for Christ, there must be a definite call by Christ. They only who are commissioned by a king to carry a message are given a message to carry. The call to any sort of Christian service comes directly from Christ. It does not grow out of one's personal choice or predisposition. Often men who prepared themselves for professional or commercial careers have been switched into the ministry of the gospel. It is a personal call. It is a matter entirely between Christ and the servant. With the call, there is always some instruction given as to what the commissioner is to do or say. He becomes a witness for Christ, with definite testimony and commission. The Gadarene demoniac, after he had been healed, was denied the privilege of going with Jesus, but was authorized to tell among his own people what the Lord had done for him.

May God call the brightest and best of our young people into definite Christian service.

THURSDAY, MAY 3

Read Matthew 8: 8-13—OBEDIENT SERVICE
"Speak the word only and my servant shall be healed."

It was in the early part of our Lord's ministry and soon after he had taken up his abode in Capernaum, that a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man, although a Roman soldier, appealed to him in behalf of his palsied servant. That he had such interest in one of his servants indicated goodness of heart, and that he should lay the case before Jesus showed a righteousness which is by faith in the Son of God. Jesus offered to go with him. But the centurion said that was not necessary, because he believed that Jesus could speak the word and heal him. Distance from the patient was not a barrier to his healing power. His faith comprehended the sovereignty of Jesus in the

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world of nature, and his absolute authority to command and to make his commands respected. The soldier illustrated his faith by reference to his own authority as a captain in the Roman army. Through the agencies under his command, he could transact business without being personally present at its execution. He believed Christ could do the same thing in healing his servant. The Centurion's request was granted, and in addition, he was commended for having had greater faith than any that had been found even among the privileged people of Israel.

May we strive to honor Christ by faithful obedience to his sovereign will.

FRIDAY, MAY 4

Read Hebrews 2: 1-10—THE SERVICE OF SUFFERING

"It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons into glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering."

If the Word of God as spoken by angels who were not given the authority to proclaim the gospel and who were but little above mankind in the scale of creation, had such power, how shall they escape who spurn the word spoken by Jesus and witnessed by the apostles whose testimony was confirmed by signs and miracles of the Lord? Hence the perfect word of God was given in Jesus Christ. He is God's last word to the world,—supreme and final, complete and perfect. By what means was he made perfect, or revealed as perfect, because he was perfect all the while? It was his incarnation, his becoming man, "made a little lower than the angels," in the area and experience of humiliation and suffering. Thus he entered into our life, and was positioned for service to us. Although he was above the angels, he took a place below them. They ministered to him on at least two occasions,—after his temptation and while in the Garden of Gethsemane. Besides the element of atonement in his mission, he was made perfect as a servant through suffering which enkindled his sympathy for sorrowing mankind and insured his own strength for his terrible trials.

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May all our afflictions work out for us a far more, exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

SATURDAY, MAY 5

Read Philippians 2: 1-11—HUMILED AND EXALTED
"Became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him."

Paul appealed to the Philippians to be humble in imitation of Jesus Christ, the great example of humanity. Wherein was he humble? In quitting his position of equality with God and in becoming a lowly citizen of the world. In taking up the place of a menial, servant and minister to others. In allowing himself to suffer unjustly and to die a criminal's death on the cross. His honor was in consequence of his humility, and in proportion to it. In both the extent and the nature of the service which he rendered, his glory consists. He was not humiliated, though his enemies meant to put him to an open shame, because he humbled himself, by yielding to indignity when he could have successfully resisted his accusers and defended himself against their false attacks. The greater his voluntary humiliation was, the greater is his exaltation at the hands of God the Father.

May we follow the example of Christ in humble and unselfish service to our fellowmen.

SUNDAY, MAY 6

Read Isaiah 42: 1-9—JEHOVAH'S PROMISE TO HIS SERVANT

"I give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light unto the Gentiles."

This prophecy concerning Jehovah's servant was fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. His character and life measured up to the description given of God's elect and anointed. He was not ostentatious, having low ways and manners to attract the attention or admiration of people. He was quiet, tender and merciful. "The bruised reed would he not break, and the smoking flax he would not quench." His mission was to announce and establish justice, judgment and truth throughout the world, even to the remote islands of the sea. He championed the cause of the oppressed and the unenlightened. His coming marked a new dispensation in which former things came to pass and new

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covenants were installed to take the place of the old.

May the promises of God, fulfilled in Christ, be the burden of our message to men the world around.

LESSON STUDY

Sunday, May 6

Topic: Greatness Through Service (Mark 9: 33-50; 10: 35-45)

Lesson Text

Mark 10: 35-45

I. AMBITION FOR PERSONAL PROMINENCE

35 ¶ And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we shall desire.

36 And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?

37 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

II. BLINDED BY PERSONAL AMBITIONS

38 But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

39 And they said unto him, We can, and Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:

40 But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.

41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John.

III. GREATNESS THROUGH PERSONAL SERVICE

42 But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

43 But so shall it not be among you; but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Lesson Comment

1. *Ambition for Personal Prominence.* James and John were parties to a special petition, of which their mother was doubtless the bearer, that Jesus should give them the highest positions

in his kingdom. They evidently thought that such exalted stations would be accorded a couple of the Twelve, and that they might make their application early enough to pre-empt all other petitions for them. It was a case of purely personal ambition. But they were not different in spirit from the rest of the apostles, except that they had put in their plea first! When the others found out what they had done, they became angry with them. Their displeasure with James and John indicated that they were of the same disposition with them, only the two brothers had run in ahead of them in that matter.

2. *Blinded by Personal Ambition.* Jesus told the brothers that they knew not what they asked. Their desire for prominence had blinded their minds so they really did not understand what they were talking about. He asked them if they could go with him through his baptism of suffering and bitter agony of soul, as the condition for his own exaltation. They said they could, and they thought they could, but they did not and could not do so. Still, though they could suffer with him, the highest place at his side would be given to them "for whom it is prepared." Leadership in his kingdom is entirely a matter of the grace and call of God. It is not won even through suffering with and for Christ.

3. *Greatness through Service.* But it was among themselves that the question as to which should be highest in his kingdom became acute. So Jesus told them that among them he is greatest who is their minister and servant. If one wishes to run ahead of the rest, let him excel all others in serving. Let him who aspires to leadership plunge so deeply into work for the spread of God's cause that he will lose sight of any eminence whatever and will be content to be an underling, if his inferior position may be to his advantage as a servant of others for Christ's sake. Jesus rebuked the selfish ambition of his disciples when he called their attention to the fact that he himself was a lowly minister and had to give up his life as a ransom for many.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

GOLDEN TEXT—*Behold, thy king cometh unto thee; but he is just, and having salvation.* (Zechariah 9: 9.)

DAILY READINGS

May 7 to May 13

Preparing for Lesson Study, May 18

MONDAY, MAY 7

Read Mark 11: 1-11—JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM
"They that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

The Triumphal Entry took place Sunday, March 18, 34 A.D. (Correct Chronology), which was the 10th day of the Hebrew month, Nisan, the anniversary of the choosing of the lamb for the Passover (Savage). It was a popular demonstration in favor of the Lordship of Jesus. The people almost spontaneously acknowledged him as King, and proclaimed their admiration for him and loyalty to him. For the time, the idea of a worldly kingdom to be set up by the Messiah was overwhelmed in the sudden torrent of feeling in his favor. It was precluded by the very circumstances of it. Jesus rode on a mule colt, in unpretentious carriage, emblematic of his entry into his kingdom as a Son of David and a Prince Royal in the empire of God. The acclaim of the people was that paid to a spiritual ruler,—one who was coming to them "in the name of the Lord." His destination in Jerusalem was that of a spiritual sovereign, the procession ending at the Temple, the house of the Lord.

May we cheerfully give Jesus full right of way in our lives.

TUESDAY, MAY 8

Read Mark 11: 12-26—JESUS EXERCISING KINGLY AUTHORITY

"Jesus answered and said unto it. No man can eat fruit of this fig tree hereafter forever."

It was the day after the Triumphal Entry, and hence on Monday, March 19, 34 A.D. (C. C.). By what means and for what purpose was the fig tree dried up under the maledictions of Jesus? His curse of it did not mean its continued barrenness but its immediate death. It was the work of a divine power that defines and limits probation, that controls the forces of life and death. His au-

thority in cleansing the temple (the second time) was that of the owner of the temple who has the right to drive out prostitutes and thieves. By coercion he could eject them, but could not thereby reform them nor set a precedent that would not be violated. They hated him even while they could not resist him, knowing that he was right. Faith is the lesson in the withering of the fig tree. If the curse of Jesus was so instantly deadly, his blessing must be equally as effectual in saving life. Since he had the power to do that miracle, he could grant any request made of him. In asking him by what authority he drove out the money changers from the temple, the scribes and Pharisees meant to affirm that he had no such right. Their inquiry was a challenge of his authority.

May every miracle of grace confirm our faith in Christ.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 9

Read John 2: 13-22—FIRST CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

"When he made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the oxen."

The selling of oxen, sheep and doves in the outer courts, or stalls, of the temple was a lucrative business for merchants and moneychangers. The situation was greatly advantageous. Rentals went into the temple treasury to make up what was evidently lacking in the voluntary contributions by worshipers. But Jesus condemned the sin of making merchandise of holy things, and the use of privileges, which should be devoted to public worship, for personal, private gain. The travesty was so much the worse because the temple authorities were parties to it. It was Passover that year, Wednesday, April 13, 32 A.D. (Savage), that Jesus drove out the cattle and sheep in the first cleansing of the temple. In answer to the inquiry as to his authority for doing so, he said that in three days after "this temple" was destroyed, he would raise it again, a concealed statement that his resurrection

from the dead would be the sign of his authority in all things.

May our churches be cleansed from every vestige of the commercial spirit by the presence of Christ in them.

THURSDAY, MAY 10

Read Revelation 21: 1-3—THE NEW JERUSALEM
"He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."

The righteous soul in this world is shut up by the shore lines of a mortal life. There are the handicaps of a sinful flesh, the want of capacity and the burdens of discouragement and opposition. What we can do is far less than what we would do. But the life eternal is a boundless realm. It is there that being is unlimited and free from all restraints. There is absolute well-being, and immunity against pain and sorrow, disease and death. There are perpetual youth and growth; and with each succeeding millenium, the life grows larger and better. There is endless advance in service, with no resistance whatever to be overcome. "They worship day and night." There is no night there, for what is night in other realms is day eternal in the City of God.

May the hope of the eternal home be ours through Jesus Christ our Lord.

FRIDAY, MAY 11

Read Zechariah 9: 9-17—THE COMING OF THE KING
"Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is just and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

This is a direct prophecy concerning the Triumphant Entry. What is here described took place when Jesus entered into Jerusalem riding upon the colt with the throng of admirers going before him waving palm branches and singing hosannas to the Son of David. Announcement is made of the coming of Zion's King, a Redeemer of Israel, and the Messiah of the Jews. He is to appear in lowly estate, riding a beast of burden, not a war horse caparisoned with golden pendants and purple blankets. His kingdom is not one of force, and yet his dominion shall extend from sea to sea. He is Commander, Saviour and Deliverer.

May we welcome the coming of Christ into our own hearts and hasten his coming everywhere.

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SATURDAY, MAY 12

Read 1 Corinthians 3: 16-28—GOD'S TEMPLES
"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

As a spiritual king, Jesus has no royal palace made with hands. His throne room is the heart which worships him. His capital is his temple. He reigns only where he is worshiped. Christian people who acknowledge him as their Lord are his temple. He has no other dwelling place. His government proceeds from them. Yet he can fill the temple with his glory only when it is sanctified or dedicated, definitely set apart and reserved, for his presence. So let the wise in worldly wisdom empty themselves of such a wisdom, in order that they may be wise with the wisdom of God. So let no one glory in men, however great and good they may be, for their virtues are not original with them, but are the outcroppings of the presence of Christ within them. His absolute ownership and control guarantee every blessing and privilege to them.

May we keep God's temples free from every influence or practice of which Christ does not approve.

SUNDAY, MAY 13

Read Psalm 24: 1-10—THE KING OF GLORY
"Be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in."

With inspired imagination, the psalmist contemplates the earth as the tabernacle of God which he himself established upon the seas and founded on the floods. The Lord has erected his temple in the universe, laying its foundation in nothing. The milky way is the path of the royal procession in which the King of glory enters his sanctuary. Yet his approach makes sacred every place. Worshipers with clean hands and pure hearts are open to receive his blessings and salvation. He is a mighty Saviour and King, attended by cohorts invincible and innumerable. As he sounds the alarm at the castle gates, let the palace panels swing open, and the King of glory will come in.

May Christ be glorified in the preparation we make for his dwelling in our hearts.

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LESSON STUDY

Sunday, May 13

Topic: Jesus Enters Jerusalem. (Mark 11: 1-11).

Lesson Text

Mark 11: 1-10, 15-18

I. RIDING ON A COLT

And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,

2 And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him.

3 And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.

4 And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him.

5 And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?

6 And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.

7 And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.

II. ENTERING JERUSALEM

8 And many spread their garments in the way; and others cut down branches off the trees, and strewed them in the way.

9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:

10 Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

III. CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

15 ¶ And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves;

16 And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.

17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

18 And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.

Lesson Comment

1. *Riding on a Colt.* To procure the colt on which Jesus might ride into the city of Jerusalem, the two disciples carried out the detailed instructions given them by him. It was a borrowed animal. It was duly returned to the owner. He thus selected the beast of burden as symbolic of his own character as a King, and as the Descendant of David, who caused his son Solomon to ride on his own mule when he was made king of all Israel in Jerusalem. There was a special significance attached to such a procedure on his part. Doubtless there was quite a crowd of people going with Christ and the disciples from Bethany into the city, but it was not merely in order that he might save himself the physical energy of walking the couple of miles or so that the colt was requisitioned for his mount.

2. *Entering Jerusalem.* The crowd quickly discerned the significance of Christ riding on the colt, and began to sing his praises as the Son of David and as the Messiah who had come to them in the name of the Lord. Their enthusiasm became contagious and the procession soon became a long line of singers. Many of them broke off the twigs of trees and scattered them on the road before Jesus as he rode along. It was not a disorganized, vociferous, yelling mob, but an orderly line of worshipers with songs on their lips and praises in their hearts. When they entered Jerusalem, the enemies of Jesus were alarmed at his popularity, and said that all the world had gone after him.

3. *Cleansing the Temple.* For the second time Jesus cleansed the temple. By force of his authority he had done it once before. But it did not stay clean. Force does not accomplish a permanent reform. After the hucksters have been driven out, they will come back again and will need to be driven out again and again. The scribes and chief priests feared greatly when they witnessed his authority, and sought to destroy him in order to save their own traditions.

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Jesus Teaching in the Temple

GOLDEN TEXT—*He taught them as one having authority.* (Matthew 7: 29.)

DAILY READINGS

May 14 to May 20

Preparing for Lesson Study, May 20

MONDAY, MAY 14

Read Mark 12: 13-27—JESUS TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE

"Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God?"

It was Jesus' busy Tuesday. In propounding their catch question to him in the temple, the scribes and Herodians resorted to the most palpable adulation. Flattery may be the truth falsely told. Their insincerity was revealed by their smooth, well-polished remarks which were immediately followed by a request! With such preliminaries, they launched their net to ensnare him by asking whether it was right to pay tribute to Cæsar or not. It was a shallow proposition, conceived in them by an ignorance or disregard of the simple principles of government. Jesus went to the heart of the matter, and penetrated to the depths of common law principles which supercede statutes or temporary questions of tribute. Then the Sadducees propounded the silly question as to whose wife she would be in the judgment who had been the earthly consort of seven husbands! Their inquiry was based on an ignorance of the Scriptures and the power of God. They knew nothing about a spiritual religion, else they would never have asked such a question. The resurrection was the point of difficulty with them. The matter of relationships after death was altogether incidental to the doctrine of a resurrection.

May the Holy Spirit enlighten our minds and hearts so that we may know the Scriptures and the power of God.

TUESDAY, MAY 15

Read Mark 12: 28-37—THE GREAT COMMANDMENT
"There is none other commandment greater than these."

One of the scribes who heard what Jesus said to the Sadducees concerning the resurrection was well pleased with his doctrine. He recognized the fact that Jesus was an authority in an in-

terpretation of the Scriptures who was worthy of being consulted and respected. He therefore asked him which was the greatest of the commandments. It was a mooted theological question. Jesus answered by saying that the two commandments, or tables of the law, given to Moses on Mount Sinai, the first of which (the first four commandments in the Decalogue) was summed up in the love of mankind toward God, and the second (the last six commandments), which deals with man's duties toward his fellowmen, is summarized in the love of one's neighbor as oneself. No other commandments are greater than these—neither among the traditions of the elders nor in the canon of the Scriptures. The scribe assented to what Jesus said. It was evidently what he was prepared to believe. Jesus told him he was near the kingdom. He had acknowledged the truth, but would he accept it? Mere assent is not enough, though it brings one close to the kingdom. There must be a whole-hearted acceptance of the truth as it is in Christ.

May we love God with all our hearts and our neighbors as we love ourselves.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 16

Read 1 Peter 2: 13-26—RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY
"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake."

Not merely for the sake of the state, but for the sake of Christ, Christians ought to be good citizens of their commonwealth. Civic welfare can not be promoted further than the kingdom of God is extended. As members of the body politic, we should carry into it the leaven of righteousness, and thus honor Christ in our citizenship. Let God be served and worshiped in the state, but not by the state. It is the duty of all good people to strive for the political betterment of the commonwealth, and to identify themselves with the civic body. In living up to the standards of the Christian life, people will go beyond the requirements of the laws

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of the state. He who observes the laws of his country for the Lord's sake is more than their doer and keeper as a citizen.

May the mind of Christ be our guide in all our civic duties and relations.

THURSDAY, MAY 17

Read Romans 13: 1-7—OBEDIENCE TO RULERS
"Render therefore to all their dues."

As officials of the government, rulers deserve to be respected. If they are personally unworthy of the positions which they occupy, they should be impeached. There is always a lawful and orderly way of doing that. It is not within the province of individuals to assume the right to disregard them or to make summary disposition of them, and thus to become a law unto themselves. The existence of governments is according to the order of God. To resist the powers that be, therefore, is to oppose a divine ordinance. It shows a disregard for God. Even where one must, for conscience' sake, disobey a statute of men, he should, for conscience sake, submit to the legal authorities set for its enforcement. Authorities exist for the good of the state, and not for its destruction. All good people should co-operate with them as agencies for the common welfare. Else they would be unfaithful as Christians and as citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Not only are they to observe the law but, as factors in the betterment of society, are also to strive to maintain justice against all crimes committed by others against the peace and dignity of the state.

May a correct conscience toward God be the conscience with which we regard all civil authorities.

FRIDAY, MAY 18

Read Matthew 22: 34-40—LOVE EXPRESSED IN WORSHIP
"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart."

Though this lawyer was evidently sincere in his question to Jesus, his party of Pharisee associates, who put him up to ask it, sought merely to tempt him by propounding a proposition which would probably embarrass him since the learned rabbis and scholars had not been able to settle it. But Jesus an-

swered him plainly and positively. The love of God is the sum of all laws governing the conduct of men toward God. And it is a command, and a duty. It includes all other obligations to him. The second is like it. Those who love God with all their hearts will love their neighbors as themselves. Where love is first and foremost and supreme, there is worship. They alone worship God who love him and who put the love of God before every thing else in their devotions. Love then is the foundation on which all that is enjoined in the law and the prophets rests. Out of it proceed the forms of true and acceptable worship. On it depends all conduct which complies with the requirements of God. Even if this scribe was not sincere at the outset, he became convinced that Jesus was right before the conversation ceased. Jesus answered friend and foe so convincingly that no man after that day dared to ask him any more questions.

May the love of God in our hearts set at rest all bickerings or discussions as to the ways of worshiping him.

SATURDAY, MAY 19

Read 2 Corinthians 8: 9-16—CHRISTIAN GIVING
"As there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also, out of that which ye have."

The Christians at Corinth had shown a willing mind to respond to the call for contributions for the poor saints at Jerusalem, and had perhaps pledged liberally for that cause. Paul pleaded with them to be as liberal in giving as they were in the desire to give. Do not let the impulse to give become choked by the strain of actually doing that thing! As there was a readiness to will, let there be a readiness to perform. Giving is the test of liberality. And where there is a will there is a way. But the will must be strong enough to carry on. The Corinthians were urged to share the burdens of their brethren, and out of their abundance minister to their need. Then the beneficiaries, out of the abundance of their Christian fellowship, could minister to the enrichment of their spiritual life. So what was lacking in one could be supplied by the other. Both would then be blest. Giving in the

Christian spirit blesses both the giver and the receiver.

May we have the liberal spirit and may we give to Christ's cause as each of us has resources in hand.

SUNDAY, MAY 20

Read Psalm 119: 1-8—BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE
"Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart."

The virtue of obedience to God's laws consists in the love of God as the motive of it. They only obey God who desire to do so. Conformity to requirement is not obedience, though it may evade the penalties for transgression. But with God, there is no obedience without love. Righteousness is a bending of the heart and will to the word of God. It is more than a circumspect conduct. It is more than a faultless exterior. They sin not, who sin not in their hearts. Still, our ways need to be directed by the Lord. Else we shall blunder and side-step and be put to confusion by our own faulty judgment. If we do not know what God's righteous will is, we can very easily find out by a study of his Word. Therefore we have no need to go astray through ignorance. He gives us both a knowledge of his will and the desire to do it. He who keeps the testimonies of the Lord is happy and blessed.

May our consciences be "void of offense toward God and men."

LESSON STUDY

Sunday, May 20

Topic: Jesus Teaching in the Temple (Mark 12: 13-44).

Lesson Text

Mark 12:13-17, 28-34

I. INSINCERE QUESTIONERS PERPLEXED

13 ¶ And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words.

14 And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man; for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?

15 Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it.

16 And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's.

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17 And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

II. A SINCERE INQUIRY ANSWERED

28 ¶ And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

III. AN HONEST ANSWER COMMENDED

32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

Lesson Comment

1. *Insincere Questioners Perplexed.* Even in replying to the censorious, catch questions of his critics, Jesus taught important truths. He did not descend to their level in argument. He did not "answer a fool according to his folly." Concerning the question of tribute to Caesar, he, first of all, charged his questioners with insincerity and conspiracy. They raised a question in a matter about which, had they been good citizens, there would have been no inquiry. The loyal citizen does not go about asking whether it is right to pay taxes or not. Since they had been so fulsome in their flattery of him, they showed they were hypocritical even in asking Jesus such a question. But he nevertheless, answered them in terms which define the duties of citizens to their rulers, and of God's people toward him.

2. *A Sincere Inquiry Answered.* The scribe who asked Jesus concerning the first or greatest commandment of all was also taught a great lesson in love as the fulfilment of all the law. God

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is a sovereign and is to be revered and obeyed. But the essence of obedience to him is a whole hearted love for him. Among men, there are social and civic relations which involve each in obligations to the other. But these can not be fully discharged except as every man loves his neighbor as himself. But who does this? The fact that such a virtue is so rare accounts for the social and civic disorders that exist among us.

3. *An Honest Answer Commended.* The scribe acknowledged the truth of what Jesus said, and won the commendation of the Master. He assented to

the spiritual interpretation of the law which Jesus had made, and declared that love was the greatest of sacrifices—more than whole burnt offerings, more than the most elaborate ceremonies of religion. As he thus expressed himself, he cut himself adrift from the traditionalism of his cult, and was edging the kingdom of God. But to be near it by assenting to the truth is not enough, there must be an entering in by faith in the Son of God in whom both the law and the prophets were fulfilled and in whom the love and justice of God are combined.

The Wicked Husbandmen

GOLDEN TEXT—*Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.* (Psalm 1: 6).

DAILY READINGS

May 21 to May 27

Preparing for Lesson Study, May 21.

MONDAY, MAY 21

Read Mark 12: 1-12—THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN
"These husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours."

When Christ bestows gospel privileges upon people, they are accorded the liberty of doing as they will with them. He is as though he afterwards "went into a far country." But they are responsible to him for what they do. His absence does not mean their freedom from such responsibility. Their differences in attitude of mind and heart toward him show up at the reckoning time, when they are called upon to give an account of themselves. But with the unbelieving and rebellious, he is exceedingly patient and longsuffering. He sends messengers to them again and again. Chance after chance is given them to make good their obligations to him. In a supreme and final effort to win the allegiance of the wicked husbandmen the landlord sent his only son to them as his personal representative and advocate. But him they cast out and killed, in a vain effort to do away with the heir so the vineyard might revert to the occupants. The point of the parable turned clearly toward the

enemies of Jesus who had rejected him as the Son of God. They became violently enraged and would have done him personal injury there had they not feared the people who loved him and who would have resisted any violence done to his person at that time.

May the longsuffering of God lead us to repentance, and not to presumptuous sinning.

TUESDAY, MAY 22

Read Mark 13: 28-37—SPIRITUAL VIGILANCE
"Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is."

Jesus taught his disciples the necessity of being watchful in view of his coming again. His second advent is mentioned as a definite event, or "time" in his own history. It is folly to understand the second coming of Christ to consist in important events in the world's history, or even in great upheavals or revivals among God's people. The destruction of Jerusalem was predicted to take place during the life time of people then living. And it did occur 70 A.D. (Usher) at the hands of Titus the Roman emperor. But the hour of his own coming, no one knows, neither the angels nor the Son himself, but the Father only. It is a secret with the Father about which it would be wrong for us to speculate. Vigilance is there-

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fore necessary in order that his coming may not be a disastrous surprise. To watch is to be ready. To prepare to meet him is to look for him. Those who do not look for him do not want to see him; and they who do not want to see him have been faithless to him. We do not know when Jesus is coming again. But we know he is coming.

May we therefore be diligent and vigilant to get ready and to keep ready for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 23

Read John 11: 47-57—CONSPIRING AGAINST JESUS
"They took counsel together to put him to death."

It was just before the passover in the spring of 34 A.D. (C. C.) immediately after the raising of Lazarus at Bethany and other miracles by Jesus in Jerusalem. The chief priests and Pharisees took counsel on the situation which, to them, had become acute since so great a miracle as raising a man to life who had been dead four days was known by every body to have been performed by Jesus. They declared that he had to be stopped, else every body would believe in him, and thus bring the whole country into rebellion against the Roman empire with disastrous political consequences. But their ignorance of him and of his kingdom was the occasion of their alarm. He was their only hope of any immunity against destruction by Rome, if they had only known it. He would not be the cause of such a calamity. But under ignorance and bigotry, the custodians of the public welfare strike down the best friends of the people and of the common interests. Caiaphas' idea of atonement was that Jesus should suffer death rather than that the whole nation should be involved in rebellion and have to pay the frightful toll of life which would be exacted therefor. Therefore the death of Jesus was decreed by the Jewish council, and liars in wait were appointed to look out for him when he should come into the city for the Passover.

May we take counsel to honor Jesus as our atoning and all-sufficient Saviour.

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THURSDAY, MAY 24

Read 2 Chronicles 36: 11-31

"They mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words and misused his prophets."

Zedekiah, king of Judah, was vassal to Babylon eleven years. Jeremiah continued to prophesy in Judah but Zedekiah was wicked and listened not to the words of the Lord by his prophet. His impiety led him to rebel against the king of Babylon in a vain foolish effort to gain his independence. How cancelled are they who spurn the law of the Lord! Disobedience to God brings on insubordination to the authorities to which one is a sworn subject. A man who is untrue to God will be faithless toward his fellowmen. In Judah, even the priests, as ministers of religion, debased their holy office, and polluted the sanctuary with their vice and immorality. God sent his messengers to warn them and to dissuade them from their evil ways, but they mocked and ridiculed them. Therefore God brought upon them the utter destruction of the city. The holy vessels were taken from the magnificent temple of Solomon and carried away to Babylon, and the temple and the king's palaces were burnt to the ground.

May we be attentive to the voice of God's messengers to us, lest we be found to turn a deaf ear to God.

FRIDAY, MAY 25

Read Acts 7: 51-60—THE STONING OF STEPHEN
"They stoned Stephen calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

In his defense before the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem, Stephen charged his accusers with resisting the Holy Spirit, as their fathers had done. In their opposition to him, he identified them with the wicked ancients who persecuted the prophets who told them of the coming Righteous One. They who opposed him for preaching the Christ were of the same sort as they who slew the prophets for speaking to them of him. But the prophetic conception of the Messiah as a Sufferer was never popular with the Jewish prelates. It was the signal for self-abnegation and personal righteousness, rigorous and scrupulous. It was a call to such conduct as they did not

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wish to practice. Stephen's charge was taken as the height of insult, and his accusers became very angry. But he was so filled with the Holy Spirit that he saw heaven open and beheld the glory of God and Jesus Christ sitting on the right hand of God. When he told them what he saw, they took him out of the city as a blasphemer and stoned him to death, while he prayed that they might be forgiven.

May we witness faithfully to Christ, let our testimony cost us what it may.

SATURDAY, MAY 26

Read Ezekiel 33: 1-6—WATCHMEN OF ISRAEL
"I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word from my mouth, and warn them from me."

Watchmen were stationed on the walls of ancient cities in order to give the people information as to the approach of enemy armies, and in times of peace to cry out the hours of the day or night. They did not create any danger that threatened the people, but were to call attention to it when it arose. Their voice was not always heeded. In such cases, they were not responsible for the calamities or losses that followed. But if they failed to tell the people the truth, and warned them not that they perished, their blood was required at their hands. Whatever may be the attitude of hearers toward the gospel or toward its messengers, it must be proclaimed fully and fearlessly else the watchmen must answer for their neglect and failure.

May we be faithful as Christ's messengers to all about us.

SUNDAY, MAY 27

Read Psalm 1: 1-6—THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

"The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish."

The righteous abide, while the wicked are transient. Goodness is personal with the godly man. It is not an assumed nature. His life is sustained by sources that can never be exhausted, and hence he is as a "tree planted by the rivers of water." Prosperity in life, riches of character and fruitfulness of piety are his. But with the wicked the case is entirely different. They are as unstable as the chaff which is driven

before the wind. They have no anchorage in truth, and all they do and accumulate is perishable. They can not stand the tests of judgment, and can not occupy a place alongside the righteous when the period of their probation has passed.

May we strive to follow in the way of the righteous which leads through a world of happiness into the heavenly home.

LESSON STUDY

Sunday, May 27

Topic: The Wicked Husbandmen (Mark 12: 1-12: 18: 1-27).

Lesson Text

Mark 12:1-12

I. REBELLION OF UNBELIEF

And he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

2 And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

3 And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty.

4 And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled.

5 And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.

II. MURDER OF UNBELIEF

6 Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.

7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.

8 And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.

III. CONSEQUENCES OF UNBELIEF

9 What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

10 And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:

11 This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

12 And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.

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Lesson Comment

1. *Rebellion of Unbelief.* The wicked husbandmen illustrate the rebellion of unbelief against God. In denying the landlord his right to a just rental from his vineyard, they repudiated his ownership of the premises. They desired the title thereto for themselves. And hence they were unready and unwilling to enter into any sort of negotiations with the landlord's agents for a payment of their dues to him. Every sort of mistreatment was administered to the collectors, because they hated the owner. Those who reject Jesus despise God, and in denying him his rights aver that he is unjust and a liar. God is entitled to receive the respect of every one, and a disregard for him is therefore rebellion against him. There is no neutral ground. Men are either believers or traitors. They are either subjects of Christ's kingdom or they are rebels. Unbelief is the one condemning sin.

2. *Murder of Unbelief.* When the landlord sent his only beloved son to the husbandmen to collect the rents from his vineyard, he made a supreme effort to win their loyalty. But they regarded this as their supreme opportunity to throw off all the claims which the owner

had against them and also their own obligation to pay him anything. They conspired to slay the heir, and thus to rebel successfully against their landlord and capture the property themselves. And it is so that those who willfully reject Jesus are guilty of his death. They are his murderers. They put the Son of God to an open shame. They scorn the messenger of love and seek to become the arbiter of their own fortunes.

3. *Consequences of Unbelief.* The lord of the vineyard, though he had been patient and forbearing for a long time, showed no mercy toward the husbandmen whose final act of rebellion against him was that of slaying his only son. He would come and destroy them utterly. Their rejection of him proved to be their own undoing. Despite their rebellion, he maintains his majesty and authority. So the rejection of Jesus does not abolish the claims of God upon the souls of men, but instead establishes them in the downfall of the unbelievers. If he can not be honored in their faith, he will be honored in their destruction. Those who do not meet him in the way of mercy must face him in the path of justice. How terrible are the consequences of a continued and confirmed rejection of Jesus as Saviour and Lord!

Jesus Facing Betrayal and Death

GOLDEN TEXT—*Not what I will, but what thou wilt.* (Mark 14: 36).

DAILY READINGS

May 28 to June 3
Preparing for Lesson Study, June 3

MONDAY, MAY 28

Read Mark 14:17-26—THE BETRAYAL ANNOUNCED
"Jesus said, verily I say unto you, one of you which eateth with me shall betray me."

At the Passover supper Jesus startled the disciples by telling them that one of them would betray him. This he did in order to sift out the false from the true in their relations to him, and to prepare his loyal followers for what was inevitably ahead of them. They were stunned by such information. But each was more disposed to suspect himself than his fellow, and began to enquire,

TUESDAY, MAY 29

Read Mark 14: 32-43—THE PRAYER IN THE GARDEN

"He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee: take away this cup from me; nevertheless, not what I will but what thou wilt."

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed to the Father for relief from the bitter cup; and yet only in case it was the will of the Father. It was not a matter of what the Father could do because all things were possible unto him. It was only a question of the divine will. That, Jesus prayed, might be done in him. He requested that the three chosen disciples should be near him and watch with him during his fearful trial hour. He wanted their sympathy. Alternately for three times, he went from the place of agony and prayer to the spot where his select companions lay sleeping. Finally he said, "Sleep on and take your rest." But immediately the glare of the torches in the hands of the Jewish constables led by Judas Iscariot, flashed through the boughs of the olive trees, and he said to the disciples, "Rise, let us be going; he is at hand that doth betray me." Though they had slept through one opportunity to stand with him, another was given them.

May we pray that God's will may be fully accomplished in us, and may we abide his time in working it out.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 30

Read Exodus 12: 21-26—THE PASSOVER

"It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt."

No type or symbol of the Old Testament more appropriately prefigures Christ than the Passover. It was the blood of the paschal lamb on their door posts and lintels that saved the Israelites from the death of their first born at the hands of God's destroying angel. So Jesus Christ by his death saves all who are under the redeeming power of his blood. He is our Passover. He has been sacrificed, once for all. The redemption which he wrought out does not have to be repeated. It is sufficient to save to the uttermost all who will come to God by him. It is God's way. He wrote it into the very text

of his covenant with his people that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sins."

May the blood of Jesus Christ cleanse us from all sin.

THURSDAY, MAY 31

Read Hebrews 5: 1-10—THE SUFFERING HIGH PRIEST

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."

Jesus Christ was invested with the office of high priest "by the power of an endless life." He did not inherit the position. He did not receive it under appointment by men. It came to him as an attribute of his own nature as the Son of God. He was perfected, or revealed as perfect, in his priesthood through suffering. His term of office was not terminated but accentuated in his death. He has no successor, because he is forever in the office. He is not a priest who is one among many, but he is the only one of his kind. By the sacrifice of himself he saves his people from their sins. His position, as was his commission, was that of God's Son who in the days of his flesh "offered up prayers and supplications to the Father to whom he rendered obedience by the things which he suffered."

May we come boldly to God's throne of grace through the way which has been opened by the blood of Jesus Christ.

FRIDAY, JUNE 1

Read Matthew 10: 24-35—COMFORT FOR CHRIST'S FOLLOWERS

"Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul."

Christ's promises are the ground of our comfort. Without them we would be disconsolate indeed. But he deals fairly with us. He did not conceal from his disciples the fact that they would be caused to suffer on his account. But their troubles would be more closely identify them with him. They were bidden not to be afraid of their persecutors. The secret designs of wicked men would eventually come to light and would be exposed. Their enemies could not destroy the soul even though they might kill the body. The heavenly Father, without whom not a sparrow

falls to the ground, holds them in high esteem and keeps his eye ever upon them. His care for them is ceaseless, and though they fall, they are never beyond it. Those who confess Christ before men, and seal their witness by toil and privations, will be acknowledged by him before the Father in heaven. But those who deny him before men will be denied by him before the Father.

May all our comfort and hope for reward in heaven rest upon loyalty to Christ in this world.

SATURDAY, JUNE 2

Read John 17: 1-10—CHRIST'S HIGH PRIESTLY PRAYER

"I have manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world."

Under the old dispensation, the high priest once a year with bloody sacrifice entered into the Holy of holies as an intercessor for the people. It was called the Day of Atonement. It was an annual event in the Hebrew calendar. But in Jesus Christ an atonement was made once for all. His blood was much more efficacious than was that of sheep and goats. His high priesthood was that of the Son of God whose mediation, when once made, was forever effective. By his mediatorial work he brought a knowledge of God to those men whom the Father had given him out of the world, and for whom he prayed. His sacrifice of himself is finished but his priesthood as intercessor continues, for he is now at the right hand of God making intercession for us. All believers are priests under Jesus the high priest. They are therefore directly associated with him in the exercise of his priestly functions. For them he prays in a special manner, that to them he may make known the Father.

May our faith and courage be strengthened by the fact that Christ is even now interceding for us in glory.

SUNDAY, JUNE 3

Read Psalm 22: 1-21—PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

The Messianic elements in this psalm art too plain to be misunderstood. David describes the fearful suffering of a soul in the agony of an unmerited

shame and disgrace. It is a picture of Jesus on the cross. It was there that he was given over to death by the Father. It was there that the spectators said, "Let be, let us see if Elijah will come." It was there that some said, "He saved others, himself he can not save." And it was there that the soldiers gambled for his vesture, parting his garments among them.

Praise and glory and honor be unto the Lamb forever and ever!

LESSON STUDY

Sunday, June 3

Topic: Jesus Facing Betrayal and Death (Mark 14: 1-48).

Lesson Text

Mark 14:17-25, 32-36

I. WITH THE TWELVE AT THE PASSOVER

17 And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.

18 And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me.

19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I?

20 And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dipbeth with me in the dish.

21 The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

II. WITH THE ELEVEN AT THE SUPPER

22 ¶ And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.

23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.

24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

25 Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

III. WITH THE THREE IN THE GARDEN

32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;

34 And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.

35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

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36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.

Lesson Comment

1. *With the Twelve at the Passover.* As Jesus ate the Passover with his disciples, he informed them that one of their number would betray him, or would prove traitor to him. It was a great shock to them. The eleven innocent men were so surprised that each of them would rather suspect himself than his fellow, though such a purpose had never entered their minds. They were deeply grieved to know that one of his followers would be guilty of such a thing. But one of the hands that was with his in the dish would be turned against him. One of his intimates would become the leader among his foes. It was as it had been written that it would be. Nevertheless, it were better for the betrayer that he had never been born.

2. *With the Eleven at the Supper.* After Judas had left the company, and the disciples were chilled by the disclosure of the traitor, Jesus took bread,

broke it and gave to them and said, "This is my body." And the wine also was distributed among them, of which they drank as the emblem of his blood. No longer did they observe the ceremonial commemorating the Passover in Egypt, but were ushered into the memorial of Christ's own death as the Paschal Lamb of God. It was the last time he would sit at the table with them, until that covenant had been fulfilled and he could drink anew with them in the kingdom of God.

3. *With the Three in the Garden.* After the Memorial Supper was ended and Jesus had spoken his last words to his disciples as a group, he went out into the Garden of Gethsemane. Leaving the eight inside the Garden enclosure, he took Peter, James and John and went further on in the Garden to pray. He begged them to watch with him while he prayed. But their eyes were heavy, and they fell asleep even in their sorrow. Jesus prayed for himself there. Hitherto he had prayed for others. But his own hour had come. He besought the Father's will in his bitterest agony of soul.

The Arrest and Trial

GOLDEN TEXT—He was despised and rejected of men. (Isaiah 53: 3.)

DAILY READINGS

June 4 to June 10

Preparing for Lesson Study, June 10

MONDAY, JUNE 4

Read Mark 14: 42-52—THE ARREST
"They laid their hands on him and took him."

Judas Iscariot led the procession of soldiers and officers from the chief priests and elders and scribes that went in search of Jesus to arrest him. He betrayed him with a kiss, a token of affection. It was the act by which Judas identified Jesus as the man they sought. It was in striking contrast with Peter's denial a little later in which he said he did not know the man. Judas claimed to know him, but was willing to sell that knowledge. What could have been Judas' purpose? Did he want to force Jesus to assert his power over

his enemies and to establish himself as a world ruler, as some have thought? But in the most favorable light at all, his act was one of treachery and treason in attempting to coerce the authority and power of Christ, or to make himself arbiter in matters pertaining to Christ's kingdom. Peter made a bold, brave dash at defending Jesus, as he drew his sword and began slashing right and left. Jesus rebuked the crowd for coming armed to take him, since he had never anywhere shown himself to be a formidable leader of a rebellion or a bandit chieftain. The disciples fled in terror from the scene. The uproar of the crowd awakened people in the immediate neighborhood, and a young man with a sheet around him curiously followed; but when they seized his

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clothes to take him, he slipped his covering and fled.

May we go with Jesus through the garden and through the judgment hall.

TUESDAY, JUNE 5

Read Luke 22: 54-62—JESUS AND PETER
"And Peter went out and wept bitterly."

Evidently smarting under the rebuke which Jesus had given him for the rash act of drawing his sword in the Garden to defend his Master, Peter followed the procession afar off. He wanted to keep close enough to see what would take place but not close enough to be identified with the party. Naturally he felt somewhat detached. The maid's inquiry of him as he sat by the fire in the outer court of the high priest's house was considered a bit of impudent curiosity which Peter thought might as well be answered falsely as truthfully. But again and again, he was quizzed about his relations to Jesus, but since he had denied once he felt he had to stick to what he had said; and to prop up his statements with profuse profanity! But as Jesus turned about and looked on him, he remembered that he had told him he would deny him thrice before cock crowing. And when Peter discovered that in his effort to conceal himself in relation to Jesus, he had actually denied Jesus, he hastily left the group about the fire and went out into the darkness of the early morning and wept bitter tears of penitence.

For all our sins both of nature and of conduct, may we always experience a genuine, godly sorrow.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6

Read Mark 15: 1-15—JESUS BEFORE PILATE
"So Pilate willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified."

It was the second appearance of Jesus before Pilate. Jesus answered his questions, but gave no reply to the charges made before Pilate by the elders and scribes. The Roman governor wondered at his conduct in this respect. The accused had been in the habit of answering the accusers. Pilate was greatly perplexed. He perceived that it

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was for envy that the chief priests had delivered Jesus up to him, and that he was innocent of any charge of sedition against the Roman government. But he was a politician. He played for power and catered to the whims of the Jewish leaders in order to win their favor. However, such popularity is short lived. The chief priests did not think any more of Pilate because he released Barabbas unto them and condemned Jesus to death. They wanted to use him, that was all. Arbitrary and violent misrule will come to its day of reckoning. Within two years after the death of Jesus, Vitellius, governor of Syria, had Pilate sent to Rome to account for his actions to emperor Tiberius. Eusebius, the historian, says that Pilate while there took his own life.

May we always remember that wherever Jesus is rejected and condemned, vice and theft and murder are turned loose.

THURSDAY, JUNE 7

Read Luke 23: 8-12—JESUS BEFORE HEROD
"Then he questioned with him in many words: but he answered him nothing."

Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee, was in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus' trial. So when Pilate heard that the accused was a Galilean, he sent him to Herod, diplomatically deferring to Herod's jurisdiction in the case, but actually and secretly trying to rid himself of an embarrassing matter. Herod had heard of Jesus in Galilee, and was greatly pleased to have an interview with him, especially as a prisoner, thinking Jesus would do some wonderful thing to extricate himself. But Jesus was silent. He replied neither to the expectation for a miracle nor to the charges made against him. Foiled in his hope of making Jesus his marionette, Herod heaped indignity upon him, putting a gawdy colored robe on him, as a mocking and sent him back to Pilate. Perhaps Pilate had previously given Herod offense in having put to death certain Galileans (Luke 13:1), and had thus trespassed upon his jurisdiction. But after Pilate had referred the case of Jesus to him, he ac-

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knowledgeed the courtesy by sending him back to Pilate. So the diplomatic "each was healed."

How marvelous was the silence of Christ when one word from his lips could have shook the world!

FRIDAY, JUNE 8

Read Matthew 27: 17-26—BARABBAS OR JESUS
"Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?"

In order to get a chance to liberate Jesus, Pilate sought to employ a custom of releasing some one of the prisoners on the occasion of the Passover feast. His suggestion was made to the people, not to the elders or rulers of the Jews. The people, for the most part, were friendly toward Jesus. But here was a crowd, not of his friends but of a curious indifferent sort of folk. In the meantime, Pilate's wife sent a special message to him urging him to have nothing to do with that righteous man because she had suffered many things in a dream because of him. That was about 8 o'clock in the morning. The chief priests and elders persuaded the crowd to ask Pilate for the release of Barabbas, a notorious outlaw, instead of Jesus. Then Pilate pleaded piteously to know what he would do with Jesus. They said, Let him be crucified. When he braved their rage enough to ask what evil he had done, they raised a tumult. The magistrate then yielded his prisoner to the mob. He took water and washed his hands in their presence as a token that he absolved himself from all responsibility in the matter. They said, "His blood be on us and on our children!" Fearful imprecation! In that was sealed the doom of Jerusalem, and also the sentence of persecution which has followed the Jews until this present day.

May the release of Jesus in our hearts be our own release from our greatest foes and perils.

SATURDAY, JUNE 9

Read Acts 3: 11-21—UNJUST CONDEMNATION
"Ye denied the Holy one and just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you."

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A crowd ran to see what had happened when Peter and John healed the lame man at the temple gate. Peter said it was not a marvelous thing at all. There was no occasion that people should gaze at them as though they were some wonderful beings. The miracle had been done in the name of Jesus Christ whom they had slain, but whom God had raised up and glorified. Peter assured them that there were extenuating circumstances surrounding their rejection of Jesus, since the prophecies concerning the Messiah as a sufferer were hard to understand until they had been fulfilled. But now they could acknowledge that they had unjustly condemned Jesus, and by repentance have their sins blotted out. Though they had spared a murderer and condemned Jesus without cause, God would forgive them if they would repent. The heavens had received Jesus until the time of the restitution of all things; for at his second coming in glory, those who crucified him must look on him.

However long and persistent unbelief has been, may we preach a Christ who will forgive if sinners will repent.

SUNDAY, JUNE 10

Read Isaiah 53: 1-6—THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR
"A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

Everywhere in prophecy, the Messiah is depicted as a Sufferer. When Jesus came, he touched the universal human level. The plane of pain is the status of every life. And through his victorious sufferings, Jesus brought hope to all mankind. He was not overcome by them but overcome them and went through them, reaching the goal of glorious conquest on the other side. His sorrows were for others. His grief was for the grieved. His soul was made an offering for sin. In his innocence, he was dumb. In his generation he was a prisoner. In his death, he was as a criminal. In him the ministry of pain reached its highest point and its sublimest expression.

May we follow Christ in suffering for others.

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LESSON STUDY

Sunday, June 10

Topic: *The Arrest and Trial* (Mark 14: 48 to 16: 16).

Lesson Text

Mark 15:1-15

I. JESUS QUESTIONED

And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.

2 And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest it.

3 And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing.

4 And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee.

5 But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.

II. BARABBAS RELEASED

6 Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.

7 And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.

8 And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them.

9 But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

10 For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.

11 But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

III. JESUS CONDEMNED

12 And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?

13 And they cried out again, Crucify him.

14 Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

15 And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

Lesson Comment

1. *Jesus Questioned.* After the trial before the Jewish court, Jesus was carried before Pilate, the Roman governor in Judea, who alone had the power to impose the sentence of capital punishment on any of the citizens. Pilate

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received the party and the embassy from the Sanhedrin, but of course, he conducted the examination of the accused Christ himself. He listened while the charges of insubordination to the established authorities were being made against Jesus by his accusers. But Jesus did not make any reply to their accusations whatever. He admitted nothing. He denied nothing. Pilate wondered why Jesus did not do as defendants usually did and loudly make denial and protest his innocence. But what answer could he have made? Any reply would simply have furnished new fuel for their fires of hate.

2. *Barabbas Released.* Pilate consulted the people in an effort to secure some means of exercising leniency toward Jesus, for he saw that it was for jealousy the chief priests had delivered him up for trial, and that Jesus therefore could certainly not get a fair trial at the hands of jealous rivals. He ventured to suggest that, as his custom was on the occasion of their Passover celebrations, he should release Jesus unto the people. But the rulers urged the rabble to call for the release of Barabbas, an insurrectionist and murderer, instead. This they did, and so Pilate, bound by his own proffer of courtesy, was compelled to comply. This Barabbas was doubtless a ringleader in the gang of robbers of whom two were crucified with Christ.

3. *Jesus Condemned.* The release of Barabbas turned loose a flood of calumny on the head of Jesus. He was acclaimed a more dangerous citizen than a bandit chief and a red handed murderer. The mob went wild with a frenzy of hate, and vociferously clamored for the crucifixion of Christ. Though the Roman governor declared Jesus innocent of a capital crime and himself innocent of his blood, he turned him over to them with orders that he be crucified, after he had scourged him; willing thus to appease the blood lust of the Jewish leaders. His own record was not clean, and he feared to incur the hatred of Jewish leaders in Jerusalem lest they might report him to his emperor at Rome.

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The Crucifixion

GOLDEN TEXT—God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5: 8.)

DAILY READINGS

June 11 to June 17

Preparing for Lesson Study, June 17

MONDAY, JUNE 11

Read Mark 15: 22-25—JESUS ON THE CROSS
"The chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he can not save."

In the mouth of a liar, a truth becomes a falsehood. The chief priests and scribes, standing by the cross of Jesus, acknowledged that he had saved others, but did so then in order to cast upon him the aspersion that he was unable to save himself. Because he did not come down from the cross, they surmised that he could not do so. Their idea was that, had he the power to deliver himself, he would certainly use it; and since he did not use it, he did not have it. Their sentiments were merely the animal instincts of self-preservation. They were entirely foreign to the true God-like spirit of self-sacrifice for the sake of others. Jesus could not save himself and at the same time save others. He was not limited in power, but bound by the high purpose for which he came into the world. He had not the desire to save himself. His was the disability of a disinclination to deliver himself from a cruel and undeserved death. He could not, therefore, only because he would not. He was the victim of his own consuming passion for the salvation of men. It was that which kept him on the cross, and it was that which makes his cross the emblem of all true service and greatness.

May we glory in the cross of Christ, "towering o'er the wrecks of time."

TUESDAY, JUNE 12

Read Mark 15: 33-41—THE GREAT SACRIFICE
"My God, my God; why has thou forsaken me?"

As quoted by Mark, Jesus on the cross used the Syrian language in that memorable exclamation quoting the Psalm, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani!" The expression, "Eloi," meaning "my God," was mistaken by some of the bystanders, who were not familiar with the Syriac,

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to have been a call for Elijah; and they said, "Let us see if Elijah will come to deliver him." With his expiring breath he cried with a loud voice, and gave up his spirit. His head dropped and only his mortal remains were left hanging on the cross. But yonder in the temple a strange new thing took place that very moment, when the veil which separated the Holy of holies from the holy place was rent in two from top to bottom. It meant that the middle wall of partition between the Jew and the Gentile had been torn away. It meant that the great High Priest had gone into the Holy of holies, even to the mercy seat, and had left the way open behind him. In his death he had made it possible for every man, who comes to God by him, to enter into the divine fellowship and communion. The centurion who was in charge of the execution was compelled to acknowledge, when he witnessed the supernatural phenomena which attended the death of Jesus, that he was a divine person.

In the spirit of the cross, may we love and labor, live and die.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13

Read Luke 23: 32-43—THE TWO MALEFACTORS
"There were also two other malefactors, led with him to be put to death."

Jesus was crucified between two thieves. As it had been prophesied concerning him, "He made his grave with the wicked." But even until the last he was the divine helper of the helpless. One of the malefactors railed on Jesus for not asserting his power, if he had it, and deliver himself and his companions in suffering from a terrible death. But the other recognized the justice of their punishment, and confessed the moral guilt of his own wrong-doing and at the same time declared that Jesus was innocent of any cause for death. He was both a penitent and a believer. Jesus rewarded his faith there and then. Though his death must follow, he assured him he would be with him in the

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paradise of God before that day would close. Death is the parting of the ways, where the righteous and the wicked separate forever. They may be in the same situation before that, but only those who are with Christ in spirit on the cross can be with him in paradise after death.

Thank God that even a dying thief, if penitent and believing, can be admitted into the fellowship of the redeemed in the presence of the glorified Christ!

THURSDAY, JUNE 14

Read John 19: 23-31—IT IS FINISHED
"He said, It is finished; and bowed his head and gave up the ghost."

What was it that was finished when Christ died? His work on earth was done. No longer was he to lead his people in person, as their healer, helper, companion and teacher. The hatred of his enemies had done its worst. His foes had hounded him till the last, and had ceased their outcry against him only at the foot of his cross. Sin was finished. In himself he had suffered the sting of death and had drawn out its fang into his own bosom, rendering it henceforth harmless to those who follow after him. His earthly life as Mediator between God and man was ended. His intercession henceforth must be that of an advocate in the presence of the Father instead of an attorney this side of the grave. The will of the Father had been carried out and was concluded. The plan of salvation had been accomplished and completed. All the types and Messianic predictions of the Scriptures had been fulfilled. The ceremonial law had been done away by the new covenant in his blood. His own physical sufferings, poverty and shame were over. His life had not been extorted from him, but surrendered by him. He simply gave up his spirit.

May we so live in Christ that at the end we may be able to say with him, "It is finished."

FRIDAY, JUNE 15

Read Mark 15: 42-49—BURIAL OF JESUS
"When he knew it of the Centurion, he gave the body to Joseph."

Since Jesus was almost certainly crucified on Thursday, the day before the annual sabbath on Friday, the first day

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of the Passover feast, Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy man and a secret disciple, went immediately after the death of Jesus and asked Pilate for the body. Pilate wondered that Jesus should have died so soon; far too soon, he thought. He, therefore, asked the centurion, who had been commissioned to execute Jesus, for an official report of the case. When the officer reported that Jesus was dead, Pilate gave the body to Joseph, which otherwise would have been thrown into the potter's field. Why was Joseph so courageous on this occasion? His secret discipleship could exist no longer. Christ's enemies had done their worst. Joseph had not been a party to the condemnation of Jesus. Any intervention in his behalf which he might have made would have been fruitless. But when hate had spent itself, Joseph's fidelity could show itself. The body was wrapped in fine linen and anointed with a hundred pounds of spices brought by Nicodemus, another secret disciple, and laid away in Joseph's new tomb in a garden near the place of execution.

May the wealth and wisdom of the world give their resources and reputation for the honor of Christ.

SATURDAY, JUNE 16

Read Romans 5: 1-11—JUSTIFIED BY HIS BLOOD
"Much more than, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

Paul argues for justification by faith. Salvation by grace and justification through faith are one and the same doctrine. Since it is by the grace of God that salvation is offered us, we cannot win it by any other means than to accept it by faith in the Son of God. The atonement of Christ was made for all sinners. It is a universal atonement. It is for everybody, whether they accept it or not. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." But his atonement becomes effective in our case only when we accept it. We are justified only when we believe. And when we are justified, and no longer held responsible for our sins, we are saved from the wrath and condemnation which must come upon sin. How does the death of Jesus save us? He is our substitute be-

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fore God, if we accept him as such. And since our substitute has died, the death penalty is paid and we are saved from the guilt and punishment of sin.

May the law of life in Christ make us free from the law of sin and death.

SUNDAY, JUNE 17

Read Isaiah 53: 7-12—AN OFFERING FOR SIN
"When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed."

Christ is our sin-bearer upon whose sacrifice of himself depends the remission of our sins. God has appointed and, therefore, accepts the mediatorial work of Jesus. Only a substitute who is acceptable to God could be sufficient to become our Saviour. Jesus shall see the fruit of his death in the lives of countless others who are saved from death by him. He shall be satisfied with the purchases of his blood, and shall have pleasure in the children who are begotten of the travail of his soul. He went down into death to bring many souls into life eternal, and into the joys of everlasting fellowship with God.

May we with all our hearts accept Jesus Christ as God's offering for sin and as our Redeemer from it.

LESSON STUDY

Sunday, June 17

Topic: The Crucifixion (Mark 15: 16-47).

Lesson Text

Mark 15: 22-26, 33-39

I. AT THE THIRD HOUR

22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.

23 And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh; but he received it not.

24 And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.

25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

26 And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

II. AT THE SIXTH HOUR

33 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

III. AT THE NINTH HOUR

34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

35 And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.

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36 And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.

37 And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

38 And the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

39 And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

Lesson Comment

1. *At the Third Hour.* It was about 9 o'clock in the morning when Jesus was carried from the judgment hall of Pilate to a place called Golgotha, outside the city of Jerusalem, to be crucified. The term "Golgotha" means "The place of a skull," which was perhaps so named because it was a knoll which resembled the human skull. It is not certain that it was a spot specially set apart for the execution of condemned criminals. Pilate had written a superscription to be nailed up over the head of Jesus on the cross, stating the crime for which he was executed. Whether it was intentional or not, Pilate simply wrote, "The King of the Jews." It was an affirmative statement, which offended some of the enemies of Jesus. However, Pilate let it stand that way, because it was what Jesus acknowledged himself to be and what the Jews claimed he was not. More than that, Pilate did not care to be so exact in giving labels to executed criminals.

2. *At the Sixth Hour.* Doubtless most of the sayings of Christ on the cross came during the first three hours of his crucifixion, from 9 in the morning until 12 at noon. It was certainly during this time that he was subjected to the ridicule and gibes of his foes and accusers. At the sixth hour darkness came over the land, and remained for three hours, until the ninth, or 3 o'clock in the afternoon. It was not a fog nor mist that rose from the earth at mid-day. It was the shroud with which all nature clothed herself while her Maker passed through her portals into the death chamber. There were some there who recognized it as super-

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natural, and who could not deny that Jesus was a righteous man and that a terrible tragedy was being enacted.

3. *At the Ninth Hour.* Perhaps at the ninth hour, after Jesus had been on the cross full six hours, the darkness lifted from the land, and with it the Spirit of Jesus departed from its house of flesh. Before expiring, he exclaimed, "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?" One of the bystanders put some vinegar to his mouth to deaden

pain, in order that, forsooth, he might linger till Elijah, whom they supposed he was calling, might come and take him down. But with a loud cry, "It is finished," he gave up his spirit which he committed into the hands of God the Father. Then the veil of the temple was rent in two from top to bottom, and Jesus, the great High Priest, had once for all, by his own blood, entered the Holy of holies into the presence of God.

A Parable of Teaching and Learning

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL LESSON

GOLDEN TEXT—Take heed therefore how ye hear. (Luke 8: 18.)

DAILY READINGS

June 18 to June 24

Preparing for Lesson Study, June 21

MONDAY, JUNE 18

Read Mark 9: 1-10—THE GLORIFIED SAVIOUR
"He was transfigured before them."

In the Transfiguration, Jesus appeared re clothed with some of the glory he had with the Father before he came into the world. It was also a Preshfiguration of the glory which he is yet to have on the earth. It was the effulgence of a shining life, a sinless nature that is brighter than the rays of a noonday sun. It was the glory of a free fellowship with the saints of God, two of whom came in visible form and talked with him. It was the glory of God's presence, manifested in the cloud which descended upon them as the shechinah hovered the mercy seat in the wilderness. It was the glory of being acknowledged by the Father before men, as the voice out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son." It was the glory conferred upon Jesus in the command of the Father that men should hear him, sealing his authority and mission as a messenger and mouthpiece of God.

May Christ be glorified in all our schools, and may all our educators hear him.

TUESDAY, JUNE 19

Read Mark 10: 35-45—THE SERVING SAVIOUR
"Even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

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As a servant of mankind, Jesus ministered not to their lesser but to their highest and eternal interests. He was not a ruler or commander with grades and ranks of subordinates under him. Episcopacy, as a form of church government, certainly has no justification in the precedents of Jesus. There is no authority for ecclesiastical "heads" of any sort except those which are set for a ministry to the people and which actually function as public servants. Where is the head? At the top or the bottom? That depends on how vital one part is to the rest of the body. Jesus is the head of the church, and yet he is its foundation. The head is the foundation, and the foundation is the head! They are one. In the church, Jesus is both, because he did more for his people than they can do for themselves or for him. He exemplified the highest type of service and leadership in giving himself a ransom for many.

May the greatest accomplishments of both mind and body be made to minister to the needs of the spirit.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20

Read Mark 11: 1-10—THE TRIUMPHANT SAVIOUR
"Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem gave Jesus' friends an opportunity to acclaim him the Son of David and the promised Messiah. He did not plan it as a plea for praise, nor as a bid for popular applause. It was not a preten-

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tious retinue in which he was the center. Astride a little donkey, with his feet almost touching the ground, moving slowly along, he was not an imposing equestrian personage. But he was not riding in a tournament. Those only who caught his spirit of humility, and understood him and his mission, perceived the beauty and significance of it all. They thus signified their hope in him as their friend and spiritual leader. It was an outburst of praise and triumph for Christ among his admirers, which precipitated an outbreak of hostility against him on the part of his enemies.

May the simplicities of the gospel triumph over the wisdom of the world.

THURSDAY, JUNE 21

Read Mark 12: 1-12—THE TEACHING SAVIOUR
"They knew he had spoken the parable against them."

For several reasons Jesus employed the parable in teaching the people. In him the story method had its highest exemplar, and the term "parable" can be applied to it only as he employed it. By it he sometimes spoke about certain ones among his hearers without calling their names, and yet reference to them was so pointed that its application was unmistakable. As here: the scribes and elders from Jerusalem perceived that he spoke the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen against them. The cap did fit them. Their own conscience made the application. Otherwise how did they know he had spoken it against them, instead of against somebody else who might have been in his mind? By the parable, he could lay down the principles of truth and give room for hearers to make their own interpretation, and thus quicken spiritual appreciation in them. He could also make accusations against his enemies in such a way they could not answer him without incriminating themselves. Hence this set of bigoted rabbis from Jerusalem simply "left him." Had they answered him they would have acknowledged that the story of the wicked husbandmen applied to them.

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May the spirit as well as the methods of Jesus be emulated by teachers in every branch of learning.

FRIDAY, JUNE 22

Read Mark 16: 1-16—THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR
"He knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy."

One of the most poignant griefs Jesus had to endure was that of being rejected by his own people. O, the tortures of being disowned by one's own folk and of being turned out of one's own house! "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." Before Pilate, he was arraigned not by Gentile plaintiffs but by accusers among his own household of Israel. The Gentile Pilate was far more inclined to mercy than were they. The rough Roman governor had moral sense enough to see that Jesus was the victim of envy among his own countrymen. As the object of jealousy, he could not defend himself without appearing to his haters to justify himself, and thus to fall more directly under their censure.

May the idealism of Jesus, though it be spurned by scholars, prevail against traditionalism in education.

SATURDAY, JUNE 23

Read Mark 16: 1-8—THE LIVING SAVIOUR
"He is risen; he is not here."

Wonderful is the epitaph of Jesus. Of the great men of the world, marble slabs or monuments bear the inscription in every case, "Here lies." Their remains lie interred beneath a canopy of clay. But it is not so with Jesus Christ. As proclaimed by an angel to some women who peered into his open sepulcher, his epitaph is, "He is not here." He is not dead. The grave could not contain him. The earth had to give him up, because he was stronger than death. He was the embodiment of life, and therefore, death, as the end of life, could not hold him. It only placed him beyond the reach of his enemies where his glory could be unquestioned and his authority undisputed.

May the living Christ teach us to know him and the power of his resurrection.

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SUNDAY, JUNE 24

Read Zephaniah 3: 14-20—THE MIGHTY SAVIOUR
"The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty;
he will save."

Under the figure of a return from captivity, salvation is promised to Zion. The prophet conceived the restoration of Zion to be the work of the Promised One. He foresaw the time when Jerusalem would shout for joy, which was fulfilled when Jesus made his Triumphal Entry into the city, when the king of Israel, even the Lord, was in her midst. Yet that was but a figure of the universal dominion and glory of Jesus Christ, when the Redeemer shall rejoice over the Zion of God as Jesus wept over the city of David. He is mighty as a Saviour, not as a potentate or absolute ruler. His power consists in his ability to save from sin and death, and to redeem a people unto God.

May majesty and power, might and dominion, be ascribed unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

LESSON STUDY

Sunday, June 24

Topic: A Parable of Teaching and Learning (Mark 4: 1-20).

Lesson Text

Mark 4:1-9

I. WAYSIDE HEARERS

And he began to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.

2 And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine,

3 Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow:

4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

II. STONY GROUND HEARERS

5 And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth:

6 But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

III. THORNY GROUND HEARERS

7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

IV. GOOD GROUND HEARERS

8 And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased, and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some a hundred.

9 And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

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Lesson Comment

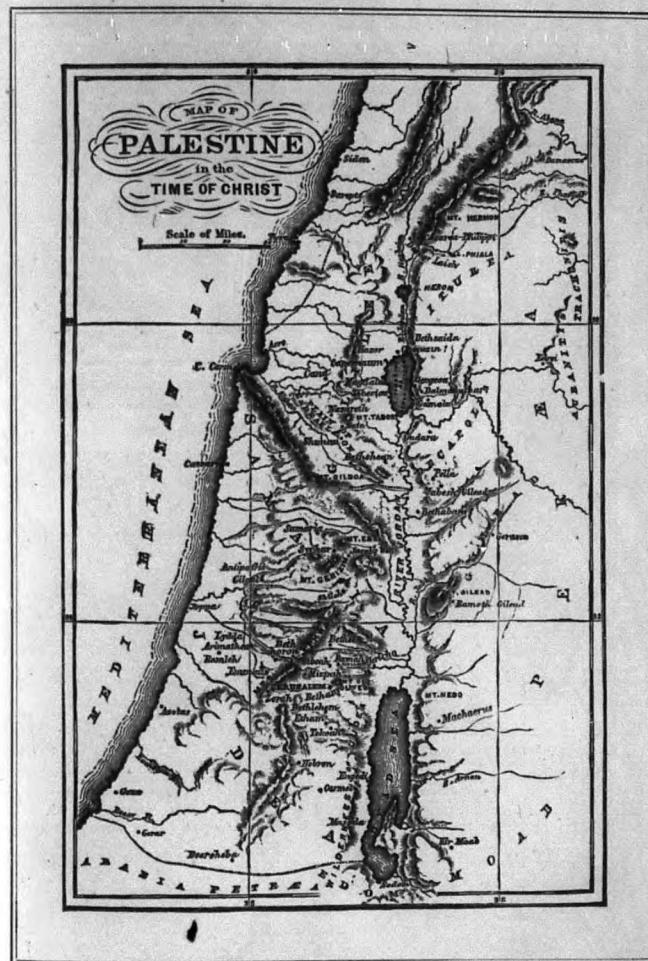
By the seaside in Galilee, Jesus taught a great multitude that had gathered about him so closely that he had to get into a boat and push slightly off shore so he might be within hearing and seeing distance of them all. It was a favorable place for giving instruction. He taught them by parables, or stories, which set forth, in narrative style and with human interest elements, the truths which he desired to impart to his hearers. In the parable of the sower, he described four classes of people in their attitude toward what he was teaching, and toward all truth. The different receptions given the word are due to differences in the spiritual conditions of the hearers.

1. *The Wayside Hearers.* The seed that falls on the hard path is quickly picked up by birds that follow the sower in the field. So there are people whose hearts are not ready to receive the word. And no one can give another anything until he is prepared to receive it. No teacher can impart instruction to a pupil who does not want to learn.

2. *The Stony Ground Hearer.* Some seed from the sower's hand falls into soil that is underlaid with solid rock, so that, while it quickly comes up and looks well at the start, it perishes under the heat of the sun. Likewise there are people whose natures are superficial, in whom no impression goes very deep. They flourish for a while but their resources are soon exhausted and they fade away.

3. *Thorny Ground Hearers.* Some seed drops in among the thorns and briers, so that it is choked and rendered barren by the more rapidly growing thistles. There are those whose hearts are preoccupied with worldly affairs so that they are fruitless as hearers of the word.

4. *The Good Ground Hearers.* There are those who are like the seed that falls into the good ground. They come to maturity and fruitage. Some more and others less, but all yield a harvest. Those who hear must retain. Then that which is heard has value.



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