

# **Bible Stories and Their Inner Meaning.**

## **A Family Study Guide**

(Original Title: *The Sower. Helps to the  
Study of the Bible in Home and Sunday School*)

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# **Introduction and Abbreviations & Authority**

## **INTRODUCTION**

These wonderfully-written and family-friendly lessons provide a practical help to teaching children the stories of the Bible and those teachings' symbolic spiritual sense, as revealed in the teachings of Jesus Christ's Second Coming. The lessons are particularly useful for busy parents who want to provide adequate spiritual instruction for their children but don't have time to do extensive preparation on a regular basis. Every lesson is presented at primary, intermediate and advanced levels, so there is something for children of all ages. This multi-level feature also means that in a family with children over a range of ages, the same story can be taught to all of them at once, with something appropriate for each age level.

## **ABBREVIATIONS & AUTHORITY**

The theological works of Swedenborg are referred to by the following abbreviations: Those in boldface are books that Swedenborg published himself, and appear to be fully authoritative Divine revelation. The remaining books, which he did not publish, do not appear to be such revelation. For details, see "Which of Swedenborg's books are Divine revelation?" The most frequently cited unpublished works in Worcester's books here are Spiritual Diary, abbreviated "D." in the text references, and Apocalypse Explained, abbreviated "E." in the references.

- A. Arcana Coelestia
- C.J. Continuation of Last Judgment
- D. Spiritual Diary (Spiritual Experiences)
- E. Apocalypse Explained
- F. Doctrine of Faith
- H. Heaven and Hell
- I. Interaction between the Soul and Body
- J. Last Judgment
- L. Doctrine of the Lord
- Life. Doctrine of Life
- M. Conjugal Love (Marriage Love)
- N. New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine
- P. Divine Providence
- P.P. Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms
- R. Apocalypse Revealed
- S. Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture
- T. True Christian Religion
- U. Earths in the Universe
- W. Divine Love and Wisdom
- W.H. The White Horse

## **Lesson 1**

### **Genesis: The Pentateuch (The Five Books of Moses)**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Turning the pages of the Bible (turn them carefully), we find it made up of many smaller parts of books. These are grouped in the Old Testament, which tells about the Lord's care of people before His coming, and the getting ready for His coming, and the New Testament, which tells of His coming and His life on earth, and of the church which He began. Starting at the beginning of the Old Testament, as you turn the pages, notice the names of the different parts or books. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. Stop here; these are the five books of Moses, and our stories will be from them.

In these stories we shall learn more about Moses, whom the Lord made a great leader of the children of Israel, to lead them from Egypt to the Holy Land, and to teach them commandments and laws. (Were the Ten Commandments written? on what? and how?) Many other laws Moses wrote in a book at the command of the Lord, and also the story of the Lord's care of the people during the time that Moses was their leader. The story of the very ancient times Moses copied from a much older Scripture called the Ancient Word which had been written long before in a beautiful ancient style. The first seven chapters of Genesis were taken precisely from the Ancient Word, and the substance of the story through the eleventh chapter, that is, up to the beginning of the story of Abram. Other laws were also added after the time of Moses, in the days of Jerusalem and the temple. (S. 103; T. 279; Coronis 52) So the Lord has given us the books of Moses as we find them in our Bibles.

Books, you know, were not printed in the time of Moses, but were written carefully by hand. The pages, too, were not bound as in our books, but were fastened together edge to edge, making a long strip which was rolled up on a stick, or on a stick at either end, so that any chapter could be found by unrolling from one stick and rolling on the other. The Lord has made the stories still more convenient to us in our Bibles, and has made it possible for every one of us to have a copy.

##### **Junior**

You must help me look up some things about these books of Moses. First, the names by which we know them. "Genesis" means "beginning," and it tells about creation. "Exodus" means "going out"; why is this name given to the second book? "Leviticus" reminds us of the Levites who were the priestly tribe, and the book is mainly laws of religious ceremonies. "Numbers" tells a part of the story of the wilderness journey including two numberings of the people. "Deuteronomy" means "a copy of this law," the phrase occurring in chapter 17, verse 18 of the book. We shall think more about these names as we take up the separate books.

Does anyone know the meaning of the word "Pentateuch," a name sometimes given to the five books of Moses? We have "penta" in other words, such as pentagon, a figure with five angles and five sides. Yes, Pentateuch is the five books, or the book in five parts.

As for the writing, we must look at some old scroll if we can, so neatly written, and at the writing on clay tablets, done with a sharp instrument when the clay was soft, and then baked hard. We are taught that the Lord provided the art of writing and the art of printing largely for the sake of His Word, that it might be kept in fixed form and might be distributed. (A. 9353, 9793)

And more about the Ancient Word from which Moses took the first seven chapters of Genesis precisely, and the first eleven chapters in substance. It was the Word of the Church called in the Bible "Noah and his descendants." It was written wholly in beautiful parables describing heavenly things. We can see that the early chapters of Genesis are of a wholly different style from the history of Abram, which follows. In more worldly and evil days, in the Lord's providence, the Ancient Word dropped out of use, though stories from it lingered in the legends and the art of many nations. In Swedenborg's latest references to the Ancient Word, He gives "this news," that it still exists in Great Tartary, central Asia, and may some day be found. We may be grateful that the Lord has preserved for us a part of the beautiful Ancient Word in our own Bible, and that He has now taught us how to read its parables and learn its heavenly lessons. (S. 101-103)

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

"Which way is it true?" the children used to ask of a new Bible story; true as a parable is true, or true also as literal history? We may be very thankful that knowledge of the character and style of writing of the early chapters of Genesis gives us assurance of their divineness, that they are true, and lifts them out of reach of conflict with natural science. Swedenborg's first great expository work, the Arcana Coelestia, is an unfolding of the deeper meaning of Genesis and Exodus. It must be our constant guide in spiritual study of these books of Scripture. The first eleven chapters are unfolded as the spiritual history of the early churches in this world, with very many cross-references to the spiritual development and experience of an individual person. (See especially the story of creation) But with the story of Abram, and continuing for many chapters, the Arcana unfolds the story in its relation to our Lord's life in the world, especially to His childhood, making these pages of the Arcana a most precious part of the New Church writings. For a series of chapters, we are allowed to read directly of the Lord's life and saving work, and at the same time, we are made to realize that the early chapters of Genesis in their deepest sense must relate to the beginnings of the incarnation and to the infancy of the Lord - that there is always this inmost application of Scripture to the Lord making it supremely sacred although this inmost application may usually be too profound for us to follow. (Students of the spiritual sense will find help in addition to the Arcana in the outlines of interpretation given in Lectures on Genesis and Exodus, by John Worcester.) The Lord said that Moses wrote of Him. He also opened to the apostles, in Moses and the prophets and the Psalms, the things concerning Himself.

## **Lesson 2**

### **Genesis 1: The Creation**

#### **THE STORY**

The Lord in His teaching often pointed His hearers to the world about them, to the light and darkness, to the sea and its fishes, to the birds and flowers, to the sheep and lambs, to learn lessons of His love and care for His children and of their duty to Him. In the ancient days, people were wiser in parables and understood better the spiritual things which things of the earth represent. The story of creation is one of the Divine stories which they enjoyed. Remember that these first chapters are from the Ancient Word. We can learn something of the wisdom that they learned from the story. At least we all can learn that God made us and the world in which we live; He makes the world beautiful and wishes to make us beautiful, too.

#### **Primary**

In the summer we are out in the air and sunshine and see a great deal of the beautiful world. Have any of you been into the woods or the fields this summer? Then you have seen the trees, and the little vines and berries and ferns and mosses that grow on the ground; and you have seen and listened to the birds. Have you worked in the garden? What have you seen there that was beautiful? Has anyone been to the mountains? You have seen grand cliffs and old forests, and wide views over the country. If you have been to the sea, you have seen the waves and the surf, and the strange plants and creatures in the pools when the tide is low. Have you seen them? What have you seen in the sky, in the evening, and at night? All these help to make up the beautiful world.

The Lord made us and the world for us to live in. It is the very first thing that the Bible tells us. The thought comes nearer home to us when we know that creation was not finished long ago, but that it is still going on. The Lord who made the first light makes the sun rise and shine for us. The Lord who made the first flowers and birds and animals is making now all the things that make the world beautiful and comfortable for us. How great, how wonderful the creating power seems in the spring when it bursts out in buds and flowers on every bush and tree and spot of ground. And all seem to say, "If God so clothes the grass of the field, shall he not much more clothe you?"

Let us see how many of the things we know which the chapter speaks of the Lord as making. The light, making day and night. The "firmament" means the clear air between the waters below and the clouds above. The seas and the dry land. The little plants and the fruit trees. The sun and moon and stars. Fishes small and great in the waters, and birds of the air. Animals small and large. And people, to use and enjoy the other things made for them and put in their care.

What a beautiful, happy world this will be if we do our part with the Lord to make it so.

And what is this beautiful world for? To be the home of people while they are learning to live in heaven. Everything in the world in one way or another is for people, to make them happy now and to help them to prepare for heaven. Did the Lord make the world all at once, in a moment? He has been making it gradually through long ages. The substances of which the world is made came

out from the sun, very thin and vapory, and they gradually grew more solid. Then there was a time when a great sea covered the whole earth, and clouds were wrapped around it, so thick that no light could get through. But already the Lord was working to make the world ready to be a home for people. Then the clouds grew thin, and some light came through. The clouds then lifted from the water, and there was clear air between. The earth grew uneven; high parts rose above the ocean, and the water lay in the lower places. Plants began to grow on the land; first lichens and mosses and little plants, and afterward larger plants, and trees that bore fruit. At last the clouds broke away and the glorious sun shone out in a clear sky, and the beautiful moon at night. Then the Lord made living creatures, fishes in the sea, and birds, and animals. The world at last was ready to be the home of human beings. The Lord made them in His own image and gave them the earth and the plants and animals to love and use and take care of. The world seems more beautiful when we remember that the Lord made it and still keeps it to be our home. The beautiful things that we saw in the summer, the Lord made for us. How great His power must be, and how near He is to us! Now listen to the story of how the Lord created the heavens and the earth. (Gen. 1)

## **Junior**

"In the beginning God created..." These are words to keep in mind as we look out into the sunshine or into the skies at night. And they are words to keep in mind in all our study of science, of geology and botany and astronomy. In all the sciences we are studying the Lord's creation and the ways in which the Lord works. There is a danger that we may become so much interested in the ways of working that we forget the Lord who is doing it. You learn in school of "evolution." The word is used in many meanings. It is all right if it means the gradual and wonderful ways in which the Lord works in developing the plants and animals; but remember always that this development is not by chance; the chief factor in the case is always the force of life from within, from the Lord, pressing to express itself more fully and perfectly in the world of nature.

It is no doubt right to see in the story of creation a general picture of the steps by which the world was brought by the Lord from a mass of fluid and vapors into a habitable world. First a condensing of the vapors till some light could penetrate. Then the coming of clear air between the waters below and the clouds above. The wrinkling of the earth's surface as it cooled, raising land above the waters, and gathering the waters into seas. The development of vegetable life from simple to highly organized forms. The breaking of the clouds so that sun and moon and stars shone in upon the earth. The development of animal life, fishes, birds and higher animals. The creation of people in the image and likeness of God. But the ancient people to whom this story was given were not interested in science. To them it was a beautiful parable telling, like the Lord's parables of seeds and birds, of the steps by which a heavenly spirit is developed in each one of us, till we come to the measure of a true human being and angel, into the image of God. This process of becoming heavenly is called a person's rebirth or regeneration. It is pictured by natural birth in the Lord's words to Nicodemus. It is pictured by the birth of a seed in some of the Lord's parables, and here in this magnificent parable, by the birth of the world. The six days of creation picture the stages of effort in becoming heavenly. It is not accomplished in a moment but gradually by the Lord as we do our part with Him. The plants, the beasts and birds, are the faculties of our own minds which the Lord develops; and He gives us dominion over them, to rule them and to use them well.

1. What new thing have you seen in the beautiful world this summer?
2. Who made the world? What is the world made for?
3. Was the world made in a moment, or gradually step by step, through long ages? How do you know?
4. Does the Lord give dominion to each of us? Over what?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The spiritual study of this chapter will be a development of the thought last suggested to the junior scholars. Spiritually, this Divine story of creation tells of regeneration, of the development of a heavenly nature. Specifically, it tells of the process by which the Lord brought the most ancient people into a beautiful celestial state (pictured in the Garden of Eden); and in general it tells of the development of a heavenly nature in every person. I assume that you will have the Arcana open before you, as you study details of the story. The days of creation represent successive steps of the process, which should at least be begun in this world, and then it can continue in the other world. Each day has its evening, its feebler beginning, and its morning, its full development. Before studying the separate days, notice that they divide into two groups, the first three days, and the next three days. In the first three days, we read of light, of waters, and of the vegetable kingdom. You recognize these as symbols of truth and of intellectual powers. In the next three days, we read of the sun and of the animal kingdom. These are symbols of love and of the affections in human hearts. Evidently the first three days describe the formation of a heavenly understanding, as we learn the Lord's truth and do it; and the next three days describe the formation of a heavenly will, as we come to love the good ways. Each of these has steps from lesser to fuller developments. The formation of these two faculties in a heavenly way is the Lord's work in us, and makes us in a little way like Him who is Divinely loving and Divinely wise.

Dwell a little on the picture of mastery over all our powers, given in verse 28. Compare the pictures of dominion in Genesis 9:2, and in Psalm 8:6-8. (Can you account for the differences?) It is an ideal for a young man or a young woman to admire, and one worth working for.

Every part of the Bible teaches about heavenly things, about heavenly life and character and how they can be formed in us. But these lessons are often given in parables. The story of creation is a parable. It tells how the Lord creates a heavenly nature in us, and makes it grow and become more beautiful and perfect step by step. We cannot become heavenly in a moment, but gradually, patiently, little by little, and only by the Lord's power. The "evening" and "morning" of each day suggest that each stage begins in obscurity and advances to greater brightness. The later stages of development also are the best. Notice that the creation of each earlier day is pronounced "good," but the creation of the sixth day "very good." (A. 6-13, 22)

"Without form and void" describes the mind before it awakens to care for heavenly things, yet the Lord is tenderly moving or brooding over every one. It is beautiful to think of this care of the Lord over a little child whose life is unformed and over those who are as yet careless of heavenly things, and over every unformed possibility of heavenly life in ourselves. (A. 19)

Light is given on the first day, and later the sun and moon. When is there light in the mind, on any subject? There is a little heavenly light when we begin to see that there are such things as heaven and heavenly life, something higher to live for than the body and this world. It is at first like dim light through the clouds, but when from experience we come to a real living consciousness of the Lord and His love the sun shines clearly out. This consciousness will not be always felt; there will be darker times when we must hold to what we know of the Lord. This faith will keep us safe; it is the moon which the Lord gives to rule the night. (A. 37, 4797; E. 275, 401, 527)

The plants and animals represent two great classes of faculties and activities in our minds. The warm, sensitive animals represent the affections, and the plants represent the living, growing, but less sensitive intellectual powers. The creation of the herbs and trees describes a stage of heavenly development when we learn what is right and faithfully bring forth the fruits of good deeds. The creation of the animals describes the more full and perfect stage of development when good deeds are done joyfully from affection. Which were created first, plants or animals? (A. 9, 12, 3218, 3220; H. 110, 111)

What words in our lesson teach us that the human form is the Divine form and that we ought to think of God as a Divine human?

The Lord gave people dominion over fish and fowl and every living thing that He had made. It suggests our responsibility to make good use of this beautiful world and all things in it. What does it mean in the deeper sense, when all the created things represent faculties and developments in a person's own life? That the Lord gives to us as our supreme human gift, the faculty of looking down upon our own feelings and thoughts and actions, controlling them and choosing among them, and making them useful servants. This is a wonderful trust from the Lord. Each of us may be master of our self, even of our thoughts and feelings, in the Lord's strength. Compare Psalm 8:6-8. (A. 52, 10609; E. 650)

What followed the six days of creation? What will follow if we are faithful through all the stages of effort and trial by which a heavenly character is formed in us by the Lord? The Sabbath of heavenly peace and rest when it is easy and delightful to do right. The mention of the six days of labor in the commandments is a reminder of the states of effort in which we must be faithful and patient, for the sake of the heavenly Sabbath. (A. 85, 87)

## **Lesson 3**

### **Genesis 2: The Garden of Eden**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

When we see the beautiful world and remember how the Lord made it for us and gave it to us to be our home, it seems as if it ought always to be a very happy place, and it is happy when people are good. The Bible tells us of a garden, the Garden of Eden with beautiful trees and a river, where people lived and were happy. They were very near to heaven in those days, and lived like good children loving each other and the Lord. That time has been remembered as the Golden Age. They

knew that the beautiful things were the Lord's, and that they were using them and caring for them for Him.

The good people of those days lived in simple homes, by families and tribes, and did not want many things and money, which make us so much care and trouble. They loved to think about the Lord and heaven, and they loved the beautiful things of this world because each one taught them some lesson of the Lord's love. People in those days showed their good thoughts and feelings in the expressions of their faces. Angels were near to them, and they often saw and talked with them. Angels taught them from the Lord, for they did not have a written Bible in those days. It is interesting to learn about the good people of the Golden Age, and to think how much like them we can be today in the same world. We must read about the good people and the garden. (Gen. 2)

## **Junior**

Did you know that each one of us has a garden, even those who live in the city? The Lord gives them to us to take care of and enjoy. There are weeds to pull up, and seeds must be planted and tended before they will bear good fruit. Bad thoughts that spring up and lead to unkind words and deeds are weeds. Good thoughts that we have learned from father and mother and teachers and kind friends are good seeds that grow and bear the fruits of kind words and deeds.

Remember the parable of the sower, and the parable of the wheat and tares. (Matt. 13) The story of Eden tells about the garden in the minds of the good people of the Golden Age. "Eden" means "delight," for their good thoughts were filled with delight. There was one special thought which stood as a tree in the midst of the garden - the thought that everything belonged to the Lord and that all their life and power was from Him. This is the happiest, strongest, most peaceful of all thoughts and the Lord wants us to enjoy it. There was another tree which they were forbidden to eat from. That was the thought that all things were their very own and that they could do good of themselves. If they ate of that thought, it would spoil it all.

Read first of the garden in its beauty. (Gen. 2:8-17) "Bdelium" is believed to mean pearl. Some of the names of rivers and of countries we shall meet later in the story. I would not try just yet to find them on the map. The people who first loved this story did not have maps, but thought of the names in a spiritual way. In the same way, they thought of the place of the garden as "eastward," the most holy quarter, and near to the Lord, and of the trees and the river of the garden. We are told in the Arcana lovely things about the good people of the Golden Age. Their home was in Canaan, between the Euphrates River and Egypt. They lived in simple houses and in a simple way; they spoke by delicate expressions of the face; they were taught by angels and by wisdom which came to them without study from the Lord. These lovely thoughts are especially meant by the trees of the garden, which the Lord God made to grow, and by the river. Remember the person described in the first Psalm, like a fruitful tree by the river.

1. Where does it say that the garden was? Who planted it? What grew in it?
2. What tree was in the midst of the garden? What other tree is named?
3. What was Adam to do for the garden? What charge was given to him?
4. What gardens have we to care for?
5. What name of the Lord is used in the second chapter that is not used in the first?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Again, I assume that we have our volume of the Arcana open. We must have a general thought of what the Garden of Eden represents, and must single out a few points for more careful study.

In general, the Garden of Eden is the picture of the Most Ancient Church in its prime; the story of creation tells of the steps by which that church was brought to this beautiful state, and the chapters which follow tell of its decline. A tree or a garden represents especially the intellectual side of a church or of an individual life, contrasted with a flock and shepherd, which represent its affectional side. Notice how the two figures run throughout the Scriptures. Remembering the kind of intellectual life of these celestial people, what are represented by the trees of their garden? What by its river?

For more special study, notice at Gen. 2:4 the change from the name God, to the name Jehovah God, for Lord in small capitals in our Bibles stands for the name Jehovah. While all Divine names in the Scripture refer to the one only God, each name brings forward some particular attribute of the Divine. Jehovah the Divine love, and God the Divine truth. The name which prevails in a chapter shows the chapter to be of a celestial or of a spiritual character; it speaks of the Lord's love or of His truth working for us. This opens a wonderful study in the Psalms. In Gen. 1 and 2, the name God is used through the steps of labor in creation, and the name Jehovah when we reach the love and peace of the Sabbath. Watch the Divine names in our coming lessons. Let them add to our enjoyment.

Who can explain the spiritual meaning of the east and of the other quarters?

To consider more carefully the trees of the garden as types of the perceptions of wisdom of those Most Ancient people, what is represented by trees pleasant to the sight and what by trees good for food? The most precious perception, the tree of life, was the perception that all life and blessing is from the Lord; and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the appearance that we live of ourselves. At first the tree of life was at the center of the garden, but later the other tree.

The first verses of the chapter tell us that the work of creation was finished and the Sabbath rest had come. It is describing a heavenly character in which love for the Lord and one another rules, and makes it easy and delightful to do right. It is called the "celestial" character. The garden with its trees describes the intelligence of such a life. It is not gained by laborious learning, but the Lord gives a perception of truth to an innocent, loving heart. That is meant when it is said that the Lord God planted the garden and made the trees to grow. The trees pleasant to the sight are thoughts beautiful in themselves; those good for food are thoughts which lead directly to useful deeds. (E. 739)

The garden was "eastward" in Eden. What does this tell us about the character of those good people? What quality of character is associated in the Bible with the east? The most innocent character, most open to the Lord's love. Angels look toward the Lord in the east, and in the old times, people turned toward the east in worship because they knew its meaning. The tabernacle and temple opened toward the east for the same reason. A garden eastward means the heavenly perceptions of an innocent heart open to the Lord's love. (A. 101)

In the first chapter, the Lord was called God; now He is called Jehovah God, Jehovah being represented in our Bible by Lord in small capitals. All the Divine names mean the same Lord, but some particular Divine quality is expressed by each name. "God" means the Lord with reference to His Divine truth. "God is our refuge and strength." "Jehovah" means the Lord with reference to His Divine love. "Jehovah is my shepherd." The name Jehovah is added in the story of the garden because the "celestial" character is being described, which is led not by truth only or chiefly, but by the Lord's love. When the creation of human beings and plants and animals is mentioned again in the second chapter, it is not a repetition; we are reading now of similar developments to those described before, but on this higher, "celestial" plane. (A. 89)

What is the river that waters the mind's garden? Water that cleanses and refreshes represents teaching of right and wrong and of what is good and wise to do. Heavenly water is such teaching from the Lord Himself. Remember the words of the Psalm: "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water." The four divisions of the river mean truth from the Lord received in different ways, to reach the more interior and more external things of life. The first river, associated with good gold, means the inmost perception, the other rivers mean intelligence, reason, and knowledge - truth in lower forms. (A. 121)

Bringing the beasts to Adam and his giving them names means something very like the giving people dominion over all creatures, in the first chapter. The creatures are again all the faculties of one's own mind. Giving them names is recognizing the quality and use of each one, for a name spiritually is not a mere word but the true quality of a thing. (E. 453; A. 10217)

There are deep and holy lessons in the last verses of the chapter. They teach that marriage is of the Lord's plan from the beginning. It is most sacred, to be kept faithfully by those who are married, and to be spoken of and thought of by every one as holy. What is said about the rib is again a parable. When we read that a rib was taken from the man and a wife was brought to him, we can see in general that the Lord would have us give up selfishly loving ourselves and gain an unselfish love for another. Something of this lesson must be learned in every true marriage. (A. 147, 155)

Compare the picture of the garden in the beginning of the Bible with the picture of the Holy City at the end. There is the same river of life and the same tree of life. Does it not suggest that with all our growth and development we may still learn from the Lord and bear fruit from Him, as innocently and happily as the people of the Golden Age?

## **Lesson 4**

### **Genesis 3: The Serpent**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

What does the name Garden of Eden bring to mind? A beautiful, peaceful place, with lovely and fruitful trees which the Lord God made to grow, and which were watered by His river. There was

one very precious tree in the midst of the garden; what was it called? There was also another tree from which they must not eat; what was its name? There were good and useful animals in the garden; there were good people who loved the Lord and one another. The Lord had given them the garden to dress it and to keep it. Angels were near to them and often talked with them. All was lovely and peaceful and happy in the garden in that Golden Age.

But a change came over those happy people. The story says that the serpent led them to do wrong, to eat fruit from the tree of which the Lord had told them not to eat, "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." It means that they began to think that they could decide for themselves what was good by what seemed pleasant to them rather than by what the Lord taught them. What happens when children think they know best and will not listen to what wiser people tell them? It may be nothing very bad at first, but if they go on in this way, they will surely come to trouble. So it was with the people in Eden. Everything began to go wrong. The world no longer seemed so beautiful. Work seemed hard. Thorns and thistles grew instead of useful plants. They were no longer in the beautiful garden, and the only way to get back must be to be again the Lord's good children. We read the sad part of the story in Gen. 3.

### **Junior**

Why is not the world now as happy a place as in the days of Eden? Why are there pain and trouble, and why are we often unhappy? Are we ever unhappy even in the most lovely place and on a most beautiful day? The trouble is not with the world, but with ourselves; we are unhappy because we do what is not right, and bad thoughts and feelings are in our minds. It was these bad things creeping into the minds and lives of people that made them unhappy and spoiled the beautiful garden. They began to wish to enjoy the good things in a selfish way, to do what seemed pleasant, and to decide for themselves what was good instead of learning what was good from the Lord. The love of doing what we please creeps into all our minds; it tempts us to do just a little of what we know is wrong, and then a little more; it makes it seem pleasant and persuades us. The temptation creeps in as slyly as a snake. Have you ever seen a little snake glide along in the grass so quietly that perhaps while you were looking it was gone? Large snakes do the same; sometimes they charm their prey by their look so that they cannot move until they can coil around them or give a poisonous bite. The temptation to enjoy pleasant things which we know are wrong - drinking what we should not, eating what is forbidden, lying in bed when we ought to be up - used to be called a serpent by the wise people of long ago. And in the Lord's own story of how unhappiness came into the garden, this temptation was called the serpent.

The trouble came when the serpent persuaded the happy people of Eden to eat of the forbidden fruit. Can we understand the story? It must mean the beginning of wrongdoing, of disobedience. Yes, and especially the wrong of listening to what seemed pleasant instead of to what the Lord told them was right. So trouble began, and it went from bad to worse. The world was not any more the happy place that it had been. And it would not be again until the Lord came into the world to teach people and to help them. That is why in the midst of this story we find the first prediction of the Lord's coming. (Gen. 3:15)

This is an interesting history of long ago. It is still more important as a warning of what may often happen with us. Are we ever tempted by what seems pleasant to our senses? And do we sometimes do what seems pleasant rather than what we know is right? Such temptations creep in

almost unnoticed; they are very "subtle," very persuasive - the forbidden candy, the food or drink that we should not take, the lazy half-hour in bed when we should be up - till some dangerous appetite or habit is formed. The serpent came first to the woman; first to our feelings, and when they yield, the reason (the man) soon follows with excuses. The Lord's book, as always, is teaching us about ourselves. It will help us to say "No" to such temptations, to remember that they are snakes creeping in to coil about us or to give a poisonous bite. And the Lord who has come to bruise the serpent's head will help us if we ask His help.

1. What kind of people lived in the Golden Age? What made them happy?
2. How did unhappiness begin? What was it that crept in and made them disobey? What in ourselves is like a serpent? Give me an example.
3. Why is the serpent said to be the most subtle beast?
4. May the world ever be happy again as it was in the days of Eden?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Someone perhaps has been appointed to make a special study of the serpent. Find help in *The Language of Parable*.

The curse upon the serpent, the woman, and the man cannot mean a curse or a punishment from God; He never curses or punishes. The curse in each case describes the condition which the disobedience has brought upon the various faculties of our nature: our senses and the affection for things of sense (the serpent); our higher will and affection (the woman); and our power of reason and understanding (the man). All are changed; they turn easily to things evil and false, and they find the service of the Lord and the work of regeneration laborious.

We have spoken of the serpent as the temptation to do what seems pleasant. Animals correspond to affections of many kinds. Serpents, which lie full length upon the ground, correspond to affections of a most external kind, nearest to the world, affections for the pleasant things of sense - sight, hearing, feeling, taste, scent. It is said that the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field. No affection is more insinuating and beguiling than this of pleasant sensation. It is of real use to know that a temptation of sense or appetite is a spiritual serpent; for we all have a horror of serpents, and to think of the temptation in this way helps us to turn from it quickly and completely. (A. 194-210; E. 739, 581; P. 310)

The serpent tempted the woman to eat the forbidden fruit, and the woman persuaded the man. A temptation to pleasant but forbidden things does not at first address our understanding, but our feelings, and when these are won over, the understanding soon follows with excuses. The man represents the faculty of understanding and the woman the feeling or affection. (A. 229)

It is said that the Lord God made for the man and the woman coats of skin. Garments represent the outer things of intelligence, speech, and act, which clothe the heart's affections. Especially the spiritual garments are the intelligence, which comes nearest to the affection as a means of giving it expression. We clothe the naked, spiritually, when we give instruction in useful and becoming

ways of expressing kind affection. When it says that the Lord clothed the man and woman, it means that He taught them such ways. The skins of animals represent intelligence suited to such affections as the animals represent; lambs and sheep especially are kind and innocent affections. It was said before that the man and woman hid their nakedness with fig leaves. Figs represent good, kind uses of a natural sort, and the fig leaves represent intelligence in regard to such uses. But here the thought of uses seems to be made rather an excuse and a disguise for the selfish spirit within. This thought is also associated with fig leaves from the Lord's words about fig trees with leaves only. (A. 216, 294)

The serpent was condemned to go upon its belly and to eat dust. The snake before had represented affection for what was natural and external in its right and useful place. Now its trailing on the ground had a new meaning, the affection for earthly and bodily things in themselves, as the things of chief importance. The other affection was good, but this is evil. (A. 242-245)

At the time that people turned to evil ways it was predicted that there would come some time a Savior. The saying that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head was understood as such a prediction. There would be One who would overcome the temptation to pleasant but forbidden things, and would lead back to the happy life. This Savior was predicted again when the Israelites in their journey were bitten by fiery serpents, and Moses set a brazen serpent upon a pole, to which they might look up and be healed. (Num. 21:5-9) When was this promise of a Savior fulfilled? Who overcame all temptations and made it possible to enjoy pleasant things in good innocent ways? (John 3:14, 15; A. 250; E. 581, 768)

The ground was cursed for the sake of human beings and brought forth thorns and thistles. As the trees of the garden pleasant to the sight and good for food, represent the beautiful, fruitful intelligence growing in people's minds in the innocent days, so the thorns and thistles represent the selfish and wrong thoughts which afterward took their place. We are also taught that all the objects of the natural world are embodiments of elements of human life, and that while people were innocent there were only lovely things in nature. The ugly and harmful things came into existence after people turned to evil. (W. 336, 339; T. 78; E. 1201)

Notice that when people were innocent the tree of life stood in the midst of the garden (Gen. 2:9), but afterward, when they disobeyed, the other tree is spoken of as in the midst. (Gen. 3:3)

## **Lesson 5**

### **Genesis 6: The Ark**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Who can tell me about the beautiful Garden of Eden? What grew in the garden? What kind of people lived in it? They were good and happy. They loved the Lord, and the angels were very near to them. How did unhappiness come into the garden? The people began to do wrong. The temptation crept in to do what seemed pleasant instead of what they knew was right; it crept in

like a serpent, little by little. When we begin to do wrong, it is easy to go on and do worse and worse. It was so after the happy days of Eden. Wrong thoughts and feelings grew so strong that every good thing seemed in danger of being lost; and the beautiful garden was destroyed. The wickedness seemed like the great floods on the Euphrates or the Nile, when houses were swept away and farms were spoiled, and animals and people were drowned. Wise people called the wickedness that came upon the world a flood, and the Lord called it so in the Bible story.

The story tells of a great storm and a flood of water over all the earth. But Noah and his family could be saved from the flood; and before the storm came, the Lord told Noah to make an ark, a kind of boat or floating house in which his family could be kept safe. The ark had rooms, and it had first, second, and third stories. It had a window above and a door lower in the side. Noah built as the Lord told him.

### **Junior**

There were some people still who were faithful to the Lord. They were not wholly good, but the Lord could teach them and protect them and make them the beginning of another happy race upon the earth. These people are called Noah, which means "rest." The Lord's protection and His care for these people are told in the story of the ark.

We cannot draw an exact picture of the ark, only some things are told us - the gopher wood, a resinous wood, the pitch to make it tight, the rooms, the three stories, the window and the door. Dimensions are given, as in the description of the tabernacle and of the Holy City. These all have spiritual meaning and are important.

1. Who were the three sons of Noah? What does the name Noah mean?
2. What was Noah told to build? How was he told to build it?
3. What were kept safe in the ark?
4. What was the flood that covered all the earth?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

We read in the first verses of the chapter about daughters of men, sons of God, and giants. It is all a description of the spiritual condition of people in those days when wickedness increased. Sons and daughters represent new developments of affection and thought in people's minds. The daughters represent affections, because girls show more affection; and the sons represent understanding, because this is more characteristic of men. The daughters of men here mean the many developments of evil affections. Sons marrying these daughters would mean understanding uniting itself with these affections, excusing and confirming them. When it says that the sons of God married the daughters of earth, it means that the things of religious knowledge and faith were joined with the evil loves and made to excuse them. As if we should indulge some evil passion and then justify it by religious teaching and texts from the Bible. Then evil became very

great and strong; people grew proud with self-love, and they are called giants and mighty. (A. 568-570, 580-583)

It is said that when the Lord saw the wickedness of people, He repented of creating the human race. In another place we read, "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent." (Num. 23:19) "The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he could repent." (1 Sam. 15:29) The Lord's purpose toward humanity can never change, for it is always perfect love and wisdom. But it may take different forms toward people when they are in different states, as the love of a kind parent may be shown in different ways when children are good and obedient and when they are disobedient. So when people became evil, the Lord's love must work for them in different ways. He pitied them and tried in every way to protect them. This is meant by the Lord's repenting. (A. 587, 588)

It is said that the Lord would destroy humanity. If people turn from good to evil, is it the Lord who destroys them, or do they destroy themselves? (Ezek. 18:32) The beasts which also perished represent the affections of people's own hearts. (1 Sam. 15:3)

The Lord protected the people who were faithful, and provided in a new way that the innocent things of heaven might be saved in their souls. We are told how this was done, in the description of the ark by which Noah and his family were saved from the flood. A house or a temple is often in the Scriptures a type of the human mind. A person from whom evil spirits have gone out is called a swept and garnished house. The Lord in His effort to come into our life speaks of Himself as knocking at the door. We are to make ready for Him in the large upper room. We are to go into the closet in prayer. We find safety on the housetop, in interior, heavenly states. People who hear and keep the Lord's commandments build their house on the rock; people who do not keep them, build upon the sand. This parable also speaks of a flood beating upon the house. So the ark describes the human mind, arranged by the Lord in a new way, so that people could be saved in days when wickedness was strong. The ark was made with rooms or mansions. This points to the characteristic feature of the new order of the mind. The two faculties of will and understanding were at that time separated so that they could act independently. This had not been so before; they had acted as one. So long as people loved what was good, they understood what was true; but when they loved evil, their whole mind was carried down into darkness, so that they could not even think what was true. Now the two faculties were separated, so that people could learn what was true, and by their understanding could lift up their will to heavenly things. This is the arrangement of our minds today, and we could not in any other way be saved. The window upward in the ark, like the eye in the face, suggests the gift of intellectual light. The door in the side, like the ear, suggests the perception by the will and its inclination to obey. The three stories are degrees of understanding - knowledge, reason, and real intelligence. (A. 640-644)

The people meant by Adam and Eve were "celestial" people, of the Golden Age. They were led by love. The people represented by Noah and his family were of a wholly different kind. The understanding acted separate from the will. They learned heavenly things in an intellectual way and obeyed what they saw was true. They were led by truth rather than love. They were "spiritual" people, and their age was the Silver Age. They also had writings. Precepts of wisdom had been written down by people represented by a man called Enoch (Gen. 5:21-24) and they were used by the race of Noah. Because the work of Enoch was not lost, but preserved, it is not said that he died, but that "God took him." (Gen. 5:24; 6:9; A. 519, 521, 614)

## **Lesson 6**

### **Genesis 7: The Flood**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We are learning of a time when wickedness like a great flood swept over all the earth. Who was Noah? Who were to go into the ark with him? His wife and his three sons and their wives. And what more was he to take into the ark? Animals of every kind and food for them all. There were to be two animals of each kind, or of the clean animals seven; this means gentle, useful animals, such as sheep and goats and cattle. Unclean animals mean those that are fierce and evil, like wolves, bears, foxes, pigs, and others. Noah was six hundred years old; and he lived in all nine hundred and fifty years. (Gen. 9:29) We read in chapter 5, of others who lived eight hundred and nine hundred years. It may not mean that particular people lived so long, but their names were given to tribes. Remember how the names Moab, Midian, and Israel were used. The older children will learn too that the numbers tell something about the kind of people in each tribe.

When all were in the ark, the flood came with a great rain that lasted forty days and forty nights. The waters rose higher and higher (so is described the great increase of wickedness in the world), and the mountains were covered, and all living things died but those that were in the ark. Did you ever see a great flood? I remember an autumn freshet when a little mountain stream grew to a roaring torrent a mile or two in width, and overflowed the farms. The corn had just been cut and it was carried off, and the pumpkins and the fences and bridges. It was a fearful sight; the water was so strong, and it was sad to see things carried by and not be able to save them. Some of you may have seen floods that carried away houses and whole towns and drowned many people. The flood in the story lasted a hundred and forty days, and the ark was carried here and there upon the waters. Those in the ark were safe, like the man in the Lord's parable who built his house upon a rock: "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not." (Matt. 7:25) We may think how the Lord's power is protecting us from many kinds of danger when we are safe in the house on a stormy night and hear the rain beating on the windows and on the roof. Let us read the story.

##### **Junior**

If you have seen a great storm, or a flood when the sea or a river overflowed the land, carrying away crops from the fields, and perhaps cattle and houses, it will help you to see the flood that this story describes. At the same time, we can remember how the people long ago, who first had this story, understood it: the great flood of evil which grew so great that almost nothing of heavenly life was left.

The stories of creation and of Eden, and this story of the flood, were spread among many nations, where the Ancient Word was known. Fragments of the flood story very like ours have been found in the ruins of Babylon and Nineveh.

The numbers are important which tell Noah's age, the days when the storm began and ceased, the height to which the water rose, the time that it stayed upon the earth. We will notice only two numbers, Noah's age, six hundred years, and the forty days and forty nights of the storm. You can associate both those numbers with trial and temptation, six with the days of labor of the week, and forty with the forty years of Israel in the desert, and with the forty days and nights of the Lord's temptation.

1. What is meant by the flood in our lesson? Tell me another place in the Bible where a flood has the same meaning?
2. How many days did the rain last? Do you think of another place in the Bible where the same number is used?
3. What other numbers are mentioned in the chapter?
4. What were saved with Noah in the ark?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Does water in the Bible ever represent anything good? What did the water of Jordan represent in which John the Baptist baptized? What is likened to rivers of water in the first Psalm? What is represented by the rivers of Eden and of the Holy City? The clear teaching from the Lord. Does the flood in our lesson mean such truth? It means the opposite of this, false and evil thoughts filling the minds of all people. (Read Matt. 7:25, 27; Ps. 124:2-5; Isa. 43:2; A. 739, 790)

The number forty in many places in the Bible is associated with states of trial and temptation. Remember especially the forty years of wandering in the wilderness (Deut. 8:2-4), and the Lord's forty days and forty nights in the wilderness at the time of His temptation. (Matt. 4:1, 2) States of spiritual darkness and distress are especially meant when forty nights are mentioned. It is interesting to think why forty is associated with temptations. Forty like four first of all suggests a full character, the length as large as the breadth, "the measure of a man, that is of an angel." (R. 905-908; A. 9717) But this fullness of character is gained only through temptations, and these are usually meant when the number is mentioned in the Bible. (A. 730, 8098; E. 633)

The number seven occurs in our lesson associated with the clean beasts and fowls. Seven suggests the Sabbath and the holy heavenly state after temptations and effort are ended. The animals, as we know, represent human affections, and the clean animals represent affections that are holy; that is why the number seven is mentioned with them. (A. 716, 2044; E. 20, 257) It is also said that the flood would come after seven days. The seven here means completeness, but in regard to the people at that time it was completeness of evil, when the time for their judgment would come. In regard to the completeness of an evil state before judgment, see Gen. 15:16; A. 1857.

As we read the chapter, it seems full of repetitions; it tells things that have been told before, and tells them twice. Thinking only of the literal story these are repetitions, but they are not so in the spiritual meaning. When the same thing or almost the same thing is told a second or a third time,

spiritually it is speaking of a different state or faculty of life. The first time it may be speaking about the understanding and its thoughts, and the second time about the will and its affections. This explains the repetitions in many parts of the Bible. It explains too some apparent disagreements when a thing is repeated with some variation. For example, in verses 2 and 3 in our lesson it speaks of taking the clean animals by sevens, but in the chapter before and in verses which follow it speaks of taking them by twos. Naturally it seems like a disagreement; spiritually the "sevens" refer to a different and more holy faculty of the mind than the "twos." (A. 707, 717, 734)

The beasts and the fowls preserved with Noah in the ark represent the faculties of a person's own life, the beasts meaning affections and the fowls meaning affections for thought, which are intelligence. (A. 744, 775, 776) Why were unclean beasts preserved in the ark? The people represented by Noah and his family were not altogether good people, but were such as could be regenerated by temptations and become heavenly. (A. 615, 705) The unclean beasts represent their unheavenly affections.

In verses 19 and 20, it is said that the mountains were covered. What do the mountains represent? Interior, heavenly states; states of love to the Lord and one another. (A. 795; E. 405) We may be sure that heavenly affections disappeared as the flood of wickedness increased. The "high hills" (verse 19) is more correctly translated "high mountains."

There are places in the Bible that speak of the waters of Noah as if they had come upon the earth also at other times. Can this be true when you remember what the waters mean? (Isa. 54:9; Matt. 24:37; A. 705)

## **Lesson 7**

### **Genesis 8: Raven and Dove**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The storm cleared, and after a hundred and fifty days the waters of the flood were gone. The mountains again were seen, and the ark rested on the mountain tops. Noah opened the window of the ark and sent out birds, first a raven and then a dove, to see if the waters had gone. The raven, a big black bird with a harsh voice, flew back and forth over the waters until they dried up. The dove when first sent out found no place to light, and came back to Noah in the evening. The next time she brought back an olive leaf in her mouth. And the third time she did not come back, for the ground was dry. Then Noah uncovered the ark and the people and the animals from the ark came out to find happy homes. Noah worshiped; the Lord was pleased with his worship and promised that there should not again be a flood to destroy all things.

Can you think what this story meant to the wise people of long ago? After the days of Eden, evil and unhappiness were growing more and more. Finally they were like a flood that covered the earth, and almost nothing good was left.

## **Junior**

There was a time when wickedness was everywhere in the world. How is this described in the Bible story?

As we read the next chapter, keep in mind what you have learned about the meaning of the story and see if you can tell what the new lesson means. It tells of the going of the waters, until at last the ground was dry. What can this mean? When the flood came upon the earth, the mountains were covered by the waters; now their tops were seen again. Does anyone see what this can mean?

The clearing of a storm is beautiful. It is a glorious picture, the abating of the waters, the resting of the ark, and (in our next lesson) the rainbow in the sky. The name Ararat sounds familiar, and we think of Armenia and the country between the Black and Caspian seas. But the ancient people who first had this story had no maps and thought of the names chiefly in a spiritual way.

Read carefully about Noah's opening the window and sending out the birds. You will know that it means a trying out, to learn if the time had come when gentle, innocent thoughts, like doves, could again find place in people's minds. Yes, at last the time had come after the days of trouble, and it was time to come out from the ark. How many sons had Noah? Please learn their names.

The story tells of Noah's building an altar and offering sacrifice of all clean beasts and birds. We read also in Gen. 4 of offerings made by Cain and Abel. People did not sacrifice animals in worship until a later time. The offerings of Abel and Noah mean love and kindness expressed in worship and in other useful ways. It is such love and service which is as a sweet savor to the Lord. "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

The flood had gone and the ground was dry. Noah opened the ark, and he and his family and all the animals that were with him came out upon the earth. The Lord blessed them, and it was the beginning of another happy time in the world. It was not like the Garden of Eden, but people were good and they were happy; they remembered the Lord and made offerings to Him, and when they did so in a good spirit, it was pleasing to the Lord and He blessed them again. Let us read the story.

1. What were covered when the flood came, which were seen again when the flood went away? On what did the ark rest?
2. What did Noah open in the ark? What did he send out?
3. Tell me about the dove's first going out; the second going, and what she brought back; the third going.
4. How did Noah worship the Lord?
5. What numbers are mentioned in this lesson?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

What do the waters of the flood represent? The wickedness, especially the falsity, which overwhelmed the minds of human beings. For those represented by Noah and his family, it was a time of temptation. You see the meaning when you read that the waters were abated and the ark found rest. The wind which dried up the waters represents the heavenly influence which protects from evil. Compare Exod. 14:21. It was in the seventh month; do you see a meaning in this number? Seven is associated with the Sabbath and the rest which follows temptation. (A. 842, 851)

When the flood came, the mountains were covered; they represent heavenly states of love to the Lord and one another. As the flood abated, the mountains again appeared, and it was upon these mountains that the ark found rest; it is the return of heavenly states. But the people represented by Noah and his descendants were different from the people of the Golden Age. In that age, love was the leading trait of character; now it was intelligence, but intelligence associated with goodness, for they did what they saw was right. The mountains which were covered were the loving states of the Golden Age; those which now appeared were the good intelligent states of the new Silver Age which followed. (A. 795, 851, 854)

What did we learn was represented by the window in the ark, opening upward? Like the eye in the face it represents intelligence, the entrance of heavenly light into the mind. Now the window was opened; it suggests the opening of spiritual intelligence. And what came out from the window? Birds; and birds represent affections for thought of many kinds. As the evil days passed by, would the first thought be very interior and wise, or would it be ignorant and largely false? The blackness of the raven, the bird that was first sent out, suggests falsity or at least ignorance. (Ps. 147:9; Luke 12:24; A. 863, 865)

After the raven, came the dove; and what kind of thought does the dove represent? Heavenly thought of a very gentle innocent kind. This is why the dove was used in offerings to the Lord, and why the Divine Spirit coming forth in the Lord's human life was represented by a dove at His baptism. There are degrees of gradual increase of this heavenly thought; the first exercise of it is self-confident, with the sense of thinking and acting in one's own power. This is suggested by Noah's sending the dove from himself and afterward drawing it in to himself with his hand. The second time that the dove went it brought the olive leaf. Trees represent intelligence; the olive, which bears the noblest oil, represents intelligence in regard to the Lord's goodness and love. People's thoughts turned to these holy subjects, and the olive leaf plucked off is an emblem of the heavenly wisdom of the Golden Age handed down for them, which they took up into their minds and mouths. Again the dove went forth and did not return; it expresses the freedom, the joyful exercise of holy, heavenly thoughts, now that the evil days were wholly gone. (A. 870, 874, 886, 892)

How is it possible that offerings of animals could be pleasing to the Lord? Even in the old days people were taught that the offerings themselves were not pleasing, but the obedient, loving spirit in which the offerings were made. (Jer. 7:21-23; Ps. 40:6; 1 Sam. 15:22; Micah 6:6-8; Hos. 6:6) The beasts which Noah offered on his altar represent all good innocent affections which the

people of that age brought gratefully to the Lord to be blessed by Him. What can it mean when it says the Lord smelled the sweet savor of the offering? It means that He perceives the kind affection. (John 12:3; A. 922, 925)

The last verse of the chapter speaks of the succession of day and night and of the seasons. Spiritually it tells of successive states through which one passes in regeneration, and the progress will go on forever. Notice that in the first two phrases, "seed time and harvest and cold and heat," the lesser word comes first, suggesting development from less to greater; also the first phrase relates to more intellectual development and the second phrase to the development of the affections. But in the last two phrases, "summer and winter, and day and night," the stronger word comes first. It refers to a time when heavenly character is established. And here the phrase which refers to the affections precedes, and that which relates to intelligence follows, because in a fully developed character love has the leading place. Swedenborg says of these words that "they contain so many and so important hidden things of heaven that it is impossible to describe a ten thousandth part of them; for the angels by influence from the Lord, in those most common words taken from earthly things, can see with an indefinite variety the whole process of regeneration and the state of one about to be regenerated and of one already regenerated, when man can scarce see anything at all." (A. 935-937)

## **Lesson 8**

### **Genesis 9:1-23: The Rainbow**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Another time of goodness had come in the world after the flood of evil had gone. The happy people are called Noah and his family. The Lord blessed them and gave them power to use and to enjoy all the good things that He had made. The animals and plants could give them food and clothing. What food do the animals give us? Milk and butter and eggs and honey and their own flesh; and wool and leather and silk are used for clothes. The plants give us all the fruits and grains, cotton for cloth and wood for our houses. Every year people are finding out more and more of the substances and forces which the Lord has stored up in the earth, to add to the pleasure and comfort of our life. He wants us to enjoy all the good and pleasant things in the world. Pleasures are food for the spirit on which it lives and grows strong, only we must enjoy the pleasant things in good, kind ways and make them help and not hinder us in getting ready for the life of heaven.

A rainbow is one of the very lovely things that we may see in this world. Have you all seen a rainbow? Where do we see it, and when? You remember the beautiful arch across the sky, perhaps toward the end of a shower when the sun, rather low in the sky, was shining through the rain. There were in the bow all the bright colors, from red to violet, which we see when the sun's light shines through a prism. (Show the colors through a prism.) The colors are very beautiful when we see them against dark clouds.

To the good people after the flood, Noah and his family, the rainbow was especially beautiful because it was a special sign to them that the Lord remembered them and loved them. We can have the same thought about a rainbow when we see one in the sky, and it will give us a still greater thrill of pleasure. Read Gen. 9:8-17.

## **Junior**

Have all the children seen a rainbow? Where do we see it, and when do we see it? How does it look? It is a beautiful arch of colors stretching across the clouds when the sun shines at the same time that the rain is falling. It comes usually when the storm or shower is clearing away. From the inner edge of the bow to the outer we see the colors shading from red through yellow to green and blue and violet. Can someone tell us what makes the bow? All the colors are in the sunshine; they are separated when the sunshine passes through the raindrops as they are when it shines through a glass prism, and we see the colors against the cloud. A rainbow is one of the most beautiful things that is seen in this world, and beautiful rainbows are seen in heaven, and they are all the more beautiful because they have a meaning. When we see the bow we know that the sun is shining, and it is a sign that the storm will clear away. It should remind us that when there are dark times and times of trial the Lord still loves us and will bring us happiness again.

A beautiful rainbow gives us a feeling of joy. Who was it who wrote "My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky"? Have you ever seen rainbows in other places? In the spray of a waterfall, or in the spray of a fountain sprinkling the grass?

After reading our story today, the rainbow ought to be to us more than a thing of beauty. It should also seem to say, when we see it, that the Lord remembers us. We think it a very new and wonderful thing for an airplane to write words in the sky, but from long, long ago the Lord has written in the rainbow against the clouds this message of His love. Do you know any other places in Scripture where a rainbow is mentioned?

They were good happy people who are meant by Noah and his family, but they were different from the people who are meant by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They were not so childlike and loving as the people of earlier days; they cared more for learning; they had also more knowledge of the arts, they knew how to write and handed down much of their learning to the Egyptians and other ancient nations. The first happy days were called the Golden Age; the happy days after the flood were the Silver Age.

1. What was given to Noah and his family to eat, besides what was given to Adam?
2. Tell me some ways in which the Lord has made animals useful to people?
3. Is it right to enjoy play and eating and other pleasant things?
4. What makes the beautiful colors of the rainbow? What should it bring to mind, which makes the rainbow still more beautiful?
5. What did Noah plant? How were the people of these days different from those of the first happy days?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Look a little more deeply into the meaning of the first seven verses, which is suggested in the first section of the lesson for the younger children. What deeper meaning is contained in the fact that the Lord gave people dominion over the animals and all things of the earth? It means also that He gave dominion over all things of their own lower nature. He gave the power to enjoy these things in good innocent ways, and to make them useful to spiritual life. The fear and dread of people falling upon every beast means the power to restrain and control all evil affections and thoughts. The permission to eat flesh means the power to use natural enjoyments of play and eating and all pleasant things in a way that is good and strengthening to spiritual life. Everything "that liveth" being for meat means that we must be careful that the heavenly spirit, the spirit of use, is present in all enjoyments; it is this that makes them living. We must not enjoy food or any pleasure in a self-indulgent way, but with a thought of what is useful. The warning about eating the blood means that we must not destroy the heavenly spirit of charity and use. (A. 994, 995, 1001)

Read Gen. 1:29, 30, and A. 1002.

What law given to them of old time does verse 6 remind you of? (Matt. 5:38) What principle of spiritual life was expressed in the old requirement that one should be punished for doing injury by suffering the same injury himself? It means that in doing wrong to others we hurt our own spiritual life. The same principle was taught by the Lord by the Golden Rule. Can you repeat it? See also Luke 6:38. (A. 1011, 1012)

The rainbow is formed by the sunshine passing through the raindrops, and is seen against the cloud. What are the clouds and rain of the mind? Gentle rain represents teaching which is cleansing and refreshing. (Isa. 55:10) Dark stormy clouds represent thoughts so ignorant and false that they shut out the Lord and His loving presence. The ignorant, false thoughts of the Jews were represented by the dark clouds which hid the Lord upon Mount Sinai. The ignorant and imperfect thoughts of the disciples were represented by the cloud which shaded the Lord's glory on the mountain of Transfiguration, but then it was a bright cloud. The warm sunshine coming through the cloud and rain is something of the Lord's great love which comes to us even though our knowledge is imperfect and in many things quite false. The Lord comes to children through their simple thoughts of Him; He comes to heathen people through such knowledge as they have; He comes to us in dark and troubled states; and wherever His love is felt, the ignorant and false thoughts will do no great harm. It is the sunshine through the rain, a sign of His remembrance, giving comfort and hope. The sense of the Lord's goodness in such partial and modified ways as we are able to receive is the rainbow in the cloud. (A. 1043, 1051; E. 595; R. 466) What color in the rainbow seems especially to be a sign of the Lord's infinite love?

The rainbow was the token of the Lord's covenant with the Ancient Church. In common use, a covenant is a contract between parties, as a business covenant, or a marriage covenant. There is no business contract between the Lord and His church. Here a covenant means the kind of relation, of conjunction, existing between the Lord and the church. And the covenant was different and the token of the covenant different with successive churches, because the people of these churches were different. With the Ancient Church, the bow was the token of the covenant.

In the Jewish Church, the ark in which the Commandments were kept was "the ark of the covenant." For the Christian Church, the Lord instituted the Holy Supper. And remember how He said, as He passed the cup, "This cup is the new covenant (or testament) in my blood which is shed for you."

Can we see how the rainbow pictures beautifully the kind of relation which existed between the Ancient Church, Noah, and the Lord? The relation was not one purely of love, as had been the relation of the people of the Most Ancient Church of Garden of Eden days. The people of the Ancient Church were kept in living relation with the Lord by learning the Lord's truth, and as they obeyed the truth intelligently they came into states of charity. The raindrops are the symbols of the Lord's truth received by them from heaven, and the sunshine is the symbol of His love which they found in doing His truth. The rainbow would not have been a true symbol of the Lord's relation with the Most Ancient Church, nor with the Jewish Church; but it pictured beautifully and truly the relation of the Lord with this Church of Noah. There would not be another flood, if through knowledge of the truth, even imperfect knowledge, they came into states of charity.

In verse 20 we read that Noah began to be a husbandman and planted a vineyard. What is represented by wine and the vine? Spiritual intelligence. Why is it said that Noah planted the vine rather than Adam? Because spiritual intelligence was characteristic of this Silver Age, but not of the Golden Age. What can be meant by the saying that Noah drank of the wine and was drunken? Read Isa. 5:20-23. People are spiritually drunken when intelligence makes them proud; then they lose their wisdom and fall into many foolish and evil things. This was the danger of the people represented by Noah. (A. 1068, 1069, 1072)

Verse 23 contains a beautiful lesson of Christian charity. It teaches that we ought not to notice the faults of others, to accuse them and make fun of them; we ought to judge kindly, to pass by faults of ignorance and to see all that is good and beautiful. Evil spirits, we are told, search out what is bad in people, but angels look for what is good. (A. 1088)

## **Lesson 9**

### **Genesis 11:1-9: The Tower of Babel**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

But sadness comes again in the story as we read. Noah planted a vineyard and he drank wine and became drunken. You will know that this means that the people did not stay good; but again, like the people before the flood, they began to be selfish and to do wrong. There is a special story to tell us how the people grew selfish and tried to have their own way, and to rule over each other. They quarreled among themselves, and the world was not the happy place that it had been. Read the story, Gen. 11:1-9.

The story opens with a picture of people at work in the great open plain, which stretches for miles about the river Euphrates. Long afterward there was a city in this land of Shinar called Babylon (Dan. 1:2), with enormous walls and palaces. Here the great proud king Nebuchadnezzar lived,

and Daniel and the children of Israel were captives. You remember the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar set up in the plain, and the fiery furnace and the den of lions. The people in the story were working to build a great tower. There are no stones in these meadows, but they were making bricks of clay and burning them hard in the fire and laying them in bitumen. Bitumen is like the asphalt which is now used for paving; it comes up in some places from the ground. You have seen pictures of the great pyramids built in Egypt in old days. Great temples also were built in Babylon and other cities by the Euphrates in steps rising one upon another to the shrine on the top. We picture such a tower and the people busily working, making bricks and carrying and laying them, determined that they would build to heaven and be great and famous. But how is it when people are proud and selfish? They begin to disagree and to quarrel with each other. So it was with the people who were building the tower; they began to speak strange languages and not to understand each other, and they were scattered abroad over the earth. Let us read the story. (Verses 1-9) This part of the chapter is a story given to teach a lesson; it is a kind of parable. The next story that we read, about Abram and his journey, really happened as it is told.

## Junior

Notice how the days of the decline of the Most Ancient Church are described in a brief genealogy, a mere list of names. (Gen. 5) The names are not the names of people, but of churches, or varieties of religious life and worship. The ages given mean not length of time, but the quality of each church. They grew less and less heavenly. It seems as if the Lord wished in His Word to make the record of the evil days as brief as possible, reducing it to a mere list of names. And again the declining days of this Church of Noah are described in the same brief way. (Gen. 10 and 11)

We are coming near to the point where real history begins. Heber, written sometimes Eber, without the "H," is the first name which means a person, a man of that name. He was the head of a family and tribe in Syria. From his name, the name Hebrew is derived. He was the ancestor of Abraham and of other Hebrew tribes.

You know the story of the tower of Babel, but read it again. (Gen. 11:1-9) The word "babel" has from this story come to mean a confusion of sounds. "And ever o'er its babel sounds the blessed angels sing." The tower of Babel means more spiritually the development of pride and desire to be great and to rule over others, using the church and its holy things in this evil way. This thought of pride and ruling over others goes with the name Babel and Babylon all through the Scriptures. How plainly it stands out in the Book of Daniel, in Nebuchadnezzar's words: "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty?" (Dan. 4:28-33) How fiercely the anger of such selfishness when it is thwarted is pictured in the den of lions and the fiery furnace! And still again we find Babylon in the Revelation in chapters 17 and 18, ruling and corrupting the peoples of the earth, until by the Lord's power the city is overthrown. What does it mean that Babylon (like the serpent) appears so early in the Bible and persists till almost the end? We have here the picture of a very deep-rooted enemy of human life. It is an enemy to be shunned. This story of Babel is given by the Lord to warn us of it and to put us on our guard against it.

There was a very old city by the river Euphrates, called Ur. Perhaps you can find it on your maps near the mouth of the river; in the old days it was nearer to the mouth of the river, for the sea reached higher up than now. There were wide green meadows all about it, and canals from the

river watered the gardens and the palms. It was a large city. There were libraries of books, and some of the books are still left, for they were not printed on paper but on earthen tablets that last a long time. There were temples too, but not for the worship of the Lord, for the people worshiped idols. This city of Ur by the Euphrates was the first home of Abram, the father of the children of Israel. Abram had two brothers, Nahor and Haran, and their father was Terah. Haran had died, but he had left a son named Lot. We shall learn how the Lord led Abram away from Ur to a new home in the land of Canaan. All the family started and journeyed on together, as the tribes of Arabs journey with their tents and camels and flocks of sheep and goats. They would go slowly, stopping a short time in one place and a long time in another. They traveled up the river a long way and stopped at a place which they called Haran for the brother who had died. It was a rich pasture country for their flocks. (Gen. 24; 29) We shall learn next time more about the journey to the land of Canaan.

1. What was the name of the tower that people tried to build to heaven? What city had almost the same name?
2. In building the tower what did they use for stones? What did they use for mortar?
3. What were they building the tower for? What happened to those who were building it?
4. Where was the land of Shinar? Where was Abram's first home?
5. What journey did Abram and his family take?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Spiritual states and qualities are represented in the Bible and by countries; what is represented by Babel and Babylon? Read Nebuchadnezzar's proud words and the "proverb against the King of Babylon" (Dan. 4:29, 30): "Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." (Isa. 14:13, 14) Babel is a type of supreme self-love; the development of this love in the world is represented by the building of the tower. (A. 1326; J. 54; E. 1029; R. 717)

"Of one lip." Not that they all had the same forms of faith and worship, for in these there was great variety, but they were of one lip and essentially of one doctrine because with them all charity was the central and important thing. Note a similar picture of unity possible in the Christian Church in T. 763; R. 73; P. 259. "I have heard that churches which are in different goods and truths, provided their goods have relation to love to the Lord and their truths to faith in Him, are like so many jewels in the king's crown."

"From the east." The Hebrew idiom is peculiar. The literal thought seems to be of journeying from the east of Canaan to the plain of Shinar by the Euphrates. Spiritually the thought is clear. They left the state of nearness to the Lord, in which Eden was planted, for a low-lying external life. (A. 101, 1250, 1292)

In building the tower, they used brick for stone. What is represented by stones used in building? Sure fixed truths which will not change. Remember the precious stones of which the wall of the

Holy City is built. Remember the stones used in building the temple. (1 Kings 6:7) In regard to these stones it was commanded that no tool should be used upon them while the house was building; it was also commanded that stones for an altar should not be hewn. (Exod. 20:25) It means that in religion and worship we must build with genuine truths as the Lord gives them to us in His Word, and must not distort and fashion them to suit ourselves. This suggests the meaning of the bricks; they are artificial and represent not genuine truths but fictions of humanity's own making. (A. 1296, 1298)

The bricks were burned. What is spiritual fire? Of what quality was the fire in those who built the tower of Babel? The bitumen also which held the bricks together is inflammable and represents the selfish love which prompted and sustained the false thought. Remember the bitumen in the land of Sodom and the fire which destroyed the city. (Gen. 14:10; 19:28; A. 1297, 1299)

Speech is the expression of thought. When we read that the people were of one speech, it means that their thoughts in regard to the Lord and heavenly things were in agreement. There was variety according to the kinds of people, but it was like the harmonious variety in heaven. When self-love grew strong and people cared only for themselves, then began disputes and disagreements; this was the confusion of tongues. (A. 1285, 1316, 1322)

In chapters 10 and 11, we find a transition from the first chapters, which are parables, to the following chapters which are true history, but which also represent heavenly things. In regard to Noah and others, we read that there were no such people, but that the names represent churches and kinds of worship. (A. 1140) The names in this chapter are the names of people, but at the same time of tribes and churches. (A. 1362) With the next chapter, which tells of the call of Abram, true history begins. (A. 1401)

## **Lesson 10**

### **Genesis 12: Call of Abram**

#### **THE STORY**

We have reached the end of the chapters that were taken by Moses from the Ancient Word. We come now to a different kind of writing, to literal history of people who really lived and of events that really happened. But these are told in the Lord's Word in such a way that the chapters, as much as those from the Ancient Word, all have spiritual meaning, about our own spiritual life and the life of the Lord in this world. (A. 1403-1405)

#### **Primary**

The Lord called Abram to take a long journey. The little map in our notes today will help us to follow the journey. First it was from Ur up to Haran. In this part of the journey, Abram was traveling with his father Terah and his brother Nahor. Another brother, Haran, had died in Ur before they started, but Haran's son Lot, Abram's nephew, was with them. They lived a while at Haran, and Terah died there. Nahor stayed there and made it his home. But Abram and Lot with him journeyed on again at the Lord's command to Canaan, with their families and flocks. (Who

was Abram's father? Who was the brother who stayed in Haran? Who was the nephew who went on with Abram?) We must know, too, Sarai, Abram's wife.

We go with them to Canaan and to several places in the land after they crossed the Jordan River. They came first to the oak (not the plain) of Moreh, and to Sichem, the old city Shechem, near the middle of the land. There was here a lovely meadow to which we come several times in the story of Jacob and of Joseph. They grew very fond of this place. Then Abram moved on to Bethel, high on the hills looking out over the land. In each place to which he came, he built an altar and worshiped the Lord. We shall soon come again to Bethel, but we have first to journey on with Abram into the open pasture country at the south of Canaan, and then to Egypt, because there was famine in the land of Canaan. It was a long journey and away from his native land; but the Lord called Abram and was leading him, and promised great blessing to him and to his family. The Lord protected Abram and Sarai from harm in Egypt and they grew rich, especially in sheep and cattle. Read the blessing in Gen. 12:2, 3, 7.

## **Junior**

We must go back and begin to read at verse 27 of chapter 11. We have begun to follow the journeys of a tribe as they folded up their tents by the city of Ur near the mouth of the Euphrates. Terah was the father of the tribe, and one of his sons was Abram. Terah and his sons set out from this old city, already old in their time, and traveled with their camels and flocks and herds up the valley of the Euphrates River to Haran. If they were going to Canaan, why did they not go straight across the country to the west? It was a desert; they could not cross it, but must go around it to the north, keeping near to the rivers. Remember this in the story later on when we hear of people going and coming between Canaan and Babylon.

Terah died in Haran. The family of Nahor, Abram's brother, stayed on in Haran, but the Lord called Abram to leave this land and its idols and to come into the Holy Land.

It would be good if we could, to get acquainted with Haran in passing, for we shall hear often of the part of the family which remained here (What was the name of the brother of Abram who stayed in Haran?) and we shall visit them again to find a wife for Isaac, and again with Jacob. But we have few interesting pictures of Haran, and must picture it to ourselves from what the story tells us of this place in a land of shepherds.

Abram journeyed from Haran with his nephew Lot. It was the moving of a tribe with flocks and herds. (Gen. 14:14) They crossed the Euphrates, came down by the old city of Damascus, no doubt an old city in the time of Abram, down through the country east of Jordan, and across the ford of the Jordan into the Holy Land. The Jordan was a boundary of Canaan and a sort of gate of entrance to the land. The first camp in the land was by the oak or terebinth (a tree something like an oak) of Moreh. It was near Sichem or Shechem, where a beautiful meadow stretches eastward from the mountains Ebal and Gerizim. Here Jacob afterward lived and dug a well. Here Joseph came looking for his brethren, and here the Lord talked with the woman of Samaria. Abram was the priest as well as the leader of the tribe, and when he camped he built an altar to make sacrifices to the Lord. They journeyed on and camped again on the high hill east of Bethel, from which there is a wide view over the country east and west. (Gen. 13:3, 9, 10) Who remembers other things that afterward happened at Bethel, from one of which it got its name which means

"the house of God"? Still they journeyed on to the South Country. Can you follow on the map to the great open pastures about Beersheba?

There was famine in the land. This sometimes happened when there was no rain, and then many people went to Egypt where the meadows are kept fresh by the overflowing of the Nile. Do you remember people by and by who went to Egypt to buy food when there was famine in the land of Canaan? Now Abram went with his family and his flocks and oxen and asses and camels. Egypt was an old country even in those days. The great pyramids that travelers now see in Egypt and other monuments were old in the time of Abram. There was the same river with its canals, the same meadows and palms. The Egyptians were kind to Abram, and they gave him a home among them and sent him back safe to the land of Canaan.

Abram trusted the Lord and obeyed Him, when the Lord called him to leave his native land and take this journey. There was blessing promised, and we know from the story that follows how the family of Abram was increased. And do you see fulfillment of the promise, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed"? We may think of the wonderful service that the family of Abram would do for the world in receiving and caring for the Sacred Scriptures, the Divine Word. And in that family, too, our Lord would be born.

Is there a lesson here to help us in making our lives useful and a blessing? You will say yes when you remember that the land of Canaan in Scripture stands for heaven and a heavenly life. The call to us is to leave the ways that are natural to us which are not good, and to follow the Lord's ways. It needs courage and faith and patience, but it is the way to make our lives a blessing to ourselves and to others.

And wait, one other wonderful thought. What does the story tell us about the Lord's life in this world? He must turn from all things in the nature which He inherited from humanity, which were not perfect, and must turn to the things that were Divine. He must have found strength and courage in this promise to Abram, and in other promises to Abram and to Jacob.

1. Where was Abram's first home? Where did he live for a time on his journey? To what land did the Lord call him?
2. Where was Abram's first camping place in the land of Canaan? What was growing there?
3. Where was his next camp? On what? Near what city?
4. In what direction did he journey on?
5. Why did Abram go for a time to Egypt?
6. Does the Lord call us to take a journey? What is the promised land where He makes ready our home?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Every part of Scripture in its deepest sense is about the Lord, and every part in senses less deep is about the spiritual life of the church and of every human being. Swedenborg in his expositions of Scripture follows now one and now another of these lines of application. The Arcana interprets the first eleven chapters of Genesis mainly in their applications to the spiritual life of the early churches on the earth. But now at chapter 12 there is a change, and the application is made to the life of the Lord, and this line of application is followed for the most part to the end of Genesis. Deeper facts of the Lord's development and conflicts and glorification are opened to us which do not appear in the letter of the Gospels. It is especially interesting to find that the story of Abram describes in its deeper meaning experiences of the Lord's childhood, about which the Gospels tell so little.

In the literal story we read of Abram. In the deeper meaning we read of the Lord in childhood, when He began consciously to recognize His duty to leave the tendencies to evil and the weaknesses which He inherited from the mother Mary and to turn to things celestial and Divine. The call of Abram and his obedient following of the call represent the consciousness of this duty in the Lord's mind as a Child and His faithful turning as a Child to things Divine. In general this is pictured in Abram's leaving the distant and idolatrous land of Ur and Haran and coming into the land of Canaan. (A. 1414) The work was not done in a moment, but step by step, and the successive stages of progress are represented by the places at which Abram camped. Each state marked a fuller union with the Divine, which is represented by Abram's altar and worship in each place of his sojourn. The Arcana will help you to see what states are represented by the oak of Moreh, Shechem, and Bethel. (A. 1442, 1443, 1451)

Going on toward the South. A certain spiritual quality is associated with each point of the compass. The garden was eastward of Eden; what did it mean? The east is associated with the greatest nearness to the Lord and openness to His love; the west represents a state more remote in affection; the south is associated with the bright light of intelligence, and the north with obscure intelligence. What change is represented by Abram's journeying toward the South Country? Advance in heavenly intelligence. (A. 1458)

And then the famine and the stay in Egypt. The hunger of the Lord as a Child was to know how to do the saving work, the love for which He felt within. The famine was grievous. Every child is eager to know, and asks a thousand questions. The Lord's desire to know was greater in proportion to His great longing to be doing the Divine saving work. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Egypt, the land to which the nations looked in famine, which was also the storehouse of learning from the ancient days, represents a natural state, especially a state of natural learning which is normal and beautiful for a child. The Lord's learning as a Child is represented by Abram's going to Egypt in this time of famine, and also by the stay of the Child Jesus in Egypt, of which the Gospel tells us. (A. 1460, 1461, 1464)

In connection with this visit of Abram in Egypt is the incident of calling his wife his sister for his own greater safety. There is almost a repetition of the incident later in the story of Abram (Gen. 20:2, 5, 12), and again in the story of Isaac (Gen. 26:7). A similar experience must be described

relating to earlier and later periods of development. But what is the experience described? We have thought of Abram as representing the Lord as a Child, especially the growing desire of the Child to be doing the Divine saving work. His wife then represents affection for the knowledge which will show how to do the work, which will give the love expression. This affection is represented by Sarai as the wife. But when we apply ourselves to learning, we become interested in truth and knowledge for their own sake, and this is Sarai as a sister. Presently the loving purpose again comes forward, claims so much of the knowledge as can be applied to use and discards the rest. So Sarai is recognized again as the wife of Abram, and they leave Egypt with much riches. (A. 1492-1496)

Do we see a reflection of this story when a young man, wishing to devote his life to some good use, goes to school and college to get the knowledge that will show him how to do the use? While busy with his studies, he is interested in the knowledge for its own sake. And it is safer for his love of use that in this Egyptian, college atmosphere it is not always kept to the front. But in time he must return to his purpose of use and discard the things of knowledge that do not serve this purpose.

This story of the Old Testament makes more full our understanding of the brief statement in the Gospel that Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

## **Lesson 11**

### **Genesis 13: Abram and Lot**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We all know Abram. And do we all know Lot? Who was he? They went up out of Egypt, our story says. How did they come to be in Egypt? How had they prospered there? They were now very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold. "Cattle" means also sheep, of which they had many. They came into the "south." They traveled north and east, but into the "south country," as the pasture country at the south of Canaan was called, much as we call the southern part of the United States "the south," and might speak of one traveling north from Mexico as coming into the south.

They came to the hills of Bethel, coming back to places where they had been before. Yet places are never quite the same to us when we come back to them again, for we ourselves have grown older and changed. We are now with Abram and Lot on the high hills of Bethel, looking out over the land. Hills to the north and south, to the west hills and the plain stretching off toward the sea, and to the east they look down steep hills to the beautiful, warm, well-watered plain of Jordan and across to the hills beyond. Why are they looking out so earnestly over the land? And why do we see them presently parting from each other and going different ways? Read verses 1-9 of our chapter and see if you can tell why. Our larger picture today, of Palestine sheep and shepherds, helps us to imagine the flocks of Abram and Lot and the shepherds who took care of them. Think how it would be if twenty shepherds and hundreds of sheep were trying at the same time to get

water from a spring, and if native people of the land were trying to drive them away and to keep the water for themselves. They ought not quarrel; it would be better to separate.

Our little picture shows us the plain of Jordan, where Lot chose to make his home. We think of Sodom near the north end of the Dead Sea. Our picture is from the ruins of Jericho, and the stream running out into the meadow is from Elisha's spring. It looked to Lot like the garden of the Lord, like Eden, which we have learned about. There were dangers there, as Lot afterward found out, for Sodom and Gomorrah were wicked cities. Zoar was a little city of the same group, perhaps over toward the eastern hills across the plain.

Abram was left standing on the hills at Bethel. The Lord told him to look over the land in every direction and to walk through it, for it should some day belong to his family and they would increase to very many people. Lot had chosen the plain; Abram kept to the hills and made his home at Hebron, high among the hills to the south of Bethel. Both Lot and Abram were living in tents like other shepherds, and Abram pitched his tent not in "the plain" but by the oaks (or terebinths, trees that look much like oaks) of Mamre, another name for Hebron. We soon have a lesson which tells of a tree shading his tent door. What happened here at Bethel? What here near Sodom? What here at Hebron?

### **Junior**

Lot had come with Abram and his family from Ur in the land of the Euphrates, and he had journeyed on with Abram from Haran to the land of Canaan and had gone down with him into Egypt. Who was Lot? Abram's nephew, the son of his brother Haran. Abram and Lot came back together from Egypt "into the south," not in a southerly direction, but into the South Country. This was the name of the open pasture land stretching southward from the hills of Judaea to the desert. It is a rolling country with few trees, but with broad sunny slopes where large flocks of sheep and droves of camels pasture. They journeyed through this country and back to the hills of Bethel where they had camped before. We know that Abram had sheep and oxen and asses and camels when he went down to Egypt. Now he had still more, and Lot had many also. There were also native people in the land with their flocks and herds. The Canaanites were the lowlanders living by the sea and in the Jordan Valley; the Perizzites were villagers of the middle country. Disputes were sure to arise between the herdsmen about the pastures and the watering places. Isaac afterward had such trouble in the South Country (Gen. 26:20), and it was probably to avoid such disputes that Jacob dug his well at Shechem. But Abram would have no strife with Lot; they should separate in peace.

At Bethel you stand on high hills which form the crest of the land. You look westward over lower hills and the broad Philistine meadows to the Mediterranean Sea; eastward you look down into the deep valley of the Jordan and to the purple hills beyond. The Jordan is a wonderful river. Follow it on the map from the great springs under Mount Hermon through the Sea of Galilee and down to the Dead Sea; all the way it is running down hill fast. The name Jordan means the "descender." Before it reaches the Sea of Galilee, it is much below the ocean level and it keeps on going down so that the lower part of its course is in a deep trough very much lower than the sea. The Dead Sea into which the river empties is very salty, and its shores are barren, but north of the Dead Sea bordering the river east and west are wide meadows. The sunshine is very hot, and in the old days when the water from springs and streams was carefully used, there were rich

gardens and orchards everywhere. In this meadow near the Dead Sea we think of Sodom and Gomorrah and Zoar and other cities. Lot looked from the hills of Bethel into the Jordan Valley and chose it for his home. It was a beautiful garden country, but the people there were wicked.

After Lot had gone from Abram, the Lord blessed Abram and told him that the land should belong to him. He went from Bethel to Hebron or Mamre, a very old city in what was afterward called the "hill country of Judaea." There Abram's flock pastured on the hills and he pitched his tents by the oaks or terebinths near the town. A very old tree near Hebron is still called "Abram's oak," and it may perhaps be near his camping place. Now let us read the story.

There are times when it is well to separate. It is a duty to separate in our own minds things that do not agree with true Christian life: laziness, enjoyment in eating and drinking which leads us to eat and drink too much, fondness for play, for seeing and hearing pleasant things which makes us neglect our work, which makes us selfish and thoughtless of other people's comfort. Pleasures are good and useful when they are enjoyed in a right way, and made useful to Christian life. This is the plain of Jordan seen as a garden of the Lord. But enjoyments that are selfish, that are evil, which pitch their tents toward Sodom (and Sodom is evil) - these must be separated and dismissed. They must not be allowed to crowd, to quarrel with, to weaken and perhaps to destroy the Christian life.

1. Who was Lot? What journey did he take with Abram?
2. Where is Bethel? When did Abram first camp there? When did he come again to the place?
3. Why did Lot separate from Abram? Where did Lot make his home?
4. What sort of country was the plain of Jordan? What cities were there? Were the people good or bad?
5. Where did Abram make his home? At what other place had he camped by a tree?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

What does the journey of Abram from his native country to the Holy Land represent in our experience and in the Lord's life on earth? What does the famine represent, and Abram's stay in Egypt? Abram returned from Egypt to the mountain east of Bethel where he had camped before. The camp upon this mountain represented a holy, heavenly state. The return to the mountain represents the coming again to holy states after having strengthened the life with natural knowledge represented by the stay in Egypt. Are we always careful after we have gained knowledge, to be as gentle and innocent as before? (A. 1556)

What Lot means in this story is made plain by his choice of a home. We are familiar with the land of Canaan as a type of heaven and spiritual life. The holiness centers in Jerusalem and the central hills of the land. The low-lying plains by the sea and Jordan represent external and lower developments of life, the plain of Jordan especially the enjoyment of external pleasures, among them pleasures of eating and drinking and of the senses, right and good in their place, but so easily approaching evil. It was here that the children of Israel first entered the land, and here also

John the Baptist gave the first simple teachings of heavenly life. Lot chose the plain of Jordan, and he represents in the story the external nature with its interests and pleasures. Abram who remained upon the hills represents the more interior, heavenly nature. There is often strife between these two natures. Many things which are naturally pleasant do not agree with our duty to the Lord; they must be separated or they will continually war with and hinder the heavenly life. This putting aside all natural things which conflict with heavenly life is represented by Abram's sending Lot away. (A. 1571, 1581)

When Lot came with Abram from Ur, we learned that he represented the external side of life, of which Abram represented the internal. Through most of the story of Abram and Lot, Lot has this meaning, representing interests and pleasures of outward physical life, both those that are good and helpful to spiritual life and those that are not. But in this thirteenth chapter, Lot has a special and more restricted meaning. He means in this chapter those interests and pleasures of external life that cannot agree with spiritual life and must be separated. We find Lot in the broader meaning again in the next chapter, where he is taken captive and is released and restored to his place by Abram. (A. 1547) How much wiser, with the Lord's help, to dismiss pleasures, desires and longings that will not agree with spiritual life, and give them up, than to worry along with them, allowing the spiritual life to be continually harassed and crippled by them.

We have developed the thought in relation to ourselves. We can see the meaning of the story in relation to the Lord, and can see the picture of His separation as a Child of all things of outward pleasure that would not agree with the Divine life which He was to live and the Divine work which He was to do. A helpful number in the Arcana puts this separation from Lot side by side with Abram's leaving Egypt. Leaving Egypt and Pharaoh means the discarding of things of knowledge which were not helpful to living out and doing the work of the Divine love. And this parting from Lot is the separation of things of external pleasure which are not helpful but discordant. (A. 1542)

We must have a final thought of Abram after Lot parted from him. He was left standing on the hills of Bethel, and was given a new vision of the land and a new promise of its possession by his family. It suggests the new freedom and expansion which comes to us in some degree, and which came to the Lord in Divine degree, as each hindering evil was removed. Compare the Lord's words: "Now is the Son of man glorified," after Judas had gone out into the night. (John 13:30-32)

Think of the encouragement to the Lord of these promises of great increases of Abram's family, for the Lord's family are those who become His children, living with Him the Christian life. Sometimes the increase is compared to the dust of the earth, sometimes to the sand of the sea, and sometimes to the stars of heaven. The general thought is the same, but more specifically the dust has reference to the increase of good, the sea to the increase of truth, and the stars to both in a higher degree. (A. 1610)

We have had a thought of the meaning of Lot's home in the plain of Jordan. Have we a thought as to the meaning of Abram's home in Hebron, the ancient city in the hills of Judah? And can anyone learn the meaning of the oaks, or terebinths, by which he camped? They stand for the child's perception of truth, not yet well ordered, but strong and tenacious. It was the oak of Moreh, and now the oaks of Mamre. (A. 1616)

The Canaanite and Perizzite were also in the land. They represent still more evil things with which we must contend. At Abram's first coming into the land the Canaanite only was mentioned

(Gen. 12:6), but now both Canaanite and Perizzite. The first opposition to good life in a child is from unheavenly feelings, meant by the Canaanite. After children have reached the age of intellectual development represented by the stay in Egypt, false thoughts also trouble them, represented by the Perizzite. (A. 1573)

As Lot beheld the plain of Jordan it was beautiful as "the garden of the Lord." It means that the external nature with its interests and pleasures may be wholly good and lovely if they are kept in order and in true relation to the spiritual life. But there were wicked people in that country, suggesting how easily external pleasures are enjoyed in a selfish way and become evil. (A. 1588, 1600)

Abram's first camp in the land was by the oak or terebinth of Moreh at Shechem, and the tree represented a child's first heavenly perceptions, not very intelligent but strong and sturdy. The oaks of Mamre where he now pitched his tents represent heavenly perceptions more interior and abundant. (A. 1443, 1616)

We have spoken of Abram and Lot as representing the more interior and external natures in ourselves. In a deeper sense, they represent the Divine and the external natures in the Lord. The separation of external things not in agreement with internal was never perfectly accomplished except in His life. The external nature was never brought into perfect order and beauty as a "garden of the Lord" except in Him. (A. 1542, 1568)

## **Lesson 12**

### **Genesis 14: War with the Eastern Kings**

#### **THE STORY**

The chapter is of special interest in several ways. It has geographical interest, for it leads us from a distant country on an interesting journey, to homes of giant people. It has an historical interest, for it gives us perhaps our first contact with history outside the Bible. Amraphel, king of Shinar or Babylon, is believed to be Hammurabi, whose wise laws have come down to us graven on a tablet. It has a strong spiritual interest because it describes stirring experiences in the Lord's life and in our lives. It is the first chapter of warfare, and warfare pictures temptation and spiritual combat.

#### **Primary**

There was a battle, and it came about in this way. There were a group of five cities in the plain of Jordan, where Lot had made his home: Sodom and Gomorrah and three more. They had been paying money each year to a king who lived far away, Chedorlaomer, king of Elam. Now our map will help us. Can you find Elam? The king of Elam came with three other kings who were his neighbors, to conquer again the cities which would not pay, and make them pay the tribute. The dotted line helps us to follow their journey. It is in part the same as the journey that Abram took from Ur to the land of Canaan. The eastern kings conquered other peoples on their way, who were living in the country east of Jordan, from the Sea of Galilee down to the Dead Sea. These were giant people, with names hard to read and to remember. Then they conquered the Horites, or cave-dwellers, who lived in the mountains which afterward belonged to Edom. There were caves

in these mountains and narrow clefts between the rocks, and in later days elaborate temple fronts were cut out in the cliffs in the rock city, Petra. Then the kings from the east went out to the westward into the open pasture country (Are you following the dotted line?), then turning back they came to Kadesh, at the south of the land of Canaan, which we learn more about by and by, when the children of Israel come from Egypt. The Amalekites might be met almost anywhere in this southern country, for they were wandering people. Amorites means the highlanders, people of the hills. The eastern kings now came to Hazezontamar, the one lovely spring on the west shore of the Dead Sea, which was otherwise a desert region,, and so up to the plain of Jordan and the five cities, Sodom, Gomorrah and the rest, which it was their special object to reach and conquer. The "slime-pits" were springs of bitumen, like the asphalt of street pavements. There are such springs in the neighborhood now, which throw up lumps of jet, which float on the Dead Sea. The eastern kings conquered in the battle, and taking captives and goods they started northward to Damascus on their way home. And how about Lot, who was living near Sodom? He was taken and his family and goods. The king of Sodom and some others fled to the mountains.

Now word was brought to Abram, living under the trees at Hebron. He gathered a little army of his own men and his neighbors, and went after the eastern kings. Read verses 13-16 and follow the line dotted on the map. So Lot and his family were rescued and brought home. And a beautiful thing happened on the way, the meeting with Melchizedek, king of Salem, in the king's dale, which from old times was a name for the Kidron Valley at Jerusalem. Melchizedek seems like the wise men who came to worship the Baby Lord. He gave Abram bread and wine, which were sacred in the old days, as they are with us in the Holy Supper, and gave him a blessing. And Abram gave Melchizedek as a gift to the Lord tithes, a tenth, of all.

So we think of Lot again living in the plain of Jordan, and Abram in his tent under the trees at Hebron.

### **Junior**

We must have the map before us for this lesson. Show me the eastern country from which Abram came. There were four kings in this eastern country, and Chedorlaomer was the chief. His rule reached to the Mediterranean from Elam east of the lower Tigris; Ellasar was probably near by; Shinar was the district of Babylon, and "nations" mean probably the tribes of northern Mesopotamia, the land between the Tigris and the Euphrates. Cities in the west, which had served the king of Elam for twelve years, rebelled and refused to pay tribute. After two years, the king of Elam came with others from the East. He must move as Abram did, northward along the Euphrates to go around the desert. Near Carchemish he would cross the river and march southward by Damascus, and down on the eastern side of the Jordan. The first people who tried to stop his march were the Rephaim in the high pasture country east of the Sea of Galilee. (Josh. 12:4) Further south the Zuzim stood in his way, probably the same as the giant Zamzummim, where afterward the Ammonites lived. (Deut. 2:20) And further on were the Emim, a people also accounted as giants, in what afterward became the home of Moab. (Deut. 2:10, 11) The conquering army marched down through the country east of Jordan and came into the mountain gorge which leads from the Dead Sea southward. At the side of this gorge is Mount Seir where the Horites the "cave-dwellers" lived. Afterward the strongholds of the people of Edom were in these mountains. Still later the beautiful buildings of Petra were carved out in the cliffs as we see them in pictures. The cave-dwellers were overcome. Then the kings turned westward through the open

pasture land of Paran, and again turning they reached Kadesh where, by and by, the Israelites camped when they came from Egypt, while their spies explored the country. (Num. 13:26) Here the Eastern kings scattered the Amalekites and then turned northward, this time through the wilderness west of the Dead Sea. This barren country falls steeply down to the Dead Sea, which lies thirteen hundred feet below the ocean level. Half way along the western shore there is a spot of green watered by the "spring of the kid," Engedi. Here was Hazezon Tamar, "groves of palms," whose mountaineers the Amorites were overcome by the conquering army. Next Chedorlaomer was met, probably in the plain at the head of the Dead Sea, by the kings of five cities, among them the king of Sodom with Lot. The "slime-pits" were holes where were springs of bitumen, like the asphalt used in paving. (Gen. 11:3) There are still such springs under the water of the Dead Sea, and lumps of black bitumen are found floating on the surface. The kings of the plain were overcome in the fight, and the victors started on their journey home, marching northward to Laish, afterward called Dan, under Mount Hermon.

Word was brought to Abram of what had happened and how Lot was carried away. Where was Abram living? By the terebinths at Hebron. He armed his tribe, three hundred and eighteen men of his own household, and hurrying northward with his little army and other men of Hebron he overtook the kings camping under Mount Hermon. He chased them to Hobah "on the left hand," that is on the north, of Damascus, and brought back Lot and all that the kings were carrying away. The king of Sodom came out to meet Abram in "the king's dale," which is probably the Kidron Valley under Jerusalem. Melchizedek also met Abram there. He was the king of Salem, no doubt the same town which was afterward called Jerusalem. Melchizedek was "the priest of the most high God." He seems like a relic of the good people of long ago who had lived in this land and worshiped the Lord. He blessed Abram, and Abram gave him tithes (tenths) of what he had taken, which was a grateful confession that the Lord had given him success.

This is our first story of warfare, the first warfare which has come into the story of Abram. We ask ourselves what warfare there is for us in Christian life, and what warfare there was for the Lord. The warfare is with things that are evil and largely in our own selves. "A man's foes shall be they of his own household," in his own heart and mind. And did the Lord have battles to fight with evils? He did, and much more severe than the battles which any of us must fight, and much more severe than we should suppose from the little that the Gospels tell us of His temptations and His nights of prayer. The truth is that even as a Child He met and overcame evil spirits, who were giants in their pride and strength. Get someone to read you the last ten lines of A. 1690, which tell how severe and how continual the Lord's temptations were. And the Lord fought all His battles from love for us, that He might help us to conquer in our battles. If we do our part and trust His help, we cannot fail. In the story, Abram and his neighbors must give help from the hills to make victory perfect. We, too, must look to the hills for help, to the Lord and heaven.

1. Where was Lot's home? What "cities of the plain" do you remember?
2. What distant kings did Sodom and other cities serve? What happened when they rebelled?
3. On which side of the Dead Sea did the conquering army journey south? On which side did they go north?
4. Where was Abram living? Where did he overtake the Eastern kings?

5. Where were Salem and "the king's dale"? What does Salem mean? Who met Abram there and blessed him?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

This is a story of war. What warfare is there in our own spiritual experience, and what warfare was there in the Lord's life? (A. 1659, 1673, 1690)

Was the Lord tempted, and did He gain victories even as a Child? This story tells us so. Even as a Child, He met and overcame spirits who were giants in pride and evil strength. The same evil spirits are meant by the giants in Genesis 6:4. They were terrible in their conceit, and so persuasive that they would almost take away one's power of thought. Read about them in A. 581 and 1673. And to think that the Lord even as a Child must meet and overcome these giants of evil, perhaps because they were evils developed in the childhood of the race.

The rebellion of the cities of the plain we can well understand - evil dispositions which are quiet for a time but after a time assert themselves and are rebellious. Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. Not literally twelve years in our spiritual experience, but during a full period in which life with a child is kept in order by rules of custom and propriety. Such rules and customs are the eastern kings ("apparent truths," the Arcana calls them), and when the rebellion comes there is a brave effort, and there was a brave effort in the Lord, from the same child's motives and rules of propriety, to bring the life into order and to keep it in order. And to a degree the effort succeeds, as the kings of the east subdued the cities of the plain. But the work was not perfect. The king of Sodom escaped, and Lot was taken away. The root of the evil is not reached, and good things of outward life which should be preserved are swept off with the evil. How often it is so, in the first efforts for reform. Abram to the rescue. A higher, more enlightened rationality must take hold, with more of the Divine help and more of the light of heaven, to complete the victory over Sodom and to restore Lot to his place. (A. 1661, 1667, 1668)

The meeting with Melchizedek after the battle is a picture of consolation after spiritual victory. Salem is peace. After every victory of the Lord there was consolation and fuller union with the Divine, and so in less degree with us. Melchizedek is a remnant of a wiser, more spiritual church. The bread and wine accompanying his blessing represent, as in the Holy Supper, the new gifts of love and wisdom from above. It is beautiful to know that in appointing bread and wine for the Holy Supper the Lord was reviving the use of symbols known in the more spiritual church before the days of sacrifices. And Abram's tithes are the acknowledgment that the victory and all blessings of victory are from the Lord alone. (A. 1726, 1727)

We have thought especially of the application of this story to our own spiritual experience. In its deepest sense, it tells of experiences in the Lord's life, of combats which He endured and victories which He gained while He was still a child. The chapter of the Heavenly Arcana explaining this story tells wonderful and beautiful things about these experiences of the Lord. See for example No. 1705.

## **Lesson 13**

### **Genesis 17:1-22: Change of Name**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

Abram was living in the Holy Land. He had come at the Lord's call from his first home in the far East; he had camped near Shechem and near Bethel; he had been to Egypt and come back; he had separated from Lot and made his home in Hebron. From there he had gone out to his first battle, and now he was again peacefully camped by the oaks or terebinths. The chapter following our lesson gives us a picture of the tents by the path and the tent door where Abram sat in the heat of the day. The tree with its friendly shade was near, where travelers rested while Abram ran to the herd not far away, and where they ate the meal that he got ready. This was the home where Abram was living when the Lord appeared to him, and made a covenant with him, and promised him great blessings.

Abram was ninety-nine years old, and his wife Sarai had no child. The Lord told him that they should have a son Isaac, and that his descendants would become a great nation. Ishmael also, the son of Hagar, Sarai's maid, should be the father of a nation. The Lord would give Abram all this blessing and the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and He told Abram that every man child that was born in his house or that was bought with money should be circumcised when he was eight days old. This was a ceremony that had the same meaning as baptism. It was a sign that the child should be the Lord's, and that wrong and evil things should be put away for His sake. Do you remember in the Gospel of Luke the story of an old man who was promised a son, and how the neighbors and cousins came together on the eighth day to circumcise the child and to give him a name? That was in the same hill country of Judaea, perhaps in this very town of Hebron where Abram lived. It was long, long afterward, but the people still remembered the command which had been given to Abram.

At the same time that the Lord blessed Abram and commanded circumcision, He changed his name from Abram to Abraham, and the name of his wife Sarai to Sarah. The new name, Abraham, means "father of a multitude"; but there was a deeper meaning than that in the change. The letter "h" which was added to Abram's name and to his wife's, was from the Lord's own name Jehovah, and it was a sign that Abraham and Sarah were to be His children, to obey Him, and as far as they could, to be like Him. You may like to read with this lesson some verses of the next chapter and some from the first chapter of Luke.

1. At what places had Abram lived in the Holy Land? Where was he now living?
2. What is a covenant? In this covenant between the Lord and Abram, what would the Lord do? What must Abram do?
3. What would Abram's name be from this time? What would his wife's name be? Why was the letter "h" added to their names?
4. What does it mean to have a part of the Lord's name added to our name?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

"God Shaddai," translated "God Almighty," was the name by which the Lord was known to Abraham. So it is plainly said in Exod. 6:3. Swedenborg tells us that Shaddai was a name used by the idolatrous people in the land from which Abraham came (Josh. 24:2, 14, 15), and the Lord permitted him to call Him by the name already familiar. It is a sign of the Lord's gentleness in leading people to a truer knowledge of Him, and of His patience with our imperfect conceptions of Him. We none of us know Him as He truly is in His infinite love and wisdom; we none of us call Him by His true name.

The name Shaddai had been given by the idolaters to the god who they thought sent certain experiences of rebuking and of consolation which came to them. When the name is applied to the Lord, it means especially His presence with us in temptation and in the consolation which follows temptation. The name Jehovah means the Lord as the one who is, and brings to mind especially His infinite love. The fact that the Lord was first known by Abraham as God Shaddai and afterward by his descendants as Jehovah, suggests that in our regeneration we may first know His power and consolation in temptation, before we can know the fullness of His love. Read much of interest in A. 1992, 7193.

A covenant is an agreement with something to be performed on each side. In this covenant with Abraham, the Lord would make his descendants a great nation, and would give them the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. Abraham and his family on their part were to observe the rite of circumcision. What do the Lord's part and Abraham's part of the covenant represent in our relations with the Lord? Our duty is to put away what is evil, for the Lord's sake. The Lord can then multiply our spiritual life without end and give us an eternal home in heaven. (A. 2026, 2039)

Should there be something in our experience that is represented by the change of name? Spiritually our name is our quality, our character; as we say that one has a good name or a bad name, or a name for this or that. The Lord's name is His Divine quality - His goodness, truth, and power. When do we drop our old name and receive something of the Lord's name? You find a similar thought in Rev. 3:12, in the promise to people who overcome, that the Lord's name shall be written upon them.

What change that took place gradually in our Lord Himself during His life on earth is represented by this dropping of the old name and taking of the Divine name? The laying down of the finite and imperfect nature, and the forming of a nature wholly Divine. (A. 2009)

Do you see why circumcision was on the eighth day? It was because it represented a new beginning. By repentance, the old state is left behind and a new and better state is begun. It is the first day of a new spiritual week. (A. 2044)

Abraham's laughter (verse 17), like Sarah's (Gen. 18:12), had something of unbelief and scorn in it. (See also Gen. 21:6.) But in the deeper sense, the laughter means the happiness in the new development of heavenly life which is represented by the birth of Isaac. (A. 2072)

There is a beautiful thought in this giving of a son to Abraham and Sarah in their old age, as in the giving of John the Baptist to the old Zacharias and Elisabeth. New births of heavenly life come only from the Lord and not till we feel our own powerlessness to become heavenly of ourselves.

## Lesson 14

### Genesis 18: Visit of Angels

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Abraham was living at Hebron, his tent shaded by the oaks. We think of a black goat's hair tent, large and irregular in shape. The tent of the chief usually stands near the path by which strangers may come. Three visitors came near, and Abraham welcomed them as people do in that country, with every politeness and kindness, and did all that he could for their comfort. He would have done so for any visitor, but he seems to have known that these were angels of the Lord. In that country they wore sandals, and the roads were hot and dusty. A first thing for the comfort of a guest was to bring water to wash the guest's feet. They must have something to eat. Sarah ground meal in the little hand mill, and baked cakes on the hot stones, pushing aside the fire. And Abraham brought more for their refreshment. Butter means curds, and there was milk and meat. So they ate under the tree; and Abraham stood by to wait on them, and they talked with him as they ate.

They told Abraham that he and Sarah should have a son. Then the men rose up to go toward Sodom, where Lot lived, and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.

##### Junior

Reading the 18th chapter we meet the names Abraham and Sarah. They are our old friends, but the names are changed. Does anyone remember the reason for the change?

One of the most lovely customs in the East is that of hospitality to strangers. Receiving a stranger, the people of the Bible land are profuse in their expressions of kindness. The guest is safe under their roof. They give everything to the guest. The best they have is not too good.

Three visitors came toward Abraham's tent and he made them welcome. Read and tell me what he did for their comfort. Do we hear also in the Gospels about washing the feet of a guest? (Luke 7:44) What food did Abraham and Sarah prepare? Do you know how the women grind the meal, one stone laid on a cloth on the ground and the other with a pin near the edge for the hands of the women? Our Lord spoke of two women grinding at the mill. (Matt. 24:41) If you come to a village in the afternoon, you may hear a gentle roar of the millstones in all the homes, grinding for the evening meal. It is among the signs of desolation when the millstones are no longer heard. (Rev. 18:22) When camping you may have baked cakes on the hot stones. In Palestine they do so, and earthen ovens are also used, heated by a quick fire, the cakes baked on the hot sides of the oven. Butter probably means curds. We can imagine the scene at the tent door under the tree, the

guests refreshing themselves and talking with Abraham, who stood near to wait upon them. Someone look up and read to us Heb. 13:1, 2.

We listen as the guests talk with Abraham and hear the promise of a son. It was like the promise by the angel to Zacharias of John the Baptist's birth. (Luke 1:18) They must know that it was the Lord's doing and the Lord's gift. What would be the name of the son now promised to Abraham and Sarah? (Gen. 17:19) There had already been promise of this son and it had been told what his name should be. Sarah laughed, and before at the same promise Abraham had laughed. (Gen. 17:17) We must connect laughter with Isaac; the name means laughter. They laughed at first because they did not believe. By and by, they laughed for joy. (Gen. 21:6)

We go with Abraham and the heavenly visitors toward Sodom, to a place on the high hills from which they could see Sodom and the plain. There Abraham earnestly prayed that if there were fifty righteous, forty-five, forty, thirty, twenty, or even ten, these might be saved. Coming again to the same place the next morning early, he saw a great smoke rising, for Sodom was destroyed. Lot and the few who could be saved were led out of the city to a place of safety. (Gen. 19:27-29) If Abraham longed and prayed so earnestly for the people of Sodom, how the Lord must have longed for the salvation of all who could be saved, when with His great love He saw the evil in the world.

1. What heavenly guests came to Abraham at Hebron? What did he do for them?
2. What promise did they make to Abraham?
3. Where was Lot living?
4. Why was Abraham anxious for his safety?
5. How are Sodom and Gomorrah mentioned in the New Testament? Were the cities standing then?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

This beautiful picture of eastern hospitality tells of a beautiful experience in our Lord's life. Abraham looked up and saw three men approaching. It was a literal, outward experience for Abraham. (A. 2149) To the Lord there was given a perception of the Divine as it would be, a trinity of the inmost Divine love, the glorified Human Nature, and the Holy Spirit going forth in all works of blessing. It is a little as if you were given a perception of the angel that you may become. The Lord desired to keep the perception and to come into closer union with the Divine. The washing of the feet of the guests and their eating of food which Abraham provided represent mutual approach and closer union between the Divine and the Human Nature of the Lord. (A. 2160, 2164, 2178)

Why is the birth of Isaac now promised? Because this closer union of the Divine made possible a new step in development and glorification, the development of a rational power, spiritual and Divine. (A. 1404, 2213) In us, every step of regeneration is a Divine gift. It does not come till we have realized our own helplessness and our dependence on the Lord. This is several times

suggested in Scripture by the birth of children to parents in old age. The new birth, the new development is recognized as the Lord's gift. It is of steps of regeneration that it is declared in the Gospel, "With God all things are possible," and that it is asked in the Old Testament, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (A. 2218-2221)

And now the last section of the chapter, Abraham's prayer for Sodom. Why is it appropriate here? What relation has it to the visit of the angels in the first part of the chapter? With the clearer perception given to the Lord's human mind of the Divine, came a clearer perception also of the conditions of evil in the world and a more intense desire to be reaching with saving help all that could be reached and saved. The tenderness and the persistence of the prayer. The numbers fifty, forty-five, forty, thirty, twenty, ten, you will know describe spiritual states of life to which the saving help can reach, even to some remains of childhood's innocence not yet destroyed. (A. 2259-2285)

## Lesson 15

### Genesis 21:1-21: Ishmael and Isaac

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Where had Abraham been living? In his tent under the oaks at Hebron. But he moved his tent and lived for a time in the Philistine country and in the big south country and especially at Beersheba. I came one day to Beersheba after a long ride on horseback across the open pastures. I saw hardly a tree all day. At one place, Gerar, were underground chambers where grain once was stored. Now a graceful gazelle ran quickly across the hill and disappeared. There were no houses at Beersheba, but black tents of wandering Bedouins nearby, and there were wells; "Beer" means well. Abraham dug wells and Isaac dug wells in this pasture country. There are still wells at Beersheba, where sometimes toward evening thousands of sheep are gathered from the open pastures for water. Abraham now lived at Beersheba.

Here the child was born who had been promised. Isaac was his name. When he was perhaps two or three years old, the child was weaned, perhaps as old as Samuel when he was weaned and taken by his mother to the tabernacle. There was a feast of rejoicing at the weaning of Isaac. But one was seen mocking, a lad now fifteen or sixteen years old, an older son of Abraham, whose mother was Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian maid. It had been promised that Isaac should be Abraham's heir; he should follow Abraham as head of the family. Ishmael and Hagar must be sent away. Abraham was grieved to send Ishmael away, but it must be, if he could not agree with Isaac. Hagar and Ishmael went out into the desert. The bread and the bottle of water which Abraham gave them could not last long. It was a small goatskin, which in that country they use for a bottle. The Lord took care of Hagar and the boy, and when the bottle was empty He showed Hagar a spring of water. The lad grew and was skillful with his bow and arrows. He was a man of the plains and the father of wandering tribes. Isaac lived with Abraham at Beersheba.

## **Junior**

We have to leave Hebron for a time to follow Abraham into the south country, where he lived for a while at Gerar, in the edge of the Philistine land, and made a more permanent home at Beersheba. Isaac was born and lived all his life in the south country. The birth of Isaac in fulfillment of the promise brought great joy. He was circumcised on the eighth day and received his name. The circumcision meant to them what baptism means to us. Abraham also made a feast when Isaac was weaned, now perhaps two or three years old. Ishmael was seen mocking at the feast. We must know Ishmael. He was a son of Abraham and his mother was Hagar, an Egyptian, Sarah's maid. We learn of this in chapter 16, and also of the beginning of trouble, when Hagar despised her mistress Sarah. She was punished by Sarah and fled into the wilderness. There the angel of the Lord found her and comforted her and sent her back to submit herself to Sarah. The angel said also that her son should be the father of a multitude, but he would be a "wild ass man, his hand against every man and every man's hand against him." We are reminded of this story as we read chapter 21. Now it is Ishmael, a lad of fifteen or sixteen years old, who mocks at Isaac, and this time both Hagar and Ishmael are sent away from home. Again they were in the wilderness, but again an angel came to them in their trouble. A spring of water was shown them, and they were told that the lad would be the father of a great nation. The pictures in the two chapters are much the same: the contempt of Hagar and Ishmael toward Sarah and Isaac, the distress in the wilderness, the comfort from heaven, and the promise to Ishmael. Our new chapter also adds about Ishmael that he grew and dwelt in the wilderness and became an archer; that he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran (toward Egypt), and that his mother took him a wife from Egypt, her own country.

There is something fine about Ishmael, and he has a blessing in his place, but he is harsh and quarrelsome and set in his own opinions (a wild ass man) and disposed to be critical of others and to condemn and ridicule others who perhaps are wiser than he. Do we get a little that way sometimes, especially when we grow old enough to think some for ourselves and to have opinions of our own? It is all right to do some thinking for ourselves, but we should also be kind, and we must be respectful toward others who may be wiser than we, and especially toward what the Lord tells us in His Word.

1. Where was the South Country? What sort of country was it?
2. At what places did Abraham live in the South Country?
3. What does the name Isaac mean? What was done in Isaac's honor when he was weaned? Who was seen mocking?
4. Who was Hagar? What was done because Ishmael mocked at Isaac? What became of Ishmael?
5. When might I be called as Ishmael was, a "wild ass man," "his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him"? What must I do then?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Isaac was born. Natural birth is a type of spiritual birth. (John 3:1-18) The birth of a child represents the beginning of some new spiritual state, some new development of heavenly life. The birth of Isaac represents such a new development. What is meant by the fact that Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac was born? A hundred suggests fullness and completeness. One state must be complete, its work must be well done, before we can advance to the next state. Childhood's lessons must be well learned before we are ready for youth. (A. 2636)

"Rising up early." We find it in verse 14 of this chapter and in verse 3 of the next chapter. The spiritual thought is of doing promptly the thing that we see is right, before our perceptions become dimmed and our resolution weakened by lower considerations.

The birth of Isaac means the gaining of a heavenly understanding, and the weaning of Isaac represents the complete putting away of all claim that we are intelligent of ourselves, and the recognition that only the Lord can give true understanding. (A. 2630, 2649)

The story of Ishmael and Isaac as unfolded to us in the Arcana gives a wonderful insight into the life of the Lord, and it gives practical help in relation to our own development and our opportunity with young people. In general Abraham represents celestial states of a little child, together with childhood's eager learning. Ishmael and Isaac represent rational powers, at first more natural and afterward more spiritual. And Jacob and his sons represent the working out in life. Ishmael and Isaac picture a most interesting phase of development, when young people begin to think and reason for themselves. The rational power has two phases of development: natural, when people judge, as they must at first, largely by outward appearances; and spiritual, when windows in the mind are opened to higher light and judgments are more wise. (A. 2657)

Nowhere in any psychology is the natural reason better described than in the pages of the Arcana about Ishmael. It is hard and contentious, quick to criticize and condemn. Read A. 1949, 1-964.

The points of view of the natural and the spiritual reason are well contrasted in A. 1911 and 2654. We recognize the picture in boys and girls of our acquaintance and in our memory of ourselves. We can help much in this period of development by sympathy and wise companionship, by respecting the right of the young people to use their new power of reason, guiding as we can to kindly and helpful interests. If the stage of development is a little trying to others, it is more so to the one who is in it, and also the person in this state does not know but it will be permanent. We know that the Ishmael stage is passing, and that a kinder, wiser state, the Isaac stage, will come. We can be encouraging. The humbling of Hagar before her mistress and the dismissal of Hagar and Ishmael from the house mean that the natural rationality must not assume superiority and condemn the higher wisdom which is spiritually enlightened, and especially the truths of Divine things revealed to us by the Lord. In its place even the natural reason has the care of heaven and the blessing of the Lord. (A. 2650, 2655)

The phases of development of rational power that we recognize in ourselves had their place in our Lord's development, as He increased in wisdom and stature. With Him the natural reason had its attractions, but He disciplined it and put it in its right, subordinate place. A rational power was developed in Him, which by glorification became Divine. It is represented by Isaac in the story.

## **Lesson 16**

### **Genesis 22:1-19: The Sacrifice of Isaac**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

At the time when Abraham lived, people made offerings of animals and fruits to their gods. They believed that their gods were pleased with such sacrifices, and sometimes they even offered their children in their worship. There were such customs in the land from which Abraham had come, and with the people of Canaan, among whom he was living, and Abraham had not yet learned better than this. In his mind the greatest service he could do for the Lord would be to offer to Him Isaac, his son, whom he so dearly loved. Would the Lord be pleased that Abraham was ready to give to Him the thing that he loved best? Would He really wish him to sacrifice his son? I will ask you these questions again when we have read our story.

Abraham was living in Beersheba when the Lord told him to go into the land of Moriah and offer Isaac to Him there. He started early in the morning, with two young men to help and an ass, taking wood and coals to kindle the fire on the altar. Their road was toward the north, and on the third day when perhaps they had reached the hills of Bethlehem they saw the place afar off. Moriah was a hill that afterward became a part of Jerusalem, the hill on which the temple was built. But when Abraham came to it, it was a wild hill with ledges of stone and thickets. We see in our little picture the top of the hill, which is protected under a pretty building, the Dome of the Rock. The young men and the ass must wait while Abraham and Isaac went on alone. They were very solemn moments for them both, as they walked on together. Read the story and what they were saying. (Gen. 22: 1-8)

Read a few lines more and hear the voice from heaven which Abraham heard, and see the ram caught in the thicket to be offered instead of his son. (Verses 9-14) Now I will ask you again: was the Lord pleased that Abraham was ready to give to Him the thing that he loved best? Did He wish him to sacrifice his son?

Another beautiful promise was given to Abraham, of increase and blessing which should come to his family. Then Abraham and Isaac went back to the young men and the ass, that were still waiting, and all went home. Where was their home from which they had gone for this sacrifice to the land of Moriah?

##### **Junior**

We had a little talk the other day about the offerings of animals that people used to make in their worship. We asked ourselves whether the Lord really enjoyed such sacrifices. The Scriptures answer in many places. Let someone look up and read to us Micah 6:6-8; and other members of the class, Ps. 51:16, 17; I Sam. 15:22; Jer. 7:22, 23; and Hosea 6:6. "Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression?" Did people really in those days sacrifice their children to their gods? They did sometimes in the nations among whom Abraham was living. The motive of utmost service to the Lord was right. This way of showing devotion to the Lord was wrong. Our story shows us how the

Lord taught Abraham this lesson. He accepted the spirit of devotion, but He would not allow the sacrifice of the boy. We are taught that in general the sacrifice of animals was permitted, to prevent the sacrifice of children. (A. 2818)

Can you follow the journey on a map from the home in Beersheba to the hill Moriah? How long do you estimate that the journey was? Look at the old rock in our little picture, the top of the hill. This was perhaps the place to which Abraham came, and it was in later days probably covered by some part of the temple.

Read carefully the story. It tells of a deep trial that came to Abraham, and in the deeper sense it describes one of the severest of the Lord's temptations.

1. Where was Abraham living in the South Country? What was the name of his dearly loved son?
2. Where was Moriah? What stood on that hill years afterward?
3. How could Abraham think that the Lord would be pleased by the sacrifice of his son? What did the Lord allow him to do? What did He forbid?
4. How was an offering provided for Abraham to offer?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Abraham's trial was in relation to his son Isaac. The trial of the Lord that is described in the deeper sense was in relation to the rational power, which Isaac represents. It must be submitted wholly to the Divine will. In this trial it seemed to the Lord that He was giving up the sole means by which He could save humanity. (A. 2773) Did the Child Jesus perhaps suffer something of this trial at twelve years old in the temple on this very hill Moriah, when after conversation with the doctors, in which all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers, He went down again to Nazareth for other patient years of working out the truth in a life of loving service?

What spiritual thought is contained in rising up early to do a hard duty?

The ass and young men must represent lower faculties which can help part way, but in a deep trial we must go beyond them. For example, we may in some trial help ourselves with reasons why it must be best and useful. It is right to find help in such considerations as far as they go, but often we must go beyond them, trusting where we cannot by natural reasoning explain. Compare the Lord's going beyond the disciples in His trial in Gethsemane.

Isaac's question, "Where is the lamb?" expresses touchingly the fear of the Lord that even if He should endure to the limit of temptation and make every sacrifice, there might not be those who could be reached and saved. The answer, "God will provide," expresses the assurance that in the Divine mercy there would be those who could be saved. They are further represented by the ram caught in the thicket by his horns - those capable of the life of charity but entangled by ignorant and natural thought. (A. 2805, 2830)

The wood of the altar is a subject inviting careful study. Read carefully A. 2798, 9812. The wood from the yearly increase of a tree, which serves on the altar to catch the fire and hold it in contact with the sacrifice, may be thought of in a simple way as representing the good which has already been experienced and become a part of character, and is helpful in catching the Divine fire and kindling the new offering. In the fullest sense it represents the good realized in our Lord's human life, in which the Divine fire was brought to earth, and is still on earth within our reach, for the kindling of our lives.

You will note at verse 11 the change of name from God to LORD (Jehovah). The name God makes prominent the Divine Truth, and Jehovah the Divine Love. The name prevailing in a Psalm or chapter often gives the keynote of truth or love. The sudden change at verse 11 is beautiful. In temptation the Lord is with us in His truth. After victory come consolation and consciousness of His love.

Notice the closing verses of the chapter (Verses 20-24). They tell of increase in the family of Nahor, the brother of Abraham, who still lived in Haran. Why mention of Nahor's family in this place? A natural answer is that it tells us of the relatives to whom Abraham presently will send to find a wife for Isaac. Spiritually these verses extend the promise and blessing just given, declaring that the help of the Lord's victory will reach even to remote and gentile people. (A. 2765, 2861)

## **Lesson 17**

### **Genesis 23: Buying a Burial Place**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Sarah was a hundred and twenty-seven years old when she died at Hebron. She and Abraham had lived together a long time, going where the Lord led them, waiting together for the fulfillment of His promise, and rejoicing together in their son Isaac. And now the long life here was ended. We think of the old man kneeling by the side of Sarah, and then rising to arrange for a safe resting place for the body. He was "a stranger in the land." He had lived there many years, it is true, but probably outside the city, he and his family and servants a little tribe by themselves, and without any permanent possession. He wished now to buy a tomb or burial place, and the business was arranged at the gate of the city, where perhaps the chief men of the city were sitting, and in the hearing of all who passed in and out by the gate. Everyone would know and it would be remembered that the land was bought.

The cave of Machpelah was in a field near Hebron, belonging to Ephron. This was the place that Abraham chose and bought. There Sarah was buried, and afterward Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob and their wives. Look at our picture of Hebron. Can you find a large building with high walls and towers? It is a mosque, a Mohammedan church, which stands over the cave. The Mohammedans consider it as a very sacred place. The whole business of buying the cave was done with care and with great politeness, as is the custom with those people. We feel that it is a holy time when someone goes from this world and the body is laid to rest. It is holy, for angels are

near to welcome the one who is passing to their world, and the Lord is near to raise up one who dies to the home which He has made ready.

### **Junior**

It was a beautiful picture of eastern hospitality when Abraham received three visitors at his tent door. Now it is another picture, when with eastern politeness he buys the field and cave for a burial place from Ephron, one of the men of Hebron. For although Abraham had lived a number of years in this country and near Hebron, he owned no land for his own. Why did he need a burial place? Sarah had died, after her long life with Abraham, of which we have been learning. How old was Sarah? Our picture shows the mosque over the cave. In the picture we see it surrounded by other buildings of the town. Our chapter speaks of it as before Mamre or Hebron, which probably means that in the old time the field and cave were to the east of the town. How many different names of Hebron do you find in this chapter? Why was the bargain arranged at the city gate in the presence of the people? We read sometimes of a king or a judge sitting in the city gate, to hear and settle differences among the people.

The story speaks of the Hittites, or children of Heth, and Ephron was one of them, who sold Abraham the cave. The Hittites were at one time a powerful people, who lived mostly to the north of Canaan. In Abraham's time they were scattered through the land in several towns, of which Hebron, an old and important city of the land, was one. The Hittites were people remaining from an ancient church and were among the best people of the land. For this reason Abraham was allowed to live among them, and they were friendly to him. Why was the silver weighed in paying for the land? Evidently it was not coined. The shekel was originally a weight, and later a coin about the size of a fifty-cent piece. The mention of all particulars, the cave and the field and the trees in the borders of the field, reminds us of the importance of detail in the Lord's Word.

There is something very tender and holy about this story. Is it simply because we feel sympathy with Abraham? There is a deeper reason. What do angels think of when we read in the Word of burial? They think of resurrection to the heavenly world. In the old days people loved to say when one died that he was gathered to his fathers or to his people, and they had no thought of the family sepulcher, but of going to live with those dear to them in heaven. They would see that meaning in this story.

1. Where was Hebron? By what other names was the city called?
2. Who were the "sons of Heth"?
3. What do angels think of when the Bible speaks of death?
4. Did Abraham pay for the burial place, or did he accept it as a gift?

### **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

#### **Intermediate**

Two spiritual thoughts are brought to us in this beautiful chapter. First, we remember how often in the Scriptures the Lord's church is called the bride or wife. The death of Sarah can represent

the languishing of spiritual life in the church, as it was languishing when the Lord came into the world, and as it has languished at other times. Abraham's mourning pictures the Lord's mourning because of this languishing of His church. The buying of the cave of the children of Heth, and the burial of Sarah there, represents the raising up by the Lord of a new church among the gentiles, as is done when a former church perishes. These kindly neighbors of Abraham, so willing to sell or give him the cave, represent the willing gentile people who received the Lord and became of His church. The Lord's joy in this reception is beautifully pictured in Abraham's bowing himself before the people of the land. (A. 2910, 2916)

The children of Heth, of whom Abraham bought the burial place, were remnants of an ancient people who preserved something of goodness of an external kind. They represent such external knowledge of good life and such good gentile states as the Lord can appeal to in establishing again a spiritual church. That the burial place was a cave means that the faith which the Lord finds is obscure. (A. 2913, 2935, 2986)

Ephron offered to give the cave, but Abraham insisted on paying for it fully. It may seem to us that we can of ourselves become heavenly. But this cannot be; it must be by the Lord's power and the Lord's gift. No one can add a cubit to his stature. This was represented by Joseph's returning to his brothers the money that they paid for corn. It is meant by the prophet's words, "Yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." And it is meant in our story by Abraham's insistence upon paying for the field, and by his weighing out in full the four hundred shekels of silver. (A. 2946, 2966)

The other spiritual lesson grows out of the thought that when we read in the letter of the Word of burial, angels think of resurrection. They are the earthly and the heavenly sides of one event. With this thought in mind, the care of Abraham in providing the burial place for Sarah and for all his family tells us of the Lord's loving care and solicitude in providing heavenly homes for His children. This tender thought runs on into the redoubled assurance at the end of the chapter that the cave and the field were made a sure possession. (A. 2974, 2985)

## **Lesson 18**

### **Genesis 24: Rebekah at the Well**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

You may have a picture of the beautiful maiden Rebekah, giving water from her jar to an old man, a traveler. He had come on a long journey, with ten camels of Abraham, his master, and with all kinds of precious things of his master's in his hand. The well or spring from which the maiden has filled her jar is at Haran, outside the city gate. Do you remember that name, and can you show it to me on the map? This was where Nahor, Abraham's brother, stayed when Abraham and Lot went on to the land of Canaan. Abraham had had word of Nahor's family. (Gen. 22:20-24)

And why had the servant of Abraham come? Because it was time for Isaac to have a wife. She must not be of the native people of Canaan, but she must be from the relatives of Abraham who still

lived in Haran. It was an important errand on which the old servant came, having sworn to Abraham to do it faithfully. The Lord had led him safely to the gate of Haran, to the spring where the maidens of the city were coming at evening to draw water. He prayed that the Lord would show him among the maidens the one who should be the wife for Isaac. The Lord put into his heart the sign that the maiden should be the one who, if he asked her for water, would give him drink and give water to the camels also. The sign came true, and it was Rebekah. He gave her presents that he had brought. Her brother and her people welcomed him in their home. They spread the supper for him, but he would not eat till he had told his errand. They all felt that the Lord had led him, and that it was right for Rebekah to go. They asked her and she was ready. The old servant gave rich presents to Rebekah as a sign of her betrothal and to her people as a price paid for the bride. In a few days the camels were turned homeward, with Rebekah and her old nurse and her maids, and came into the south country, where Abraham was living and where Isaac lived.

I have told it as quickly as I could, for we want time to read the beautiful story. I have suggested how you can shorten it if you have not time to read it all. As you read, you will be thinking, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way."

### **Junior**

If you have read the chapter, let me ask a few questions about it, and then you will want to read it again, to get the full beauty of it. What is the important errand on which Abraham sends his old and trusted servant? Notice the manner of swearing in verse 2, and the same in Gen. 47:29. Have you noticed any other manner of swearing in a chapter that we have lately read? (Gen. 14:22)

What two things was the servant strictly charged not to do? (Verses 3-6) To what place was he sent, where relatives of Abraham were still living? Why is it called the city of Nahor? (Verse 10) Show me on the map the long journey that the servant and the camels took from the south country, perhaps from Beersheba.

It is a beautiful scene at the spring by the gate of Haran, the old servant and the camels arriving from their long journey, the camels kneeling down to rest, the maidens of the city coming with their jars for water. What sign did the Lord put into the old servant's heart by which he should know the one who should be the wife for Isaac? (Verse 14) Rebekah came; he asked, and she was of the family of Nahor, Abraham's brother. See the reverent eagerness of the old man as he feels it coming true. What was the name of Rebekah's brother? What were the names of her father and grandfather? See the hospitality in Rebekah's home, but the old man's intentness upon his errand. They all felt that it was the Lord's will.

The Psalm that we are learning tells us of the Lord's care with those who trust and follow Him. This lovely story brings us the same lesson and tells us of the Lord's special care for young men and women when they have thoughts of marriage. Their thoughts should be full of trust and desire to do as the Lord alone shall guide.

1. "Mesopotamia," verse 10. Where was this country? What is the meaning of the name?
2. "The city of Nahor." What city is meant? Why is it referred to in this way?
3. What charge did Abraham give to his servant in regard to a wife for Isaac?

4. By what sign did the servant know Rebekah?
5. Who was Rebekah's father? Who was her brother?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Read in M. 316 of the Lord's providence over marriage. The beauty and the tenderness of this story of Rebekah will help to deepen our sense of the sacredness of marriage and our wish to be guided and protected by the Lord in all things relating to it.

The story also teaches that thoughts of marriage should be upon a high, spiritual plane. They must not admit anything unworthy. They must not lead away from the highest, the holiest aims of life, to merely external pleasures and ambitions. A true marriage must be a marriage of inmost natures, and must exalt the noblest and the best in both husband and wife. Every young man or woman whose thoughts are turning to marriage may find a lesson in Abraham's earnest charge that his son should not marry a daughter of the Canaanites, and that he should not return to live in the distant land from which Abraham had come, but that a wife of his own people should be found who would come to him in the Holy Land.

Come now to our thought that Isaac represents a faculty of spiritual rationality developed in us in our regeneration, and a faculty of rationality which in the Lord by glorification became Divine. Each new development needs its truth and affection for truth which is adapted to realize its purpose. This is the wife in relation to the childlike purpose represented by Abraham, or the rational purpose represented by Isaac. Where is this helpmeet to be found? Not among evil and false things, represented by the daughters of Canaan. She must indeed come from the land from which Abraham came, for all truth must be learned from without. (Note that the wives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all were from that land.) But among such truths and affections for truth, only such can serve as are related to spiritual life, as for example truths of the letter of the Word which contain spiritual lessons, or truths of nature which bear witness to the goodness and wisdom of the Lord; in a word, only such truths as can be elevated to the plane of spiritual life, and in particular such as can satisfy fully the needs of the rational life represented by Isaac. (A. 3024, 3025, 3030)

How beautifully this scene at the spring of Haran unfolds its lesson. The maidens coming with their jars for water are various affections for truth, among them one who meets the conditions and is to be the wife for Isaac. (A. 3058)

Do you see the meaning of the camels? Compare the young men and the ass in Gen. 22. (A. 3019, 3048, 3054)

Does the sign by which Rebekah was recognized unfold its meaning? She was known by her giving water to the servant and the camels, Isaac's representatives who had come for her. Spiritually the affection for truth which is sought must be able and ready to satisfy fully the needs of the rational mind represented by Isaac and those who served him. (A. 3057, 3074)

## **Lesson 19**

### **Genesis 27: Jacob and Esau**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We are again in the south country with Isaac and Rebekah. Abraham has died and his sons, Ishmael and Isaac, have laid his body to rest in the cave of Machpelah at Hebron. Isaac has lived with his flocks in Gerar and in Beersheba, a gentle, peaceful man, and has dug wells to avoid quarrels with the people of the country about water. The story is now of Esau and Jacob, twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah. Esau was born before Jacob and would have the right of the older son to follow his father as head of the family. Esau was red and hairy; Jacob was smooth. Esau liked the fields and hunting and was especially loved by his father; Jacob stayed at home by the tents and was especially loved by his mother.

All was not as friendly as it should have been between the two brothers. This was shown especially at two different times. Once Esau had been in the fields hunting and came home tired out and faint with hunger. He found Jacob making pottage, or soup, of little red lentils. Esau begged for some of the pottage, and Jacob sold him some in exchange for his birthright. (Gen. 25:24-34)

Now Isaac was old and was nearly blind. He wished to bless Esau before he died. An old father's blessing was sacred and important, for the words he then spoke were not his own but from the Lord. There was also a little offering eaten by the old man in connection with the blessing. So Isaac sent Esau to the fields to hunt a deer and to make ready meat for him to eat. But Rebekah heard what Isaac said to Esau, and she and Jacob deceived the old father Isaac and Jacob got the blessing. Esau was terribly disappointed and so was the old father, but the words had been spoken, words from the Lord, and could not be changed. There was another blessing, too, for Esau, and it said that while for a time Jacob should be chief, by and by Esau would be the greater and would break Jacob's yoke from off his neck. You will feel sorry for Esau, that Jacob meanly and dishonestly took from him the birthright and the blessing.

##### **Junior**

We read no more of Abraham. Let some member of the class read Gen. 25:5-10 and tell us why.

Let someone read Gen. 26:12-25 and give us some idea of the character of Isaac and of his life in the south country.

Two new names come into the story: Esau and Jacob. Who were they? They were two brothers, but as boys and men they were quite different from each other. The teacher can tell the class, from Gen. 25:21-28, about Esau and Jacob, what sort of boys and men they were.

Two things happened in the life of Esau and Jacob, neither of them happily, but important in their effect upon their later life. Let us ask some member of the class to read Gen. 25:29-34 and tell the class about the selling of the birthright. What does "birthright" mean? What did Jacob give Esau

for the birthright? It was a soup of lentils, very common in Syria and Egypt. It is called in our story "that same red" from its color. What do you think of Jacob's buying the birthright as he did? Was it generous? Was it right?

The other unhappy incident between the brothers was the deceiving of the old father Isaac and the stealing of the blessing. Why was the old man Isaac easily deceived? What do you know about the sacred custom of the blessing of the children by the old priest and father of the family before his death? Read of the blessing of his own sons and Joseph's two sons by Jacob before his death. (Gen. 48:13-20 and chapter 49) Notice especially that they knew the blessing was from the Lord and could not be changed. Note a similar thing in the blessing of Joseph's sons by Jacob. See, too, the words of Balaam when, unwillingly but obediently to the Lord, he spoke a blessing upon Israel. "He hath blessed and I cannot reverse it." (Num. 23:20)

The children of Esau were to become a nation, the Edomites. They loved a roving life and made their stronghold in Mount Seir. But the children of Jacob were to become the Lord's chosen people, who were to treasure and keep safely His Holy Word. Through them the promises to Abraham were to be fulfilled.

In the last verses of our chapter, we read that Jacob was to be sent away to Haran, his mother's home, that he might take a wife from among his own people. This journey would also take him away from Esau, who was very angry that Jacob should have taken his blessing.

Notice one important verse in the blessing of Esau, verse 40. This promise was in a measure fulfilled when Jacob returned from his long stay in Haran. He then met Esau very humbly, called him "my lord" and gave him rich presents. (Gen. 32:13-21 and 33:1-11)

## **Lesson 20**

### **Genesis 28: Jacob's Ladder**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Jacob is setting out from the home in Beersheba on the same long journey to Haran which the old servant of Abraham took when he went to bring Rebekah. Jacob seems to be walking and alone, and sleeping at night under the stars. He is going for two reasons, to be safe from Esau, who was angry with Jacob because he had stolen the blessing, and to find one among the relatives in Haran who would be his wife, as Rebekah had come to be the wife of Isaac.

Jacob came on his journey to the high hills of Bethel, from which Abraham and Lot had once looked out over the land. As he slept with a stone for his pillow, he had a wonderful dream. He saw a ladder set up on the earth, but it probably means a way leading upward in broad steps. The Lord stood above it and angels were going up and down upon the steps. The Lord then spoke to Jacob to renew the blessings given to Abraham and to promise to be with Jacob in his journey and to bring him back safely to the land of Canaan. Jacob awoke. He felt that it was a holy place and

called it Bethel, house of God. He set up the stone that had been his pillow to mark the place of his dream, the beginning of the heavenly way.

It was a beautiful lesson to Jacob, leading him to feel that the God of his father was always near him. It is a wonderful lesson to each one of us, which should help us to realize every night of our lives the Heavenly Father's loving care of us, His nearness to us. "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for Thou LORD, only makest me dwell in safety."

## **Junior**

Jacob was on a journey. Where was he going? And for what two reasons was he going? (Gen. 27:41-46) We have been over this road before, from Beersheba to Haran. Show it to me on the map. The last time was when the old servant went to bring Rebekah.

But stop at Bethel. We already have associations with this place. Here Jacob slept out on the hills with a stone for a pillow. Close your eyes and imagine his beautiful dream: the ladder, probably an ascending way with steps, the angels going up and down upon it; the Lord above it spoke to Jacob. Compare the blessings given to Abraham and to Isaac. (Gen. 12:2, 3; 22:17, 18; 26:4, 5) The Lord also promised to be with Jacob in his journey. What a splendid promise to Jacob, and to any young man or young woman setting out alone to find his or her place and work in the world. The promise and the vision seem to say, "You think you have before you a lonesome journey, but the Lord and angels will be with you if you want their company." It looks to you like a long, dusty road stretching away to Haran, with people and camels passing on the business of this world. But the Lord sets before you an ascending way, leading from earth to heaven. Will the young person going out into the world travel only the flat, dusty road, when the Lord offers the upward way with the promise of His care? Jacob's setting up the stone seems to say that this vision and promise must not be forgotten, but must stay with us always.

1. To what place did Jacob go to find a wife? By what name is the country called in our story today? What other name for the country do you know? (Gen. 24:10)
2. Who was Laban? What have we learned about him before?
3. Where was Bethel? What is the meaning of the name? What did we read of Bethel in the story of Abraham?
4. What did Jacob see in his vision?
5. What help does this vision of Jacob bring to us?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

Return to the thought that Abraham and Isaac and Esau and Jacob in general represent three planes of development: celestial, spiritual and natural. They represent also three planes of the Lord's human development and glorification, in the loving states of early childhood, the more intellectual states of older childhood, and the maturer states in which love and truth were made

actual in life. In Esau we have a type of goodness in life which cannot be realized at once, but only after a period of faithful obeying of the truth in the work and conduct in the world. You see now the meaning of Jacob's years of labor, and why he spent them in the country of Haran, which represents the plane of life in the world. (A. 1025, 2187, 2658)

What does the land of Canaan represent, and the distant land from which Abraham was called? Now the going back of Jacob to that land represents the turning to the plane of natural, external life, to work out the truth of heaven in practical good deeds. So even the Lord entered into the natural life of the world and the things of natural inheritance from His mother, and glorified this natural plane of life, making it Divine. The Lord saw this great labor of His life described in this story of Jacob's journey to his mother's distant home, and of his years of service there. (A. 3656, 3665)

The dream at Bethel is a wonderful picture of the progress of regeneration as the truth is lived out in conduct in the world. To such a life the windows are always open to heaven and the Lord. The two phases of regeneration are beautifully pictured in the ascending and descending angels, the stage in which we are learning the truth of the Divine law and dutifully doing it, and the stage when the current is reversed and love, descending from within, makes good life spontaneous and delightful. The Lord applied to Himself this vision of the ladder when He said, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." (John 1:51; A. 3699-3701)

A stone set up for a monument in general means that the thing commemorated is one to be kept forever fresh in memory and experience. "And they are there unto this day." (Josh. 4:9) The stone at Bethel stands for the eternal fact, never to be forgotten, that the patient keeping of the Lord's truth in daily life in the world means not a level, dusty journey but an ascending journey and an open way to heaven, a journey in which the Lord provides the food and clothing, the goodness and truth, needed by the soul. Once more, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way." (A. 3734, 3735)

1. Who was Isaac's wife? Who were his two sons?
2. Which son did Isaac especially wish to bless? How did the other get the blessing?
3. How had Jacob already got the birthright that belonged to Esau?
4. Was it right for Jacob to deceive, and steal the blessing? Is the story holy?
5. Why did not Isaac change the blessing?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The act of Rebekah and Jacob in deceiving Isaac and taking the blessing from Esau was mean and wicked. We must not think that it was right because we read the story in the Bible. The letter of the Bible tells of many wicked people and wicked deeds; the holiness is not in these, but in the Divine and heavenly things which these represent. We read in A. 1409, "The wicked, as well as the good, were capable of representing the Lord, and the celestial and spiritual things of His kingdom:

for, as was said and shown above, the representatives were altogether separate from the person." It is important to remember this distinctness of what is Divine and from the Lord in the Word, from what belongs to the garment, which is from human beings. Then we can be clear and strong in our condemnation of evil, and at the same time recognize the whole Word as supremely holy. Read S. 1-4.

Keep in mind the general meaning of the three generations of the patriarchs, in our regeneration and in the Lord's human life. Abraham represents a childlike celestial stage of development, and Isaac a more youthful spiritual stage. Now the plane of outward life is represented by the two brothers, Esau and Jacob, the good and the truth brought forth in conduct. Of these, good represented by Esau is the more important, but truth represented by Jacob for a time must lead. Later good will take the central place and the work which had been laborious while we followed rules becomes a joy. Then Esau has come into his own and has broken his brother's yoke from off his neck. (A. 1025, 2187, 2658)

You read in H. 29-31 that the degree of nearness to the Lord among the angels, and the quality of reception from Him, leads to the distinguishing of three heavens, the celestial, the spiritual, and the natural, which are imaged in the three planes of life in every heavenly person. The chapter of Heaven and Hell referred to also gives us a hint why the heavenly affection has one representative, Abraham, and the heavenly intelligence one representative, Isaac, but when we come to the natural plane of action there are two representatives, Esau and Jacob. The two brothers represent the two qualities of affection and intelligence embodied in life. (A. 2187, 2658)

You will associate the redness of Esau with his representation of goodness. His fondness for hunting pictures fondness for the natural kindly affections which the deer and other gentle creatures represent. Esau ate of Jacob's pottage, for good impulse and affection needs some instruction to sustain its strength.

Esau's hairiness is like a natural clothing and represents spontaneous acts of good affection. The skins tied on by Jacob to imitate the hairiness of Esau picture acts of use and kindness not spontaneous and from affection, but acquired, artificial, conventional, done according to rule. So it must be for a time until through faithful following of the rules the love of good is gained. (A. 3301, 3540)

Isaac's love for Esau and desire to give him the blessing represents the desire in us, and especially in the Lord, to realize the heavenly and Divine ideals immediately in good natural life. The keen sorrow of both Isaac and Esau in the diverting of the blessing represents a very deep disappointment that the inner good cannot be immediately realized in life, but that it must be realized through a stage of patient following of the truth. But keep in view the promise that good shall come to its own, that it shall become spontaneous and free. (A. 3296, 3603)

## **Lesson 21**

### **Genesis 29:1-20: Serving for Rachel**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Are we interested to know how this journey of Jacob ended? He came safely to Haran and to a well. It was not the fountain at the gate of Haran, but a well in the field, and the flocks were beginning to gather to be watered. The well was covered by a stone, which by their rule was moved when all were gathered. Jacob talked with the shepherds and learned that they were from Haran. He asked about Laban, his mother's brother. They knew him; and Rachel, his daughter, was just then coming with the flock. Jacob at once loved Rachel. He watered her flock and he agreed to work seven years for Laban her father to win Rachel for his wife, and the seven years seemed to Jacob but a few days for the love he had for Rachel. As it proved, Jacob worked in all twenty years for Laban and was given both daughters, Leah and Rachel, as his wives, and very many sheep and cattle

##### **Junior**

Where had Jacob come from when he spent the night at Bethel? What did he see in a dream at Bethel? What promise did the Lord make to him? What did Jacob promise to do? Where was Jacob going? Why was he going there? Show me on the map the way he went and the city where his mother's family lived.

We remember the beautiful story of Abraham's old servant who was sent to Haran for a wife for Isaac; how he came with the camels to the well outside the town, and Rebekah came to draw water. Jacob also came to a well, not close to the town but in the fields, where the flocks of sheep and goats came to be watered. In that land, toward evening, thousands of sheep and goats come from the pastures to the well. Water is drawn up in leather buckets and poured into the little stone troughs which stand about the well. When the sheep have drunk, the shepherds lead off in different directions and call, and each sheep knows and follows its master's voice. Read how Jacob met Rachel here and loved her. It reminds you of the finding of Rebekah at the fountain of Haran. It is even more like the meeting of Moses with the daughters of Jethro at a well in the land of Midian when he watered the flock for them and one of the shepherd maidens became his wife. (Ex. 2:15-22)

It was probably a rule among the shepherds at Haran to wait till all were there, so that all might share alike. Jacob spoke with the shepherds who were waiting and asked about his mother's family. Already Rachel was coming with the sheep. Jacob asked for Laban the "son" of Nahor and called himself Laban's "brother." The words are not used in the strict sense but in the more general sense of "descendant" and "relative." How was Laban related to Nahor? How as Jacob related to Laban?

You remember how Abraham's servant gave rich presents to Rebekah's family as a price paid for the bride. Jacob also agreed to serve seven years for Rachel, for he loved her. His work was taking

care of Laban's flocks and herds. When Jacob had served seven years, Leah was given to him as his wife instead of Rachel. He served another seven years, and Rachel was also given to him. In those days people did not know how holy marriage is, and it was not wrong for them to have more than one wife. And after this Jacob kept on serving Laban (he was with him twenty years in all), and for his pay he kept all the speckled and spotted goats and the black sheep. We shall learn next time how he grew rich in flocks and herds and how at last he took his family and all that he had and left Laban and came back to the land of Canaan. It is said of the first seven years of Jacob's service for Rachel that "they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." Time always seems short and work seems easy when our heart is in it and we are working for those we love.

1. Tell me about the people in Haran whom Jacob was going to visit. Who were they and how were they related to Jacob?
2. Where did Jacob meet Rachel? What was she doing? What did Jacob do for her? Compare the meeting with Rachel and the meeting with Rebekah.
3. What sheep are entrusted to our care? What water do they need? Where is the well from which to draw it?
4. How long did Jacob serve for Rachel? When does time seem short and labor light?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

What is represented by the call of Abraham from the distant country to the Holy Land? The first turning of the affections from natural and worldly things to the Lord and to heavenly things. (A. 1411-1413) What is meant by the charge that Isaac should not marry a daughter of the Canaanites, or go back to the distant country for a wife? It means that the spiritual understanding must not come down from its heavenly light and satisfy itself with evil or merely natural subjects of knowledge. It must find in natural knowledge and life those things which it can lift up and make serviceable to the spiritual life. (A. 3031-3033) And now what is meant by Jacob's going to the distant land and living there many years, and gaining there his family and his wealth? While the affections and thoughts remain in heavenly sunlight one must in action enter into the practical life of the world. It is in this working out of the heavenly spirit on the natural plane that it becomes established and grows strong. Still the heavenly character does not become absorbed and buried in worldly things, but gathers from them strength for heavenly life, as Jacob again returned to the Holy Land with all that he acquired by his years of labor. (A. 3665, 4069)

What is represented by water and a well? Truth or teaching in regard to right and wrong and in regard to what is practicable and wise to do. The Lord's own Word is the most perfect well of spiritual water. Remember the lesson of the Lord's words to the woman of Samaria. (A. 3765)

What is it spiritually to water sheep at a well? Sheep represent gentle, innocent affections, and to water them is to refresh them with true teaching, especially from the Lord's Word. You see this lesson in Moses' watering the flocks in Midian, and the same in Jacob's watering the flocks for Rachel. The stone covering the well is like the letter of the Word which makes it sometimes hard to learn the real spiritual truth within it. Jacob's removing the stone as he came on his journey to

the East represents the opening of the lessons of the Word when we come to it with the real desire to live the spiritual life; then we see beneath the letter, and all innocent affections are refreshed and satisfied. In a deeper sense, the Lord is the Jacob who removes the stone and waters the flock. (John 4:12) The Lord did the spiritual work which Jacob represented. (A. 3769, 3798)

If Jacob's coming to the distant country represents the effort to work out the heavenly spirit in the practical life of the world, his wives married in that country represent developments of that good life. Leah the elder, who was tender eyed, represents a first affection for more natural truth and the ways that it teaches. Rachel the younger and more beautiful, who kept the flock, represents a more spiritual affection for deeper truth with its more gentle, perfect ways. We must desire this deeper affection and its more beautiful life, and must work faithfully and patiently for it through as many weeks of labor as may be required. We must not be discouraged if it is not developed at once and if less perfect powers are all that we are capable of exercising for a time. Our love for the heavenly life should make all efforts seem easy. (A. 3820-3824)

The story is a wonderful picture of the Divine patience of the Lord's life, of His hopes deferred, of the perfect love which sustained Him in His labor. (A. 3827)

## **Lesson 22**

### **Genesis 31: Jacob and Laban**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

Seven years for Leah and seven for Rachel. Jacob was with Laban twenty years in all. His work was to take care of Laban's great herds and flocks which fed in the broad pastures about Haran, being led at times a journey of some days away from home. What was Jacob's pay during the other six years? He was to keep all the speckled and spotted among the goats and all the black sheep as his own. He did so, and his own flocks grew very large. (See Gen. 32:13-15.) And Jacob now had many children. We often read about the twelve sons of Jacob; eleven of the twelve sons were born in the country of Haran. You may remember the names of some of them, which were afterward given to the twelve tribes. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah were the oldest; Dan, Naphthali, Gad, and Asher were the next; and then Issachar and Zebulon. Joseph was the last son born in the Eastern country; he was the son of Rachel who was so dear to Jacob. Benjamin was born near Bethlehem after Jacob with his family came back to the land of Canaan.

After twenty years of service, Jacob left Laban to go back to the Holy Land. It was not a friendly parting. Laban was unwilling that Jacob should go. (Gen. 300: 2 5-28) Jacob went secretly. He called Leah and Rachel to him in the field and told them what he planned to do. They agreed to go. They rode on camels and crossed the river Euphrates and came down toward the land of Gilead, which is east of Jordan just across from the land of Canaan. They took with them the flocks and herds and all the goods that belonged to Jacob, and, besides, Rachel stole from her father's house, while he was away shearing his sheep, the teraphim or little idols that belonged to him. You

remember that Abraham worshiped idols before the Lord called him to the land of Canaan (Josh. 24:2, and on), and those of the family who lived at Haran still had their idols.

Jacob had been gone three days before Laban knew it. He followed with others of his family and overtook them east of Jordan in the land of Gilead; but the Lord warned Laban in a dream that he should do no harm to Jacob. Jacob and Laban talked together, and they made a covenant of peace. They marked the place by a stone set up as a pillar, as Jacob had marked the place of his dream at Bethel, and by a heap of stones. They called the heap by names which mean "heap of witness"; and Jacob called it also Mizpah, "watch tower," saying, "The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another." They promised that they would never pass this place to do each other harm.

1. How long did Jacob live in Haran? What was his work there? What wealth did he gain in that country?
2. How many sons were born to Jacob in Haran? Which was the oldest son? Which was the youngest born in that land? Which was born in the land of Canaan?
3. Was Laban glad to have Jacob go? What did he do when he learned that he had gone?
4. Where did Laban overtake Jacob? What happened between them in that place? What promise did they make to each other? How did they mark the spot?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

We have learned that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob represent the three planes of heavenly life, celestial, spiritual, and natural; or more simply, Abraham represents heavenly affection, Isaac heavenly intelligence, and Jacob life in which the spirit of heaven is brought down into practical deed. (A. 1025, 1409) This bringing down of heaven into the practical life of the world is especially represented by Jacob's journey to Haran, and by his long sojourn in that land. The riches and the family he gained there represent the development of character as one lives patiently in the world, meeting its trials and doing its work. (A. 3665)

A part of the gain in heavenly character through patient life in the world is represented by the speckled and spotted goats and the black sheep which Jacob kept for his own. Sheep and goats represent innocent affections, and if it had simply said that Jacob grew rich in these, the meaning would seem easy. But why did he take the speckled and spotted and black? The pure white among the flocks would seem to represent the best, and the mixed color suggests a mixture of what is false and evil. In fact there is always a mixture of what is false and evil in the goodness which we may acquire from life in the world. To acknowledge that the truth we gain is mixed with falsity, is to take the speckled and spotted goats; to confess that we have no real innocence of our own, but except for the Lord's mercy are wholly unworthy, is to choose the black sheep. To take the white would mean to claim that we are pure and innocent in our own strength. (A. 3993, 3994)

We have learned that Jacob represents the plane of natural life in which the spirit of heaven is worked out in practical deeds. His twelve sons represent successive developments of that life.

Ought we to expect the best and most perfect developments to come first, or the more external and least perfect first and the more spiritual and heavenly afterwards? The less perfect come first, represented by Jacob's first-born sons, the children of Leah and the handmaids. The more perfect developments come later, represented by Joseph and Benjamin, the last-born sons, the children of Rachel whom Jacob dearly loved. The story connects the birth of Joseph with the return to the land of Canaan. (Gen. 30:25) This suggests that the birth of Joseph marks a point in development, when it is time to gather up all that has been gained from the world and to enter upon a life distinctly higher and more spiritual. (A. 3860-3862, 3973)

The story closes with the covenant of peace between Laban and Jacob. Jacob's return to the land of Canaan represents the entrance upon a higher and more spiritual stage of life. What then shall be the relation of this life to the external things of life in the world? The two should not be hostile but friendly; each has its right place, and each should be helpful to the other. The covenant between Jacob and Laban teaches also beautiful things about the Lord's relation to the simple external goodness of gentile people. (A. 4189, 4190)

## **Lesson 23**

### **Genesis 32: The New Name**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

Tell me about Jacob's leaving Haran; why did he leave hurriedly and without telling Laban that he was going? Jacob had come to Haran alone walking with his staff; how was he leaving? Find on the map the land of Gilead where Laban overtook Jacob. There were fine pastures and large groves of trees and deep valleys with brooks running to the Jordan. One of the large brooks was the Jabbok. They were near to this brook Jabbok, which Jacob soon crossed. A name given at this time, which we find afterward in the story of Joshua and in the story of Saul and David was Mahanaim, "the two camps." (Josh. 13:26, 30; 2 Sam. 2:8; 17:24, 27) The two camps were Jacob's own and the camp of angels who appeared to him. He had seen angels in the vision at Bethel as he set out on his journey; it was as if they came again to welcome him on his return to the Holy Land.

What were the feelings between Jacob and his brother Esau when they parted twenty years before? Now Jacob was afraid to meet his brother, and he did everything that he could to gain his favor and to protect himself in case Esau were still angry with him. Where was Esau's home? In Mount Seir, the mountainous land of Edom south of the Dead Sea. Jacob sent to tell Esau of his coming. The message was very polite, calling Esau "my lord" and Jacob his "servant." The messengers brought back word that Esau was already coming with four hundred men. Was he coming to welcome Jacob kindly or to fight with him? Jacob did not know; he was "greatly afraid and distressed." He divided the people and the flocks with him into two companies. This was in case Esau came as an enemy; if he took one company, the other might escape. Then he chose goats and sheep and camels and cows and asses as a present for Esau, and sent them forward in separate droves. "Ewes" are the mother sheep, "kine" are cows, and "foals" are colts. Esau would meet the droves one by one and would hear each time Jacob's polite words, calling him again, "my

lord Esau" and Jacob his "servant." Jacob hoped that these presents would make Esau feel friendly. We shall learn in the next lesson about their meeting.

The flocks for Esau had gone forward and Jacob's family had crossed the Jabbok, Jacob himself last of all. He passed a night alone, and he seemed to be wrestling with an angel; he seemed to conquer but was lame in his thigh from the struggle. He was also given a new name, Israel, which means "soldier of God," or perhaps "he that striveth with God." Abraham's name and Sarah's had been changed from Abram and Sarai by adding "h," a letter from the Lord's own name Jehovah. So Jacob's new name had in it "El" which means God. You find the same in Samuel, Elijah, Bethel, and many other Bible names. It meant that Jacob should be the Lord's in a new and fuller sense, and that he should have new strength from the Lord.

1. Where was Gilead where Jacob was? Which way must the messengers go to Esau? Where was his home?
2. What were Jacob's feelings on hearing that Esau was coming? Why was he afraid? What did he do to make Esau feel kindly?
3. What polite words did Jacob use in speaking to Esau? What present did he make ready?
4. What happened to Jacob in the night before meeting Esau? What new name was given to Jacob? What is the meaning of the last syllable of the name?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

In the promise made to Esau, in Isaac's blessing, it was said that he should some day have the dominion and break his brother's yoke from off his neck. (Gen. 27: 40) We may regard it as at least a part fulfillment of the promise when Jacob made Esau large presents and called Esau "lord" and himself "servant." (A. 3603)

You remember the deeper meaning in Jacob's taking the birthright and the blessing from his elder brother. Esau represents goodness in natural life, and Jacob understanding. Goodness is the more important of the two, the thing to be most desired, but for a time understanding must take the lead. We must learn what is right and do it faithfully before we can do it spontaneously from love. But afterward, if we are faithful, we shall love what is right; goodness will take the lead and understanding will be its servant. These are the steps of progress in any kind of work, as in playing an instrument. At first we learn and do it with careful thought; afterward we do it easily because we love to. It is the same in forming good habits, at first with careful thought, afterward with love. The happy change when love takes the lead is pictured in Jacob's submitting to Esau, giving him rich presents. The several gifts which Jacob sent, one after another, to his brother, suggest that the change takes place gradually, little by little, and in regular order. (A. 4242, 4266, 4267)

The submission of Jacob to Esau, the return into the Holy Land, and the giving of a new name to Jacob all took place at the same time, and they all represent a step upward to a more heavenly state of life. (A. 4286)

Connected with this step of progress there is an experience of temptation, represented by Jacob's night of struggle. No one ever passes from the state of doing right from knowledge to the state of doing right from love except through something of temptation. This is suggested also by Jacob's terror at the approach of Esau and his men, his fear of meeting them. (A. 4249, 4274) What is represented spiritually by the fact that the struggle was in the night? It seemed to Jacob that the man with whom he contended was the Lord, or at least an angel. Really the struggles of temptation are never against the Lord but against evil spirits and evil things in ourselves. (A. 4287) Jacob's lameness after the struggle suggests that while there is victory, with the Lord's help, we may not be able, at least at first, to make the victory complete. (A. 4278)

Jacob's struggle and lameness have a special meaning as applied to the Jewish people. They represent the urgency of the Jews to be the chosen people, and at the same time the lack of real connection between their representative forms and the spirit of heaven. (A. 4281, 4293)

## Lesson 24

### Genesis 33: Meeting with Esau

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

It is twenty years since Jacob came alone to Haran and met Rachel at the well in the field. All this time he has been caring for Laban's flocks, and has gained himself large flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. He also has a family: his wives, Leah and Rachel, and eleven sons, children of Leah and Rachel and of their handmaids. It is now time for Jacob to go back to the land of Canaan, and it must be slow traveling with his family and with the sheep and cattle. Laban followed Jacob to the land of Gilead, east of Jordan; but Laban has now gone home and Jacob is ready to cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan.

Jacob was anxious about one thing, the meeting with his brother Esau. Why was he anxious? Remember things that had happened between the brothers before Jacob went to Haran. He was afraid that Esau would still be angry, and he was the more afraid when he heard that Esau was coming up on the eastern side of Jordan from the land of Edom, where he lived, with four hundred men. Jacob sent forward rich presents, one after another, of goats and sheep and camels and cattle and asses, to meet Esau, calling Esau "my lord," and himself his servant. He then went himself, and his family followed in three companies, Rachel and her son Joseph whom he loved so dearly, last of all. Each company as they met Esau bowed low to him. When Jacob met his brother, he bowed seven times to him and begged him to accept the presents. It was a friendly meeting. The two brothers embraced each other and wept. Esau went back to his home in the mountains of Edom, and Jacob crossed the Jordan to the place near Shechem where Abraham first camped. He bought here a beautiful meadow and dug a well for water for his cattle. So Jacob was safe back in the land of Canaan, after his journey and his long stay in Haran.

## **Junior**

How long had Jacob been in Haran? (Gen. 31:41) He had gone alone to Haran. Now what family and what possessions had he, as he left Laban to go back to Canaan? Leah and Rachel were his wives; eleven sons had been born, and many of the best of Laban's flocks had become Jacob's as wages.

Who will learn and tell us about the parting from Laban? Jacob stole away without Laban's knowing it. (Gen. 31:20) When Laban overtook Jacob, he was already in the land of Gilead, east of Jordan and near to the brook Jabbok. They parted as friends, and Laban went home. We have here words which are often quoted: "The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another." (Gen. 31:49)

Will someone look up for us another thing - a night in which Jacob seemed to be wrestling with an angel, and he was given a new name, Israel, which means "prince of God." "El" means God; you find it in Bethel and many other Bible names. (Gen. 32:28) This new name for Jacob reminds us of the change in Abraham's name and Sarah's.

And one more incident still on the east side of Jordan, the chief incident of our lesson: Jacob's meeting with Esau. What were Jacob's feelings when he knew that Esau was coming with four hundred men? While Jacob had been gaining a family and great flocks and herds in Haran, Esau had become rich in the land of Edom and was the father of a tribe. We read about his family in Gen. 36. Esau and his men drew near and Jacob came forward to meet him, having sent flocks and droves before as a present, and putting his family behind. The meeting was friendly. Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept for joy. Jacob was forgiven, and the brothers were friends. Then Esau saw his brother's family and received his present. He wished Jacob to go back with him to Mount Seir, but Jacob made excuse that the children and flocks could not travel fast. Esau wished to leave men to escort them, but this was declined. Jacob said that he would follow to Mount Seir, but he did not. No doubt it was safer that the brothers with their large families and flocks and herds should live apart. (Gen. 36:6, 7) We do learn of Esau and Jacob's being together again when Isaac died and his two sons buried him in the cave in Hebron. (Gen. 35:27-29: compare Gen. 25:7-10.)

Isaac lived in Hebron in his last days, where Abraham had pitched his tent by the trees. There Isaac received Jacob after his long absence, and he died there.

Where had Jacob been between his meeting with his brother in the country east of Jordan and his coming to his old father in Hebron? After Esau went back to his home, Jacob did not at once cross the Jordan, but stayed for a time at a place in the Jordan valley north of the Jabbok, and built a house there and shelters for his cattle. The resting place was called Succoth, which means "booths." When they moved again, it was across the Jordan into the land of Canaan. Shalem may have been the name of a place near Shechem to which they came, but the word means "peace," and perhaps the meaning is that they came in peace to Shechem. They camped "before," that is, "to the east of" the city. See on the map how Shechem lies in the very middle of the land, in the valley between the two mountains Ebal and Gerizim. To the east of the city and the mountains there is a beautiful meadow. Here Jacob bought a piece of ground of the native people. "Pieces of money" are mentioned, while Abraham weighed the silver in payment for Machpelah. The word for pieces is "lambs," which perhaps means that they were in this shape or bore this stamp, as our

"eagles." Jacob speaks in one place of taking the land by his sword and bow (Gen. 48:21, 22), and it may be that after buying it he had to protect his rights.

Abraham had moved from Shechem to Bethel, and then journeyed farther southward. Jacob did the same. (Gen. 12:8, 9; 35:1-16) First he gathered up all the idols that the people had and buried them under an oak in Shechem. He built an altar to the Lord in Bethel where he had the vision of the ladder when he set out on his journey. The Lord had kept him safe and brought him again in peace. From Bethel they went southward. As they came near Bethlehem, called in the old days Ephrath (Micah 5:2), Benjamin was born and Rachel died. Her grave is still marked by a little building by the roadside. So Jacob came to his old father Isaac in Hebron, and was there when Isaac died. We find him in the next lesson still in Hebron.

1. Who was coming to meet Jacob in the country east of Jordan? With what feelings did Jacob await him?
2. Was the meeting friendly? What did Esau do? What did he offer?
3. Where did Jacob rest before crossing the Jordan? Where was his first home in the land? Who else had lived in that place? What afterward happened there?
4. Where did Jacob go from Shechem? What had happened there?
5. Where was Benjamin born? Where did Isaac die?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

We should have a definite thought as to the meaning in the Lord's life and in our regeneration of Jacob's long sojourn in Haran. Abraham represents celestial states of early childhood, Isaac more intellectual states of older childhood, and Esau and Jacob goodness and truth in conduct. For a time truth (Jacob) leads, and the working out of truth in the life of the world is represented by Jacob's years of toil in Haran. There is a similar thought in the Lord's years of work in Nazareth. Leah and Rachel represent affections for truth of life, Leah a more external affection and Rachel a more internal affection. Jacob's eleven sons, born in Haran, represent successive developments in good life; at first more external developments, represented by the sons of Leah and the handmaids, and a more interior development represented by Joseph, Rachel's son. (A. 3860-3862) Other gains in character by faithful life in the world are represented by the flocks received as wages by Jacob. The speckled and spotted goats and the black sheep mean in this case affections the more innocent because humble, conscious of imperfection and weakness. (A. 3993, 3994)

The birth of Joseph seems to be the signal for return to Canaan. (Gen. 30:35) Benjamin was born in Canaan, near to Bethlehem. The birth of Joseph marks a point in development when it is time to gather up all that has been gained from the world and to enter upon a life distinctly higher and more spiritual. (A. 3973) Several incidents are connected with this return to Canaan: leaving Laban, the wrestling, the new name, the friendly meeting with Esau.

The separation from Laban began with difficulties, but ended with a covenant of friendship, which pictures the helpful relation which should exist between internal and external life. It contains also beautiful thoughts about the Lord's relation with those of simple gentile character. (A. 4189, 4190)

Advance to a spiritual state involves temptation, represented by Jacob's wrestling. The wrestling may seem to be with the Lord; it is never really so, but with evil spirits and with evil in ourselves. (A. 4249, 4274)

We have spoken several times about the meaning of Jacob's stealing the birthright and the blessing from Esau. At first, truth, represented by Jacob, takes the leading place; we must know what is right before we can love it. The change, when the two elements of character are united and goodness takes the lead, was promised in Esau's blessing (Gen. 27:40), and is represented by the friendly meeting of Jacob and Esau. Remember how Jacob called Esau his "lord" and himself "servant." He made him rich presents and bowed himself seven times to the earth before him. Truth is the servant, and is valued for the sake of goodness. The coming of goodness into the heart from the Lord when the mind is ready to receive it is beautifully pictured by Esau's running to meet Jacob, and by his embracing him and kissing him, and by their weeping for joy. These things describe how goodness comes from the Lord, not all at once but step by step in order. We have almost the same picture of the coming of goodness to the soul when it is ready to receive it, in the story of the prodigal son, when the father had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. (Luke 15:20; A. 4347, 4350-4354)

Esau's meeting the children of Jacob not all at once but in companies, is another suggestion of the gradual, orderly steps by which goodness comes into all parts of the life. It comes first into more external things and afterward into more internal, which is suggested by the order in which Esau met the children: first those of the handmaids, then those of Leah, and lastly Joseph with Rachel. (A. 4345, 4360-4362)

Jacob's first home in the land was the same as Abraham's. Does it mean that life after years of effort is again at the same place, having made no progress? Notice the greater permanence of Jacob's possession, for he bought the land. He dwelt in the land of his father's sojournings. (Gen. 37:1, Revised Version) We can hardly reach more heavenly states than those of childhood, but by actual life they become permanently ours. It is beautiful to notice the name "peace" given to this home of Jacob's. It is expressive of the peacefulness of the soul when after learning what is right and faithfully doing it, the love of it is given from the Lord. (A. 4393, 4667)

Jacob's journey to Bethlehem and southward seems like a repetition of Abraham's experience. It often seems in life as if we came to the same place again and went through the same experience. Yet it is not the same; life does not move in a circle, but in a spiral. If we experience the same things, it is in a new and higher way. Several things suggest that this journey of Jacob's represents advance to holier states: the Lord told him to arise; he buried the idols; as he journeyed Benjamin was born. (A. 4551, 4552, 4585)

Did you ever stop to think why people bow to others? Men especially bow to women. Why? Why did Jacob bow down before Esau? Because Esau stood for what is good. Whenever we bow, it is to recognize goodness of some kind in others. From whom does the good in people come? Yes, the Lord. The Lord is the only source of goodness. He alone is really good, but He likes to share His

goodness with people. He lets His goodness come into people, as the sun lets its warmth come into the earth and all things on the earth. Therefore we bow before the Lord more deeply than before anyone else. There are many people who bow their head or raise their hat whenever even the name of the Lord is mentioned, because they love to show that they believe that He is Goodness Itself.

## Lesson 25

### Genesis 37: Jacob and His Brothers

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Jacob had come back to live in the land of Canaan. He bought a piece of ground near Shechem. He did not live there long, but moved southward. Near Bethlehem, Benjamin was born and his mother Rachel died. You pass still by the roadside a little building called Rachel's tomb. Jacob went on to Hebron, where his old father Isaac was living, and he still lived there after Isaac's death. (Gen. 35:27-29)

How many sons had Jacob? There were ten older brothers and Joseph and Benjamin. Joseph was now seventeen years old. The older brothers were shepherds, and Joseph was sometimes with them. He brought to his father report of their wrong doings. They hated Joseph, too, because his father loved him best of all his sons and made him a beautiful coat of many colors, or as some understand it to mean, a long garment with sleeves. Joseph also had dreams, which he told his brethren, and they hated him for these. What were his dreams? (Gen. 37:5-11) Do you see why these dreams made the brothers hate Joseph more?

The brothers had gone to feed the flock in Shechem. We think of the meadow which Jacob bought, where he dug his well near Shechem, when he came from Haran. Jacob sent Joseph to see how it was with the brothers and with the flock. He came to this meadow, which they all knew so well, and expected to find his brothers there. But they were not there; they had gone to Dothan. This was another meadow farther on. Joseph went on and found them there. But now is the sad part of the story. The brothers thought of killing Joseph, but Reuben and Judah had kinder thoughts, and Joseph was put into an empty cistern in the ground where sometimes there was water. Then men came with camels, with loads of different sorts of gum from Gilead, the country beyond Jordan, going to carry it down to Egypt, where it would bring a good price. The traders are called Midianites and Ishmaelites, wandering people like the Bedouins of today. The brothers sold Joseph to these men for twenty pieces of silver, to be taken down to Egypt as a slave. The brothers remembered afterward how Joseph had besought them, but they would not hear. (Gen. 40:21)

Then comes the saddest part of the story, how they took Joseph's coat and stained it with the blood of a kid and brought it to their old father. He knew the coat and said, "It is my son's coat. An evil beast hath devoured him." So his father wept for him. We will go next time to Egypt, the country to which Joseph was taken.

## **Junior**

We must get acquainted with the lovely meadow which Jacob came to "before," that is, "to the east of" Shechem. Will someone look up a few verses for us? Gen. 33:19 tells us that Jacob bought the piece of ground from the native people of the land. Jacob speaks in one place of taking the land by his sword and bow (Gen. 48:21, 22) and it may be that after buying he had to defend his rights. Our story today adds interest to this piece of ground. Later Jacob made a special gift of it to Joseph, before his death. The bones of Joseph were buried there when the people came from Egypt. (Josh. 24:32) We are reminded of this by a little building in the meadow still called Joseph's tomb. This is the parcel of ground and this is Jacob's well, where the Lord rested and talked with the woman of Samaria. (John 4:5, 6)

Where was Jacob now living? The words "the generations of Jacob," mean the story of his family, especially of Joseph. How old was Joseph now? What reasons are given why Joseph was hated by his older brothers? Will someone tell us the two dreams?

Follow Joseph on his errand, by the help of a little map. Remember what we have learned about this lovely meadow near Shechem, where Joseph came looking for his brothers and the sheep. Follow on the map to Dothan. This is a little plain almost a part of the great plain of Esdraelon, lying lower than Shechem and on the route followed by travelers and traders coming from the east through the plain of Esdraelon and crossing to the seashore on their way to Egypt.

What evil thought did the brothers have when they saw Joseph coming? What advice was given by Reuben and what by Judah? The traders who now came with their camels and loads of gums from Gilead, called both Ishmaelites and Midianites, were simple people, not so evil-minded as Joseph's brothers. The brothers sold Joseph to them. What report did they bring to their old father? How bitterly he grieved!

1. Where had Abraham first camped in the land, and Jacob, after coming from Haran?
2. Where did Joseph look for his brethren? Where did he find them?
3. How many brothers had Joseph? Who were some of them?
4. Why did Joseph's brethren hate him? Can you tell the two dreams?
5. By whom was Joseph saved and carried into Egypt? Read Gen. 42:21.

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

It is beautiful in a simple way to recognize Joseph as a type of the Lord. The Lord came seeking for the flock, but it had been led away by unfaithful shepherds. People hated the Lord and tried to kill Him, because He told them of His Divinity. So the brethren hated Joseph for his dreams in which they bowed down to him. You think of the Lord when you read how Joseph was sold for money and his coat was dipped in blood, and again when you read how Joseph in Egypt, while unknown by his brethren, loved them and preserved their lives. (A. 4669)

Many times in the Gospels the Lord's garments are types of the words and acts in which He clothed and expressed His love. You have in mind the swaddling clothes, the healing of some who touched His garment's hem, the parting of His garments at the cross. The same thing had been represented long before the Lord's coming by the beautiful garments made for Aaron and by Joseph's coat. The many colors suggest the infinite adaptations of the Lord's truth and love to people of many kinds. If we think of a long garment, compare the garment down to the foot in Rev. 1:13, the Lord's truth brought down to the simple minds of human beings. The dipping of the coat in blood as proof that Joseph was dead represents the perversion of the Lord's Word to confirm the denial of His Divinity. (A. 4677, 4768)

The plain of Shechem was a beautiful upland meadow in the heart of the land, Abram's first home and Jacob's on coming from the east. It represents a childlike state of charity, content with simple knowledge of doctrine. The low-lying plain of Dothan represents a more external state in which charity is forgotten and particulars of doctrine, here of false doctrine, are made important. (A. 1440, 1441, 4716, 4720)

Ishmaelites from Gilead took Joseph when his brethren despised him. So gentile people, and many of them from that same country beyond Jordan, received the Lord in their simple way when He was rejected by the Jews. "By Joseph's brethren are represented they within the church who have confirmed themselves against the Divine truth, but by the Ishmaelites are represented they who are in simple good." (A. 4747)

So far we have thought in a general way of Joseph as a type of the Lord. We must think what special phase or element in the Lord's life and in our lives Joseph represents. As the truth represented by Jacob is worked out in life, earlier and more external developments are represented by his older sons. The most spiritual developments come last, represented by Joseph and Benjamin, the sons of Israel's old age and dearest to him. They represent, in the church and in us, an interior acknowledgment of the Divinity of the Lord, Joseph the loving perception of His Divinity and Benjamin the understanding of it. Joseph among his brethren in the land of Canaan represents this perception of the Lord's Divinity as a real and living power in life, such as it was with the first Christians. Joseph is sold into Egypt when all perception of the Lord's Divinity is lost and it becomes a mere matter of knowledge and history, still a most precious knowledge as we shall see when we follow the story of Joseph in Egypt. There is promise of the return to a living perception of the Lord's Divineness in the return of Joseph's bones from Egypt and their burial in the field of Shechem. (A. 3969, 4727, 4788)

What in our Lord's own life would seem to be analogous to the experience of the church which we have just noted? Were there for Him times when He had a living perception of His oneness with the Father, and times when it was not a living perception but He must rest on faith and upon the promises of Scripture?

## **Lesson 26**

### **Genesis 40: Butler and Baker**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

It was very different from Joseph's simple home in Canaan, this rich old land of Egypt, with its wonderful river and meadows, its pyramids and temples, its rich people and its slaves. Who remembers how Joseph came to Egypt and became a slave to an officer of Pharaoh? (Gen. 37:36) The Lord was with Joseph and all that he did prospered. His master's affairs prospered in his care, but Joseph was charged falsely and was put in prison. Still the Lord was with him, and the other prisoners were placed in his care. There he met the chief butler and chief baker of Pharaoh, as the king of Egypt was called, who were also in the prison. Old pictures show us butlers and bakers at their work, butlers caring for the grapes and wine, and bakers for the bread and cakes. Both were trusted officers of Pharaoh, but both had displeased the king and were in prison.

Both the butler and the baker dreamed the same night, and Joseph told them the meaning of their dreams, for the Lord showed it to him. Read the dreams. Perhaps not "white baskets," but "baskets of white bread." The dreams came true as Joseph had told their meaning. The baker was hanged, and the butler was restored to his place. Read, too, how Joseph begged the chief butler to remember him and to bring him out of prison, but how the chief butler forgot him until something soon after happened that made him remember Joseph.

##### **Junior**

I would love to take a trip with you in Egypt. It is a wonderful old country, with a wonderful river, wonderful pyramids and temples, sphinxes and obelisks and tombs, and wonderful pictures of the people of long ago at their work and games. What books and pictures have you that will show you some of these things and make you feel that you are in Egypt? Can you get some good book at the public library, if you have not one of your own? Is there a museum near your home which you can visit and see some of the things and pictures from old Egypt? Have you a good map of Egypt, which shows the river Nile, its sources in the great lakes under the equator and in the mountains of Abyssinia, and its long course through the desert, making greenness along its banks and each autumn overflowing to water the farms? Who will learn for us before next Sunday something about the Nile, and be ready to tell the class about it? Who will learn and tell us something about the pyramids? Did any one of you ever hear of the Hykos or shepherd kings? They were not native Egyptians but came into the country from the east and ruled especially the delta land. It was probably during their time that Joseph came into Egypt and rose to power. You will know that it means a change of rulers when we read in Exodus 1:8, "Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph."

In Palestine, Joseph's people lived in tents, pastured their flocks in the meadows or on the hillsides wherever the pasturage was best, digging wells and building altars when they stayed long enough in one place, and the Lord was their God. The Egyptians for centuries had had every luxury of city life. The great temples and palaces, libraries and museums, pyramids and

monuments, statues and carvings. The rich people lived sumptuously, having slaves to serve them, to bring them rich food at the feasts, to make music for them and dance before them and their guests and run before their chariots. They had wines to drink, and sweet spices and gums to perfume the air. They had their gardens along the fertile banks of the Nile, which were rich and fruitful, being overflowed once every year and carefully watered through the dry months. There were fortresses and prisons too, in the days of Joseph. And the people worshiped idols.

The Lord was with Joseph, and all that he did prospered. See how it was in his master's home. See how it was in the prison, where Joseph was for a time under a false charge. And still more was it so when Pharaoh raised Joseph to power, as we shall soon learn.

We read of the chief butler and chief baker of Pharaoh. They were important officers who provided for the king's food and drink. In the old pictures we see men making wine, sometimes squeezing the grapes in a leather bag, sometimes treading them. Then we see the sealed jars set aside. Again, like the chief butler, one presses grapes into a cup of water for the king to drink. We see the bakers also in the pictures. They had small dome-shaped ovens of earthenware, such as are still used. There was a hole near the top through which the baker reached his hand to put his thin cakes against the hot side of the oven, and to take off those that were baked. They made many kinds of fancy breads and often carried them in shallow open baskets on their heads. It is the way the people carry fruits and other things today. The chief baker carried such baskets in his dream. The words translated "white baskets" perhaps mean "baskets full of holes." The chief butler and chief baker had displeased the king and were in prison, perhaps in the fortress at Memphis, of which a picture still remains. Joseph was in the same prison. The Lord was with him, and the other prisoners were put under his care, especially the butler and the baker. They dreamed one night, and told the dreams to Joseph, and the Lord showed him the meaning of the dreams, so that he told them truly. In those early times, people were often taught by the Lord through dreams. Some of them they themselves understood, and others, like the dreams of our lesson today, were explained by someone to whom the Lord had given understanding.

1. What river waters Egypt? Where does it rise? What peculiar habit has this river?
2. In what part of Egypt was Joseph's home? Do you know what the names of the great cities of Egypt today? Do you know any cities of Joseph's time?
3. What was the king of Egypt called?
4. Where did Joseph meet the butler and baker of the king?
5. What dreams did the butler and baker have? What did the dreams mean?
6. Why did Joseph prosper?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Recall what we learned of the spiritual meaning of Egypt in connection with Abraham's going into Egypt in time of famine. The land of Canaan is the type of a spiritual life. Other countries around, according to their character and the character of their people, represent natural states and

faculties, some helpful, some hostile to the spiritual life. Egypt was the world's storehouse of learning as well as of food. The people had no spiritual perception themselves, but they treasured the learning handed down from ancient days, especially a knowledge of correspondences that was the basis of their hieroglyphic writings and of their elaborate religious ceremonies. This quality of the people was also reflected in the land itself, which had no rain from heaven but lived by the water of the Nile that came down from distant mountains. (Deut. 11:10, 11) We saw that Abraham's stay in Egypt represents a child's gathering of natural knowledge, which will serve later as material and basis for spiritual development. The Lord as a child must learn, as other children do, the outward forms of truth, especially from the letter of the Word, and this was represented by His being taken as a child into Egypt. (A. 1460-1463) The spiritual acknowledgment of the Lord and the spiritual motive of life represented by Joseph may seem to be lost, but they still live as a hidden influence, inspiring and ordering the gains of natural learning and power, preparing these for service to the spiritual life. (A. 5968)

The spiritual mastery over the natural mind and life is not gained in us, and was not gained in the Lord's life, without temptations. These are represented by Joseph's being shut up in prison. (A. 5035, 5036)

The butler and baker of Pharaoh represent two faculties, understanding and will, of the natural mind. Remember the significance of bread and wine in the Holy Supper. That these officers had offended and were in prison, represents disorder and constraint of these natural powers, awaiting a spiritual influence to judge and correct them. The understanding, represented by the butler, may be more easily corrected. The perverse will, represented by the baker, is condemned. (A. 5125, 5126, 5156, 5157) We long to see Joseph come to power in Egypt, in us and in the church. May the Lord, even though it be in hidden ways, guide and inspire our activities in the world, preparing us for spiritual life - a return to Canaan.

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Dreams

We have read about a dream Jacob had. What was it? We have read about two dreams Joseph had. What were they? We now read about dreams of the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt. Do you ever dream? Do you see, hear, touch, and smell in your dreams? But how can you see when your eyes are closed? Yes. You see with the eyes of your spirit. And do you also hear, feel, and smell with the corresponding senses of your spirit?

There are many kinds of dreams. In some dreams, people see things just the way the Lord wants them to see them, when He has something to tell about the future. In other dreams, people see things that angels who live in beautiful gardens and paradises of heaven show them. In still other kinds of dreams, spirits who are inclined to be foolish show people things fanciful and strange, made up out of parts of the pictures of things they have in their memory.

The dreams that Joseph dreamed came from the Lord through heaven, and by them the Lord foretold to Jacob and to Joseph what He was going to do for them.

A person's memory, which is the "book of life" of which we read in the holy Word of the Lord, has written and painted in it everything that person has ever seen, felt, smelt, tasted, touched, learned, thought, loved, wished for, been pleased with, cried for, laughed at, worked, played, or lived in any manner whatever. The Lord makes use of this "book of life" and selects material from it for the dreams which He shows to us while we are asleep, when He wants to tell us something. So, when Joseph dreamed, he saw sun, moon, and stars, which he had often seen before, and which were pictured in his book of life. But the Lord made them do something new, which foretold Joseph's future. This is the way it was also with the dream about the sheaves. And this is the way it was also with the dreams of the butler and the baker. The butler had in his book of life, or his memory, pictures of vines, that he had seen before he was put in prison; also of Pharaoh's cup; and the Lord took these pictures and made them move in a new way in the dream, which meant something about his future life. What it meant the butler did not know, but Joseph knew, because the Spirit of the Lord told him. And this is the way it was with the baker and his dream of the delicacies, the baskets and the birds.

These dreams were all from the Lord and different from our ordinary dreams. Once in a great while, however, even now-a-days, the Lord sends someone a dream that tells about the future. But the dreams of the Word were different even from such dreams, because each dream in the Word contains, besides the natural meaning such as Joseph "interpreted," another deeper, spiritual meaning.

You would probably be surprised to find how many dreams are told in the Word. Count up as many as you know. But do not include visions. Do you know the difference between a vision and a dream? You know that when people dream they are asleep. When people have visions, they are not asleep, but still the eyes of their bodies may be closed and they pay no attention to what goes on around them, for the eyes of their spirit are opened so that they see the things that are represented in the spiritual world. The prophets had both visions and dreams. Turn to Daniel 10, and you will read of a vision. All the things that John describes in the Book of Revelation were seen and heard by him in a vision, not in a dream. When angels were seen by Elisabeth, Mary, Zachariah, and the shepherds, they were seen in a vision not in a dream. Swedenborg sometimes had visions. But for the most part, what he saw was different from a vision because he was wide awake, both as to his body and as to his spirit. If you want to know the difference, first read a chapter from the Book of Revelation, and then read one of the "Memorable Relations."

You may remember that Joseph stands for, or represents, the Lord. When Joseph was in the pit, it represented the way the wicked people of the Jewish church treated the Lord at the time of the crucifixion, and on other occasions, and the way that people even now treat the Word which He has written through Moses, the Prophets, and the Evangelists. Joseph's being in prison in Egypt represents the same thing. Do you remember that when the Lord was crucified there were two men crucified with Him? One was saved, the other was not. So there were two men with Joseph in the prison. One was saved, the other was not.

## **Lesson 27**

### **Genesis 41: Plenty and Famine**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We are in the wonderful country of Egypt. The butler and baker had dreams and Joseph interpreted them. Now it was Pharaoh who dreamed, and when the wise men of Egypt could not tell the meaning, the butler remembered Joseph, and the Lord showed him the meaning of the dream. What was the dream? A sort of double dream; and what did it mean? You would think of Pharaoh's dream if you should see the canals in the flat meadow land of Egypt, and cows coming up out of the water where they have been to cool themselves and to escape from the flies; and again if you should see the fine heads of wheat, but sometimes withered by the hot dusty wind that blows from the deserts of Arabia. There were years of plenty in Egypt when the Nile rose in the autumn and watered all the fields. There were years of famine when the river did not rise as usual and some of the fields went dry.

Pharaoh saw that the spirit of the Lord was with Joseph, and he set him next himself over all the land of Egypt, to gather up the grain in the years of plenty and sell it to the people in the years of famine. Read all the things that Pharaoh did for Joseph. The ring that he gave Joseph had Pharaoh's own seal. Using this seal was like signing Pharaoh's name. The chain was perhaps a beautiful collar, a sort of golden lace work. Joseph should ride in the second chariot next to Pharaoh's own, and the runners going before cried "Abrech," which means "Bow the knee." You would imagine it all if you should see the runners in bright dress, calling before the carriage of some great man in Egypt, to clear the way.

Joseph was married to the daughter of the priest of On. At the ruins of On, near Cairo, one lonely obelisk is still standing that belonged to the temple. Do you know what an obelisk is like? Other obelisks from the same temple have been taken to London and New York. If we see them, we may think that Joseph also saw them.

So Joseph gathered up the grain in the seven years of plenty and brought it out and sold it to the people when the years of famine came.

##### **Junior**

What did Pharaoh dream? A picture will help us to think of a canal from the river Nile and of cows which had been cooling themselves in the water, coming out to feed in the meadow. Ears of corn mean wheat. The east wind which parches the grain is a hot wind full of fine dust that blows from the deserts of Arabia during about fifty days in the spring. If it comes too early, it withers the grain. Who were the magicians and wise men of Egypt? We shall hear more about them in the days of Moses. Why was Joseph called to interpret the dream? How did he know its meaning?

What was the meaning of Pharaoh's dream? We can better understand years of plenty and years of famine in Egypt if someone has learned for us about the rising of the Nile each year and the

importance of this to the fields, leaving on them a coating of rich mud and soaking them well with water. There is very little rain in Egypt, a few showers perhaps near the sea, but none inland. What did Joseph tell Pharaoh should be done? And Pharaoh appointed Joseph to do it, seeing that the spirit of the Lord was with him.

Notice the signs of power and honor that Pharaoh gave to Joseph: his own signet ring, vestures of fine linen or cotton, the chain or broad collar of delicate gold work, the place in the second chariot and the runners calling to the people to bow down as he passed. Joseph's wife was daughter of the priest of On. Has anyone found a picture of the obelisk still standing at On? Or has anyone seen another obelisk that has been brought from there? How could such a stone be brought across the ocean? Who were Joseph's two sons? Why do their names sound so familiar to us?

1. What are the first dreams mentioned in the story of Joseph? What dreams were interpreted by Joseph in the prison?
2. What was Pharaoh's dream? What did it mean?
3. What did Pharaoh do to Joseph?
4. What did Joseph do to prepare for the years of famine?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

We have thought of Joseph as representing the influence of an inner acknowledgment of the Lord upon our natural interests and natural learning, inspiring these and preparing them to serve the spiritual. It is equally true and more personal and beautiful to think of Joseph as a type of the Lord preparing us for spiritual life while we are living and working among things of the world. Among the types of the Lord in the Old Testament - Abraham, Samuel, David - Joseph is perhaps the most beautiful.

The Lord provides for us years of plenty in Egypt, when as children we learn easily many heavenly lessons, especially from the letter of the Word. We should do our part to lay up a store of these precious things while we are children, especially stories from the Bible and Psalms. Joseph's storing the grain in the cities means that the Lord withdraws many of the precious things of childhood beyond our consciousness for their safekeeping. And Joseph's bringing out and selling the grain in time of famine means that the Lord brings these precious things to consciousness in after years when they may be a source of strength and an influence for good. (A. 5342, 5363, 5376)

Can you see any spiritual reason for the doubling of Pharaoh's dream? (A. 5212)

Pharaoh's appointing of Joseph to rule his land suggests how we ought to put our lives into the Lord's care, to be guided and protected by Him. "Without thee, shall no man lift up his hand or foot, in all the land of Egypt." Nothing should be done except as the Lord would have it done. But what does it mean that Pharaoh kept his throne? "Only in the throne will I be greater than thou." We still are responsible for our lives. It is for us to submit all things to the Lord and to see that He is obeyed. (A. 5313)

The story of Joseph in Egypt, which describes so beautifully the Lord's hidden work for our regeneration amid the experiences of worldly life, describes in our Lord's own life the work of the Divine for the glorification of this natural plane of His human nature. Be sure to read A. 5275, 5307.

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Joseph, Ruler of Egypt

You may have heard of the "heavenly Canaan," by which we mean - what? Yes, heaven, where the angels live. The land of Canaan in this world stood for or represented heaven in the other world. The word "Canaan" in the Sacred Scriptures therefore is a sign of heaven, or signifies it. Canaan was a beautiful mountainous land, with the clear sea of Galilee, the river Jordan, with snow-capped Mount Hermon, with the famous mountains Moriah and Zion, where the city of Jerusalem was, with hills full of vineyards, olive-yards, fig-orchards, with plains that had oak groves, with Jericho, the city of palm trees, with springs, and wells, and brooks, etc. This mountainous, fruitful land stood for heaven because the angels live on mountains and hills and because what is heavenly (like love to God, and love for the neighbor) in people on earth is of a high and exalted character.

But Egypt is a low-lying, flat land, with very rich soil, but with no beautiful mountains. Being flat and low, many canals can be cut leading out from the great river Nile, so that the land can be easily watered; and, as a rule, crops of wheat, spelt and barley grow very abundantly.

Now, if the mountainous land of Canaan represented heaven where the angels are, and the heaven in human beings - that is, the high and lofty, heavenly loves in them - what do you suppose the low, flat land of Egypt represents? It represents something good, but lower down than heavenly loves, namely, all that children learn in the way of knowledge about God, the Lord, about His Word, and about heaven. You may be said to be in Egypt because you are learning to know things from the Word. The more you learn to know from the Word, the more grain is growing in your Egypt. The seven years of plenty mean all the holy days and hours during which you learn knowledges from your parents and your Sunday-school teachers, and from your own reading of the Word. But the Lord tells you that while He cares for you so that you shall have so many holy years in which to gather up knowledges about your spiritual life, a time will come when you may not be interested so much in learning, as you are now, and so He provides that the knowledges that you learn now shall be gathered up and put somewhere in storehouses in your mind, where you may not see them except when the Lord permits. Just as Joseph gathered up the grain and kept it in storehouses where the people could not get at it without his permission. For, you will remember, that Joseph stood for, or represented, the Lord.

Pharaoh called Joseph, "Zaphnath-Paaneah," which means, "One who makes known hidden things and the future." That is what the Lord does. He makes known what will come in your future life, and for this reason he wants you to learn just as much as you possibly can about Himself, about the Word, about heaven, and about the life you should lead as true New Church people.

## **Lesson 28**

### **Genesis 42: The Brothers Come**

#### **THE STORY**

The story of Joseph and his brothers in chapters 42 to 45 is very beautiful. Little children feel its charm, and there is a tender something about it which brings tears to many older eyes. We must take pains to preserve this charm in our presenting of the story. It may be well to depart somewhat from our usual method in our study of these chapters. Let us say just enough to make the scene living to the children and then reverently read the chapters with them. It may leave a clearer memory of the story if we give one lesson to chapter 42, describing the first visit of the brothers, and make our long reading from chapters 43 to 45, describing the second visit. If carefully planned and done, these lessons will be long remembered.

#### **Primary**

Pharaoh had raised Joseph to great power in Egypt. What were some of the things which showed that Joseph was ruler of the country? What did Joseph do in the seven years of plenty? What did he do when the years of famine came?

One day, Joseph saw ten of his brothers among the people who came to buy grain. Where had they come from? Why had they come? As they bowed down before him, Joseph knew them, but they did not know him.

Does their bowing down to Joseph remind you of dreams that Joseph had long before? Joseph could also understand when they talked with each other, but they did not know it, for he spoke in the Egyptian language and the interpreter repeated in their language what he said to them.

One of the brothers was not there, the youngest, Joseph's own brother Benjamin. He wished to know about Benjamin, whether the brothers had been kind to him and to their old father. He loved his brothers and could not keep back his tears. But could he trust them? So he spoke roughly to them and called them spies, enemies of the country, and said that they must bring Benjamin with them when they came again or they should not see his face and he would not sell them grain. He kept one of the brothers, Simeon, when he sent the others home, to make sure that they would come again with Benjamin. Another thing troubled them. Joseph gave them back their money, putting each man's money in his sack of grain, and they found it when they opened their sacks. They could not tell why this was done. They were afraid it was some plan to do them harm. When they came home and told Jacob their story, and told him that the great man in Egypt had said that Benjamin must come with them when they came again, Jacob was troubled. He loved Benjamin so much, and he had fears for his safety with the brothers and in the strange land of Egypt.

#### **Junior**

Have you all a good map of Egypt to look at? It is a strange country, all desert outside of the strip of land which is kept green by the overflow of the Nile. There is famine in Egypt if the Nile fails to

overflow the fields. This was probably what happened in the seven years of famine after the years of plenty. But Joseph collected corn in the years of plenty and was ready to sell it to the people when the famine came. The famine was not alone in Egypt, but all the neighboring countries suffered also, even the land of Canaan, where Joseph's father, Jacob (or Israel), lived, some two or three hundred miles away. They heard that there was corn (or grain) to be bought in Egypt, and Jacob sent ten of his sons down to buy corn. You can trace the way on your map, along the Mediterranean shore and across the Isthmus of Suez, which was then much narrower than it is now.

It was Joseph who sold the grain. As they came and bowed down before him, Joseph knew his brothers, but they did not know him. Does their bowing before Joseph remind you of a dream that Joseph had long ago? Let us read the story. (Gen. 42) Joseph longed to make himself known to his brothers, but first he wanted to know if they could be trusted. Had they been kind to the youngest brother, Benjamin? He was not with them. So Joseph bound Simeon, and kept him till they should come down to Egypt again bringing Benjamin with them. He pretended that he thought they were spies. The Egyptians were always watchful lest some enemy should come into their country through the great highway from the east.

Joseph had learned the language of the Egyptians, which was different from the language that his brothers spoke. He understood their language, but he spoke to them through an interpreter. That is, he spoke to the interpreter in the language of Egypt, and he told them in their own language what Joseph said.

Joseph returned each man his money in his sack, so that really he made them a present of the grain. They did not understand why he did it, but went home to their father greatly troubled. And you can understand that the old father would be greatly troubled also, for twice the brothers had come home with one brother missing, and now they wanted to take his youngest son Benjamin, whom he loved so much. "If mischief befall him," he said, "by the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

If we were acting out this story, do we know what feelings we ought to have and to express if we were taking the part of Joseph when he saw his brothers, and what feelings we ought to have if we were taking the part of the brothers? What if we were taking the part of the old father Jacob?

1. From what country and city did Joseph's brothers come to buy corn? To what country did they come?
2. How did Joseph treat his brothers? Why?
3. What did he say that they must do? Which of the brothers did Joseph bind?
4. What can you tell about the money that the brothers brought to pay for corn?
5. Tell about their return to Jacob.

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

The most helpful glimpse of deeper meaning in this story grows from the thought that Joseph represents the Lord loving and caring for us in hidden ways while we are living our natural life in the world, occupied in natural interests and natural knowledge. How tenderly He loves and longs for us to know His love! Sometimes the Lord's ways seem harsh and His words seem harsh. Really His ways toward us and His words are all from love. (A. 5422, 5423, 5511)

Joseph loved Benjamin and longed to have him with him, and could not reveal himself to the brothers till Benjamin came. Go back to the thought which we had that Joseph and Benjamin, the last-born of Jacob's sons, represent more spiritual developments than are represented by the other brothers. They represent a conscious relation with the Lord: Joseph a loving sense of the Lord's help, very obscure in our worldly Egyptian state, and Benjamin an understanding of it. Perhaps in the present experience of the Christian Church Benjamin is now timidly coming to Joseph in Egypt, fearful that the knowledge of the Lord which is real and precious to us in more spiritual states will hardly be able to take its place among the knowledge and experience of the world. Joseph needs Benjamin, and no harm befalls him. (A. 5411)

The money which the men brought was returned in their sacks. Paying for the grain represents the feeling that we are able of ourselves to acquire truth and strength of character. We cannot do this; it is the Lord's gift. He invites us to ""buy wine and milk, without money and without price." (Isa. 55:1) This truth was represented by the returning of their money to the brethren. They could not buy food; they must take it as a gift. (A. 5488)

## **TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES**

### **Leading Thought: Retribution and Repentance**

Do you remember what is called "The Golden Rule"? Please recite it. (Matt. 7:12) We may understand this law also as saying, "Whatever you do to others will be done to you." Indeed, this is the law of the whole spiritual world: of heaven and of hell. In heaven the angels always do good to others, so good is done to them. In hell the devils do evil to others, so evil is done to them. In other words, good people receive their reward, and evil people receive their punishment. And in every single case, without exception, the exact evil that people do to other people is paid back to them; and on the other hand, the good that people do other people, returns to them. This is not always so in the natural world. But in ancient times, many laws on earth were framed to carry out this principle, as you may see by turning to Exodus 31:23-25; Leviticus 24:19, 20; Deuteronomy 19:18, 19. In this world sometimes the reward or the punishment may not follow until many years after. We see something of this in our lesson. The brothers of Joseph had put him into the pit in the desert more than twenty years before the events occurred that are told in the story in our lesson. Now, after so many years, they were put in prison for their misdeed. The three days of their imprisonment represented the full punishment, for you will remember that "three" means what is full, complete, and perfect. One of the brothers, Simeon, who was the next oldest to Reuben (it was Reuben who had counselled against throwing Joseph into the pit) was kept in

prison for a much longer time. They realized that all this imprisonment was a punishment for their cruel and heartless treatment of Joseph (verses 21, 22).

Now, you must know that the Lord never permits anything bad to happen without a good reason. Why does he permit people to be punished? Yes, in order that, being afraid of the punishment, they may be kept as much as possible from doing evil. But punishment has another use, and this with those who are not wicked at heart, but still do or say things at times that are wrong. Like children. Punishment leads them to repent; that is, to think of the wrong they did, to be sorry for it, and to make up their minds never to do it again. To be sorry is not enough. Repentance means not to do it again. Would you like to know what angels say that repentance is? I can tell you, for once, after Swedenborg had been preaching repentance in the streets of a big but bad city in the spiritual world (it was called "Sodom and Egypt"), and had been treated badly by them, he heard a voice coming from angels in heaven instructing people about this very subject of repentance. And this is what they said:

"Repentance is to examine yourself, to know and acknowledge your evils, to make yourself guilty of them, to confess them before the Lord, to implore aid and power to resist them, and thus to desist from them, and to lead a new life."

The angels said more; but don't you think it would be fine to commit to memory this much of what they said? Think of knowing a definition which angels have given!

## **Lesson 29**

### **Genesis 43: Joseph and Benjamin**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The grain was used up which Jacob's sons had brought from Egypt, but the man had said that they must bring their youngest brother with them when they came again, or they should not see his face and he would not sell them any more grain. Jacob was afraid to let Benjamin go. At last Judah promised to take care of Benjamin, and his father let him go. They took also a little present of gums and nuts of Canaan to give to the great man in Egypt. They came among the others who came to buy. Joseph knew them and saw Benjamin with them; he had them taken to his house. What sort of a house do you suppose Joseph lived in? Some rich houses in Egypt had fine rooms with bright pictures painted on the walls, and courtyards with baths and beautiful colored tiles and flowers. The rich people had many servants. And there was an office away from the house where Joseph attended to his work, coming home at noon for dinner. Joseph's brothers felt like strange, rude shepherds from the fields, in this fine house of the great man in Egypt. They thought, too, of the money that had been given back to them in their sacks of grain and were troubled. But the steward, the keeper of the house, was kind to them, and they got ready their present to give to the great man when he should come to dinner. The dinner was served, and still they did not know that the great man was Joseph. They spent the night at his house and in the morning loaded their asses to go home.

## **Junior**

Joseph's brethren came back to tell their father that Simeon, their brother, had been made a prisoner in Egypt, and that he would not be set free until they should take Benjamin down with them. In fact, they could not hope to get any more food from the ruler of Egypt until they should take Benjamin down. All this must have seemed very strange to their father, and no wonder he felt that he could not trust his dearly beloved Benjamin to the care of his brothers. Had not Joseph been killed when he was sent to them? And now they came home without Simeon.

But all the corn they had brought with them was at last used up and the only food to be had was in Egypt. Then Judah came to his father and promised to care for Benjamin, and if any harm should come to him it would be Judah's fault. (We remember that Judah and Reuben had been the ones who did not want Joseph to be killed.) So Jacob let Benjamin go with them. They took a present to the great man: a little balm, a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and almonds. Three of the things they brought are the same gums that the Ishmaelites were carrying who brought Joseph into Egypt. "Spices and balm and myrrh" are tragacanth and gum from the mastix tree and from the cistus shrub. (Gen. 37:25) What is called "honey" was perhaps a syrup of grape juice; "nuts" were pistachio nuts, and almonds we all know. They carried too not only money to buy more corn, but the money that had been returned in their sacks, about which they were so troubled. You can understand how they feared and wondered when they were taken to Joseph's house.

When Joseph came in and saw Benjamin, his very own brother whom he loved so much and had not seen for so many years, he could not keep back his tears, but had to leave them for a while. "Bowels" is used in the old sense of feelings. (See Isa. 63:15; Ps. 25:6; 1 Kings 3:26) Then they all sat down to dine, Joseph at a table by himself, on account of his high rank, the brothers by themselves, and the Egyptians who were there by themselves. The Egyptians would not eat with foreigners, especially with common herdsmen like Joseph's brethren. (Gen. 46:34) As Joseph gave his brothers their places at table, he began with the oldest and arranged them according to their ages, which would have been an impossible thing for a stranger to have done. It was a sign of honor to his guests when Joseph sent them food from his own table.

1. Why did the sons of Jacob delay to go to Egypt the second time for grain?
2. Who promised to take good care of Benjamin?
3. What did they take as a present for the great man in Egypt? Where did they give the present?
4. Why did the brethren fear when they were taken to Joseph's house? What did the steward say to comfort them?
5. What sign of honor did Joseph show his brothers at the dinner? What showed that he knew them? Who was the oldest? Who was the youngest?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

It may not be possible for even the older scholars to get more than a glimpse of the deeper meaning of these chapters about Joseph; but the youngest children feel the charm of the story, and there is a tender something about it, which brings tears to many older eyes. It is because the story is about the Lord, and if we read it reverently, it brings us near to the Lord and angels. Read L. 7.

Who is Israel, mentioned in the sixth verse? When did he receive the name? What is the meaning of the last two letters of the name? This prepares you to learn that a more interior and spiritual quality of life is meant by the name Israel than by the name Jacob. (A. 5595)

Does the present brought by the brethren to Joseph remind you of a present that was once brought to the Lord? Gold and frankincense and myrrh? The offerings that were made in old times to the Lord, and to rulers and priests who in a manner represented the Lord, were symbols of the good affections and true thoughts with which we ought to come to the Lord. It is significant that although the brethren took of the best fruits, or, in Hebrew, the "song" of the land, it was such a poor little present after all. (A. 5618, 5619)

What did we learn is represented by the effort of the brethren to pay for the grain? The feeling and belief that we are able to gain heavenly knowledge and strength for ourselves; but the returning of the money meant that the things of heavenly life are only from the Lord and are His gifts to us. Remember the Lord's words to the rich young man, who felt that he was good and strong in his own strength. (Mark 10:17-22) The kind words of Joseph's steward, when the brothers told him about the money, express beautifully the truth that heavenly knowledge is only from the Lord, but that He permits us to learn it and to enjoy it as if it were our own. Find in the statement of faith in our Book of Worship, the words that express this important truth: "In abstaining from evil and doing good we are to act as of ourselves; at the same time believing and acknowledging that the will, the understanding, and the power to do so, are of the Lord alone." (T. 3; A. 5662)

Joseph's emotion on seeing Benjamin suggests the great love which the Lord feels for the interior things of heavenly life in His disciples; more than people can know or understand. (Matt. 12:50; A. 5691, 5694)

Joseph's eating with his brethren, and his sending them food from his own table, reminds us of the Lord's eating with His disciples and with others, and of His blessing and giving them the bread. Both were representative of the Lord's giving in His great mercy the spiritual food of heavenly goodness. Find in the prophets a place where heaven is spoken of as a feast. (Isa. 25:6) Find such a place in the Lord's parables. (Luke 14:16) Among the times when the Lord blessed the food and gave it to the disciples, which do we remember as most full of sacred meaning? (A. 5706)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Benjamin of Bethlehem

Benjamin had been born in Bethlehem. Bethlehem and Benjamin mean nearly the same thing. That is, they stand for the means that brings two separate things together. Let us see. What is the story about Bethlehem in these chapters? Joseph had become ruler of Egypt. His brothers came from Canaan to buy grain. He recognized them, but they did not know him, and he behaved strangely and sternly toward them. He told them to bring little Benjamin, who was his own brother, the only other son of his mother Rachel; and he imprisoned Simeon until Benjamin should come. When Benjamin was brought into Egypt, as today's chapter tells, then Joseph treated his brothers kindly and invited them to dine with him. So Benjamin was the means of bringing the brothers nearer to Joseph.

Now, it was in Bethlehem, Benjamin's birthplace, that the Lord was born. People on earth no longer knew the Lord; they did not know that He was a strong and loving Divine Human. Therefore, He came into the world so that they might know Him and feel His great love and could love Him. As Joseph invited his brothers to dine with him, so the Lord when on earth invited people to dine with Him, and instituted the Holy Supper. To come into the world, it was necessary for Him to be born somewhere. Without His having been born, people could not have been brought to be near Him. He chose Bethlehem. Bethlehem, then, was the means of bringing the Lord God of heaven together with people on earth.

And all the truth that we learn about the Lord who was born in Bethlehem to be our Savior, and that helps us to know Him and love Him, is a means for bringing us to Him. We may therefore say that little Benjamin represented or stood for such truth as the Lord uses as a means to bring people together with Him.

Is this hard to understand? Let me illustrate. Suppose that you do not like someone, simply because you do not know how good he is. If you then try to find out the good that is in him, as for instance, by having some friend of yours who knows him well, tell you about lovely traits in his character, then the truth that you thus find out about him leads you to love him. That truth is like a little Benjamin that brings Joseph and his brothers together. Unless we possessed the truth about the Lord born in the world, we could not know Him and love Him truly. The Lord Himself tells us the truth about Himself, and in such a way that we can understand Him and love Him for His goodness and His wisdom. This holy and innocent truth that He tells us in His Word is meant by Benjamin.

## **Lesson 30**

### **Genesis 44: The Silver Cup**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

On this second visit, the brothers spent the night at Joseph's house, and early in the morning they were sent on their way home with their sacks full of grain. The money was put back in their sacks as before, and in Benjamin's sack Joseph's silver cup. It was a cup to drink from, and also the Egyptians and others in old times read signs in such a cup, in the play of light in the water or wine. Sometimes also jewels or other things were dropped into the liquid. Joseph's steward went after the brothers and charged them with stealing the cup. He would have brought back Benjamin and let the others go, but the brothers were faithful to Benjamin and they all came back with him to Joseph's house. Judah told how he had promised to take care of Benjamin and bring him home safe. It was enough to show Joseph that he could trust them, and he told them who he was and that he forgave them for the unkindness that they had done to him. The Lord had made it the means of saving them and all their family in this time of famine. The brothers must go and bring the family, and Joseph would give them a home and take care of them in the land of Goshen, a part of Egypt good for sheep and cattle. Save till another time the story of their coming, and all listen while we read the chapters, Gen. 43, 44 and 45.

##### **Junior**

Joseph's brothers were sent on their way home with their sacks full of grain. What else had been put into their sacks on their first visit? Their money, and this was done again by Joseph's orders, and in Benjamin's sack besides his money was put Joseph's silver cup. It was called, "it wherein my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth." The Egyptians and others in old times read signs in such a cup in the play of light in the water or wine. Sometimes also jewels or other things were dropped into the liquid, or a ring was made to swing against the sides of the cup. Joseph knew better than the Egyptians that the Lord only can reveal secrets. When the chief butler and baker told their dreams he said, "Do not interpretations belong to God?" And he said to Pharaoh, "It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." (Gen. 40:8; 41:16)

Why was the cup hidden in the sack, and why were they accused of stealing? Was it perhaps to test the faithfulness of the brothers to Benjamin? If they were faithful to him, then Joseph would make himself known to them all, and show kindness to them all; and this is what did happen. But if they were unfaithful to Benjamin, it would be better to separate him from the others and to show kindness to him alone. Rending the clothes was a sign of grief. (Gen. 37:29, 34) Can you find this same sign of grief in the New Testament?

The brothers did not try to excuse themselves, but Judah's confession of guilt refers not so much to the cup as to the wrong that they had done to Joseph and which they felt was the cause of all their trouble. (Gen. 44:16; 42:21; A. 5785) Judah spoke for the brothers and told Joseph why they could not go and leave Benjamin. It was Judah who promised to take good care of Benjamin and to

bring him safely to his father. Judah's words were very loving and tender. Joseph knew now that he could trust his brothers and could show kindness to them all.

1. Read the first verse of chapter 44. Who commanded? What position did the steward hold? Who are the men mentioned?
2. Read verse 20. Who was the father? How old was he? Who is called a "little one"? Who is spoken of as dead? Who was the mother?
3. What was put with the grain in the sacks? What was put into Benjamin's sack? Why was this done?
4. What did it prove when all the brothers came back with Benjamin? Why did Judah offer to stay instead of Benjamin?
5. Of what is it a sign, when someone, like Judah, is willing to lay down his life for his friends?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

We must try to learn the meaning of the part of the story about the silver cup. The cup is closely associated with the money. What was represented by the money, and by its being returned with the grain? The money brought by the brethren to buy food represents the self-confident belief that we can gain knowledge about the Lord and heaven and strength of heavenly character of ourselves. But the returning of the money means that this is not so. We can gain nothing of heavenly life in our own strength; it is all a gift from the Lord. Even the knowledge that there is a God and a heaven we could never find out for ourselves if the Lord had not revealed it to us. The same lesson is taught in the words of Isaiah: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." (Isa. 55:1; A. 5488)

Now Joseph's cup in which he drank and with which he divined is found in Benjamin's sack, and he is accused of stealing it. A cup for water and wine is plainly a symbol of truth and intelligence. This meaning is still plainer from the fact that it was a silver cup, for silver is associated with intelligence, as gold is with love. Most of all does the use of the cup for divining, for reading secrets by the play of light, suggest that it is a symbol of spiritual insight and perception. Benjamin himself represents nearly this same quality of heavenly life. The cup seems almost to belong to him, but his being accused of stealing it means that even this spiritual perception has at first something of self-confidence about it, believing that it sees and enjoys heavenly truth in its own strength. This feeling must be overcome and one must become thoroughly humble before the Lord, for it is only as we become humble that the Lord can make us wise and can make Himself known to us. This is beautifully explained in A. 5747.

The decision of the brothers to become Joseph's bondsmen, and Judah's confession that they are his servants, represent the subjection of all the external life with its natural powers of use and pleasure to the inner, spiritual life and to the Lord. This submission seems beforehand like a

bondage, but it proves not so. Compare the resolve of the prodigal son to become as one of the servants in his father's house, and the result. (Luke 15:19, 20; A. 5763, 5786)

Notice in this chapter how Judah comes to the front and is the leader and spokesman of the brothers. (Verses 14, 16, and on) Each of the sons of Jacob represents some element of character. There is a stage of development when intellect leads. Such a state is represented when Reuben speaks for the brethren. (Gen. 42:37) But Judah, in a good sense, represents a humble, heavenly love; and a state in which love leads is represented when Judah acts as leader and speaker. Notice the great tenderness of Judah's words and his willingness to bear the punishment for his brother. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13; A. 5782, 5842)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Silver Cup

It is said that Joseph's silver cup which was found in Benjamin's sack was used by Joseph to drink out of, and to divine in. We remember that Joseph represented the Lord Jesus Christ. Did the Lord, when He was on earth, drink out of a cup? Yes, the cup which He used at the Last Supper, when He instituted the Holy Supper, and told His disciples, "Drink ye all of it." The wine of the Holy Supper means Divine Truth, just as the bread means Divine Good. We need to know the truth, that we may live right, and when we live according to the truth, then we receive good. In this way we drink spiritual wine and eat heavenly bread. Silver also means truth. As it was through the silver cup in the sack of Benjamin that Joseph's brothers were brought back to him after they had started to leave him, so it is through the Truth which the Lord puts into our sacks - our memories - that we are brought back to Him when we have left Him. We can understand this, can we not?

But now comes something a little more difficult. What does Joseph's "divining" in the cup mean?

You will remember that when Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, dreamed his dreams about the seven cows and the seven ears of grain, he called for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt to explain the dreams. These were men who studied correspondences. What does that mean? Why, they knew what the things we see in the natural world meant, what spiritual things they corresponded to. For instance, a "horse" corresponds to or means the understanding - a white horse the right understanding of the Word, a black horse the wrong understanding of the Word; "to be warm" corresponds to being full of love; "to see" corresponds to understanding a thing; "to hear" corresponds to obeying; "the sun" corresponds to the Lord; etc., etc.

So these old magicians and wise men of Egypt knew what cows corresponded to, and grain, and a river, and numbers, like seven, three, forty, etc., what stars corresponded to. In fact, they studied what all things on earth correspond to. Those of them who were good, made a good use of what they knew; they could teach the truth, and they could find out hidden things in this way - secrets that were hidden from people generally. But those of them who were not good made a bad use of their knowledge of correspondences. They performed magical tricks, which were intended to deceive people, and through their knowing hidden things, tried to make people believe that they were wonderful and great, and so tried to obtain power over people, for their own advantage. The

wise men or magi who came to see the Lord when He was born in Bethlehem, and were guided by the star, were of the good kind.

Using knowledge like this to find out what good ought to be done was called "divining."

Joseph, as you know, was able to do for Pharaoh what the wise men and magicians had been called upon to do and had failed to do. He was a very good and wise man, "in whom was the spirit of God." He could see and know hidden things. And he told Pharaoh the hidden meaning of his dreams. Now, just as the wise men at the time of the Lord's birth could, by the star, find out the hidden knowledge where the young Child who was born to be "King of the Jews" lay, so Joseph in Egypt, a long time before, could find out by his silver cup things that were hidden to others, and then would tell others what they ought to do. So he "divined."

When the Lord Jesus Christ made His First Coming into the world, He made known hidden things. He taught people about the hidden kingdom of God, which they knew nothing about. He taught them to love even their enemies, to do good to those who persecuted them. He taught them many things of this kind, showing that in this way they would come to be very near to Him, and be bound together with Him. This was the New Covenant, and so He called the cup at the Holy Supper "the New Covenant in My blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

The Lord has now made His Second Coming. Has He made known hidden things to us of the New Church?

You have seen the great work, in many volumes, called the Arcana Coelestia, have you not? If not, ask your teacher to show it to you in the church library. Do you know what Arcana Coelestia means? It is a Latin title meaning Heavenly Secrets. You know what a secret is. Of course you had secrets before Christmas! You hid the presents which you were getting ready for your parents and brothers and sisters and friends. They did not know the lovely things you were going to give them. But when Christmas came, then you brought them out of their hiding places and out of their wrappings, and disclosed them, to make the loved ones happy. And they did the same to you. Now the books called the Arcana Coelestia contain lovely things that had been kept hidden in heaven for thousands of years, until the Lord made His Second Coming. Then our Lord Jesus Christ took Swedenborg to heaven, and showed Him these heavenly secrets, and told him to disclose, or reveal them, that is to tell people on earth about them and show them to them. And this he did in these wonderful books. These books are like Joseph's silver cup, in which we can "divine" - that is, know - the hidden things of heaven, and learn how to have them on earth. Whatever you learn about the Lord and heaven, and whatever your pastor preaches in the church on Sundays from the internal sense of the Word, has been "divined" from this silver cup.

## **Lesson 31**

### **Genesis 45-47:12: Jacob in Goshen**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Did you learn last Sunday how Joseph, who was now a great man in Egypt, told his brothers who he was and spoke to them so kindly, and told them to go home and bring their old father Jacob and all the family and their sheep and cattle to live in the land of Goshen? Pharaoh heard about Joseph's brothers and he, too, told Joseph to send for his father and the family and to give them a home in the best of the land. He told Joseph, also, to send wagons in which Jacob and others who were feeble could ride. So Joseph gave them wagons and much food for the journey and presents, and said, "See that ye fall not out by the way."

They came to Jacob and told him about Joseph. At first his heart fainted, for he could not believe it. When he saw the wagons, that helped him to believe, and he said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die."

We must follow Jacob and the family in their journey from Hebron, stopping at Beersheba to offer sacrifices, and then by the way which we know along the shore of Egypt. Their home was to be in the land of Goshen, a land of good pastures, where a canal from the Nile carried water and greenness farthest to the east. It was the first part of Egypt which they came to. Joseph made ready his chariot and went to meet them there. He took five of his brothers and presented them before Pharaoh. They told Pharaoh that they were shepherds, and just as Joseph hoped, he told them to make their home in the good pastures of Goshen. And Joseph brought his old father to Pharaoh. If you have the picture of Jacob before Pharaoh, it will help you. And read Gen. 47:7-10. So the family lived in Goshen and Joseph took care of them there.

##### **Junior**

Judah had been speaking to Joseph, telling him why they could not go back to their father without Benjamin. As Joseph saw the faithfulness of the brethren to Benjamin and their love for their father, he knew that he could trust them, and that he could tell them who he was, and he forgave them.

Read the first verses of our new chapter. (Gen. 45:1-15) Weeping is not always from sadness. We weep sometimes for joy. Remember how Jacob and Esau wept at their meeting, when Jacob came back to the Holy Land. (Gen. 33:4) The brethren were troubled, or terrified, when they first knew that the great man of Egypt was Joseph, and that they were in his power. But Joseph comforted them, and told them that the Lord's providence was over his coming into Egypt, and had made it the means of saving many people, and even themselves, alive. The title "A father to Pharaoh" shows how important Joseph's position was as adviser to the king. See Judges 17:10.

There had now been famine for two years; how much longer would it last? "Earing" means ploughing. Joseph could care better for his father, and his brethren, and all their families, and

their flocks and herds, if they would come and be near him in Egypt. Goshen was the eastern part of the delta land of Egypt, where a canal from the Nile reaches out into the desert and carries greenness with it. It was land that was especially good for pasture, and Jacob and all his family were shepherds. Read also of Pharaoh's kindness in verses 16-20. Notice the charge which Joseph gave his brethren as they started: "See that ye fall not out by the way." How their old father received them, you learn in the last verses of chapter 45. So Jacob and his family came into Egypt.

It is a very touching scene, the old man Jacob before the king, no doubt in his palace at Zoan, near to the land of Goshen. "How old art thou?" was Pharaoh's question. Jacob was a hundred and thirty years old, not as old as Isaac and Abraham had lived to be. Abraham was a hundred and seventy-five years old, and Isaac was a hundred and eighty. (Gen. 25:7; 35:28) Then the old man blessed Pharaoh.

It came about as Joseph had wished: Jacob and his family should live in Goshen and have the good pastures for their flocks; some of them should also be keepers of Pharaoh's cattle. In verse 11 it is called the land of Rameses. This was another name for the same part of Egypt, perhaps including Goshen and somewhat more. You recognize Rameses as being the name of some of the great kings of Egypt.

1. Why were Joseph's brothers troubled when he made himself known to them? How did he comfort them?
2. What did Joseph tell his brethren to do? What did Pharaoh say?
3. What did Jacob think when his sons brought word of Joseph? What gave him courage to believe them?
4. Where were Jacob and his family given a home? What made Pharaoh the more willing to have them have that land?
5. What question did Pharaoh ask Jacob?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The selling of Joseph into Egypt represents in us and in the church the loss of a living sense of the Lord's nearness and Divineness, such as existed with the early Christians, giving place to an interest largely historical and scientific. Even so, the knowledge of the Lord is the most precious of knowledges, and there is need for the laying of an historical and scientific basis which will make a spiritual faith when it is regained more enduring. The coming of the brothers and family to Joseph in Egypt means that all the particulars of religious life and worship are dependent on the central element of faith in the Lord; they live from it and share its vicissitudes. The Egyptian experience interests us vitally because it has so much in common with the state of Christianity today. A return to the living faith in the Lord of early days (and now with a stronger basis) is pictured and promised in the burial of Joseph in the field of Shechem in the land of Canaan, for burial means resurrection. An application to the Jewish Church is shown in the Arcana. (A. 5915, 6591-6596)

Joseph's words of comfort to his brethren, that it was not they who sent him to Egypt but God, that he might preserve life, remind us that the Lord's providence is over all things, even over the trials of life and the wrong that people do, to make all things contribute as far as possible to spiritual life. (A. 6570-6575)

The kindness of Pharaoh to Jacob and his family suggests the help which all natural knowledge and power should give to the heavenly life. Wagons, which make the strength of the work animals more effective, represent forms of truth and doctrine that help the mind in its reasonings and conclusions. Many such helps spiritual thought finds in nature and in the letter of the Word. See a somewhat similar lesson in the help given to Solomon by Hiram and his ships. (A. 5945, 5971)

Jacob's family was made more sure of the land which Joseph desired for them because they were shepherds. A spiritual shepherd protects and cherishes affections of innocence and charity. Remember the Lord's charge to Peter: "Feed my lambs; feed my sheep." (John 21:15-17) If one is a shepherd and remains a shepherd and insists on being a shepherd, that person is safe in the Egypt of natural development and natural knowledge. This spirit separates and protects people from the natural pride in knowledge for its own sake and the natural desire to use knowledge for selfish and evil ends, the Egyptian who abominates the shepherd. (A. 6052)

What deeper thought is contained in Pharaoh's question to Jacob, "How old art thou?" A special meaning in Jacob's answer is noted in A. 6098. In connection with Pharaoh's question, consider also the words of the Psalm: "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." (Ps. 90)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### **Leading Thought: Joseph's Piety**

One of the Christian graces which the Lord especially taught people was to be forgiving to those who wronged them and persecute them. He taught this so often and clearly that on one memorable occasion His disciple Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him, till seven times?" The Lord answered him, "I say not unto thee till seven times, but until seventy times seven." Forgiving others is so important that the Lord refers to it in the prayer which He taught to His disciples, and which we pray every day: "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." Our "debtors" are those who we think owe us some sort of restitution for having done evil to us. Joseph, of whose wisdom and ability we have learned so much, forgave his brothers who had been so wicked and cruel as to put him into a pit and afterward sell him into Egypt, far away from his loving father and his home. And more than this: Joseph was so kind as to wish that they who had done this great wrong to him should no longer be distressed about it, saying to them, "Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither." He then displayed his great reverence and piety by showing them that, although they had done evil, the Lord knew beforehand what they would do - for the Lord knows everything - and that He made use of the evil which they did, to bring great good out of it, not only for the Egyptians, but also for other people, and even for themselves who had committed the evil! For, through their selling him into Egypt, the Lord could bring about that he should become the chief governor in that country, and provide for the years of famine. Notice how Joseph always thought

of God and His wisdom and might - not only when he was in trouble, but also when he was a great man.

How kind and merciful the Lord is! He always foresees what people will do, and if they do evil, He still brings as much good as possible out of it. This is called His Divine Providence.

Of course, the Lord's making use of wrong and evil does not make the wrong right, nor the evil good. But it shows how good and wise and powerful He is. So, no matter what may happen, the pious people of the Church know that, in some way or other, the Lord will bring good out of it, and so they trust in the Lord and are content. When you study history, see if you can find out the instances where the Lord permitted evil, and so led events that it served for the bringing about of good. History is full of instances of this kind. But you have to know how to read history right.

The Lord's knowing all things, even before they happen, is called His "Divine Omniscience." Can you tell me some instances in the stories of Genesis which we have read thus far, where He made known by dreams or otherwise what would happen in the future? The Lord's being able to make evil done by people serve the final coming about of good, is called His "Divine Omnipotence." Many of the Psalms teach us about His Omnipotence (see 19:6), and praise Him for His Providence. For instance, the fortieth Psalm tells about the Lord bringing one out of a miry pit, and setting one's feet upon a rock. That reminds us of Joseph, and even of the Lord Himself, who, after His crucifixion, arose from the tomb and ascended to heaven. The beautiful twenty-third Psalm says, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." The eighteenth Psalm says, "The Lord is my rock and my fortress, my deliverer, my God, my strength in whom I will trust, my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower. I will call upon the Lord who is to be praised; so shall I be saved from mine enemies."

In whatever trouble we may be, we may be sure that, if we keep our conscience clear, the Lord will lead us into a happy, heavenly state.

## **Lesson 32**

### **Genesis 48: Ephraim and Manasseh**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

Jacob had grown old in the land of Egypt and he would soon die. We have learned how they valued an old man's blessing. He was both father and priest of the family, and at such times he spoke from the Spirit of the Lord and his words were sure to come to pass. Remember how Isaac before his death blessed Jacob and Esau (Gen. 27), and how when he found that he had been deceived, although he wished to change the blessing he could not do it, for it had been spoken from the Lord. I "have blessed him, yea and he shall be blessed."

When it was told Joseph that Jacob was sick and he knew that his death was near, he brought his two sons who had been born in Egypt, to receive the old man's blessing. Do you remember their

names? Manasseh was the elder, and Ephraim the younger. They were now nineteen years or more of age, for Jacob had lived in Egypt seventeen years, and two years of famine had passed before he came, and both the sons were born before the years of famine. (Gen. 41:50-52; 45:11; 47:28)

We see Joseph coming with his sons, and the old man raised himself in bed. Jacob spoke from the Spirit of the Lord. He told of the blessing which the Lord gave to him at Bethel when he saw the vision of the ladder. Turn to the place and read again the blessing which was given him. Joseph's two sons should share the blessing in a special way; they should be as two of Jacob's own sons and should be counted among the tribes. So you will find that usually no tribe of Joseph is mentioned, but instead two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim. But why does Jacob say that the Lord appeared to him at Luz? Were we wrong in saying that it was at Bethel? Jacob also told again how Rachel, the mother of Joseph and Benjamin, died when they came from the East, and was buried near Bethlehem. They show you still by the wayside a little building which is believed to mark the grave of Rachel. (Gen. 35:16-20) Ephrath or Ephratah was an old name of Bethlehem, both names perhaps having reference to the rich fields and gardens of the town. (Micah 5:2) Padan, the plain, or Padan-aram, the plain of Syria, was a name of the country beyond the Euphrates where Haran was, where Jacob lived with Laban. (Gen. 28:2, 5) The story of the blessing reminds us further of the story of Jacob and Esau, when Jacob the younger received the greater blessing.

Then Jacob gave to Joseph a special parcel of ground in the land of Canaan, the beautiful meadow to the east of Shechem, which he had bought and where he had dug a well. (Gen. 33: 18-20) It may be that he had also to fight to protect his rights. This meadow is already associated in the story with Joseph, for it was here that he came looking for his brethren; here also the bones of Joseph were buried when the people came from Egypt. (Gen. 50:25, 26; Exod. 13:19; Josh. 24:32) But best of all we remember the mention in the Gospel of "the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph"; and how the Lord talked there with the woman of Samaria, at Jacob's well. (John 4:5-6) Jacob also spoke words of blessing and of warning to all his sons.

1. What were the names of Joseph's two sons? Where were they born? How old were they when Jacob came into Egypt? How old when they received his blessing?
2. Why is it that we find the names of Ephraim and Manasseh among the tribes of Israel as if they were Jacob's sons?
3. Which was the elder of Joseph's sons? On which did Jacob lay his right hand when he blessed them?
4. Where was Luz? Where was Padan? Where was Ephrath?
5. What special portion in the land of Canaan did Jacob give to Joseph? What do we read in the New Testament about this piece of ground?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Let us think about the meaning of Joseph's two sons. We remember in general that Abraham represents heavenly affection, Isaac heavenly understanding, and Jacob the working out of heavenly truth on the plane of natural life. The twelve sons of Jacob represent successive developments of this life, beginning with those which are quite external and imperfect, and advancing to those which are interior and spiritual. The inmost motive of love to the Lord and the perception which belongs to that love, are represented by the last-born and favorite sons, Joseph and Benjamin. But how is this inmost life of love for the Lord known? Does it remain only a hidden motive in the inmost region of the soul? No, it comes out on the plane of practical life in the world, causing practical intelligence and practical goodness in everyday natural affairs. These two, practical intelligence and practical goodness, but from the interior spiritual origin of loving acknowledgment of the Lord, are represented by the two sons of Joseph born in Egypt, the goodness by Manasseh and the intelligence by Ephraim. (A. 6234)

The practical intelligence and goodness represented by Joseph's sons take their place in the life of the world side by side with intelligence and goodness of more external kinds; outwardly they are much alike though different in spirit. And this is represented by the adoption of Joseph's sons by Jacob, and by their taking the chief place among his own sons. "As Reuben and Simeon they shall be mine"; these were the two eldest of Jacob's sons, representing understanding and obedience of a simple, external kind. They should, as it were, give place to the sons of Joseph, a truly spiritual intelligence and goodness. (I Chron. 5:1, 2; A. 6236, 6238)

In Jacob's blessing, Ephraim, Joseph's younger son, was given preference over Manasseh the elder. The deeper meaning is much the same as in the story of Jacob and Esau, when the chief blessing was given to the younger-son. In each case the two brothers stand for the two elements of truth and goodness, faith and love, of a certain degree and kind. While goodness is the greater of the two, for a time truth must take the lead; we must learn what is right and in some measure understand it and do it before we can do it freely and from love. This is represented by the laying of the right hand upon the younger son. When we are more advanced in heavenly life and reach a more interior state, we shall perceive what the true relation of truth and goodness is; and this is represented by Joseph's displeasure at what his father did. But Jacob's reply means that though goodness is first, truth must appear so for a time. (A. 6269-6273, 6287-6294) Look at the map, which shows the lots given to the tribes in the land of Canaan, and notice the large double portion given to Manasseh.

## **Lesson 33**

### **Genesis 50: Burial of Jacob**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

Jacob had died in Egypt, after blessing Joseph's sons and his own sons. Where was the family burying place? Turn back to chapter 23 and read again about the cave in the field of Machpelah before Hebron which Abraham bought for a burying place when Sarah died. Her body was buried there, and afterward Abraham (Gen. 25:8-10), and Isaac (Gen. 35:27-29), and Rebekah and Leah. (Gen. 49:31) Why is Rachel not mentioned? (Gen. 35:19, 20) Today a Mohammedan mosque stands over the cave. You can see its walls and towers in the pictures of Hebron. The Mohammedans do not let anyone go down into the cave, but it may very well be true, as they believe, that the bones of Abraham's family are still there.

The body of Jacob was embalmed in Egypt, and we know from those found in the Egyptian tombs and from old pictures with what great care this work was done by the physicians. You have perhaps seen in the museums the wooden mummy cases, painted all over with bright pictures. The wooden case was often placed in a heavy stone box, the sarcophagus. Inside the case was the body, preserved with resins and spices and wrapped in hundreds of yards of white linen strips. Wreaths of lotus flowers were laid in some of the coffins thousands of years ago, from which the color seems hardly gone as you see them opened today. The process of embalming took forty days, and there were thirty more days of mourning, making seventy days in all. (Compare the mourning for Aaron and for Moses. Numb. 20:29; Deut. 34:8) Pictures carved and painted on some of the walls in Egypt show us the funeral feasts, and how they used to carry the body of a king or a great man to the tomb with great pomp and ceremony. We can imagine the procession which started after the days of mourning, by the command of Pharaoh, to carry the body of Jacob to its resting place. The Egyptians seem to have stopped at the threshing-floor of Atad, or the "cactus," while Jacob's own sons carried the body of their father to the cave in Hebron.

The words "beyond Jordan" usually mean, on the east side of the river, which would imply that for some reason the funeral company took a roundabout journey. Swedenborg translates the phrase, "in the passage of Jordan," and speaks of their crossing the river after leaving the floor of Atad. (A. 6538, 6540)

They all went back to Egypt after the burial of Jacob, and Joseph renewed his promise of kindness.

Now Joseph's death was near, and he, too, charged the people, when the Lord should lead them back from Egypt, that they should take his bones with them and bury them in the land of Canaan. We look forward in the story and find that this was done. Read Exod. 13:19 and Josh. 24:32. This last verse tells us that Joseph's bones were buried "in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought." We remember this parcel of ground where Jacob dug his well, where Joseph came looking for his brethren, which Jacob gave to Joseph before his death, and where long afterward the Lord talked with the woman of Samaria by Jacob's well. A little building called the tomb of

Joseph is still shown in the field. The building is not old, but it may mark the place where Joseph's bones were buried.

1. Where did Jacob die? Where was he buried? Where did Joseph die? Where was his burial place?
2. How did the cave at Hebron become the possession of Jacob and his sons? How did they gain possession of the parcel of ground at Shechem?
3. When the literal story of the Bible tells of death and burial, what do angels think of? How is one who dies gathered to his or her people?
4. What event in the Lord's life is connected with the parcel of ground where Joseph was buried?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Notice the words spoken of Jacob, that he was gathered to his people. (Gen. 49:33) It was a common saying in the old time. The wise ancients knew that when we die we awake in the spiritual world, and find our home there with those who are dear to us. All the particulars of this chapter, which tell so much about death and burial, mean to the angels things connected with the awakening and coming to the heavenly home. (A. 3255)

Does this suggest a beautiful meaning in the earnest request of Jacob, "Bury me not, I pray, in Egypt: but I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying place"? (Gen. 47:29-30) And in Joseph's charge, "Ye shall carry up my bones from hence"? (Gen. 50:25) So we can look forward to heaven and desire, when we die, to come to the heavenly home. And we should desire, even in this world, not to remain always in the external, worldly state which Egypt represents, but, as regeneration advances, to return to spiritual states represented by the land of Canaan, and to the enjoyment of innocent things of earlier life which have been laid up within us by the Lord and carefully preserved. So, while we still live in this world, we come into association with those who have lived before us and gone on to heaven. (A. 3255, 6181-6185, 6451, 6589)

The Egyptians embalmed the bodies of the dead; not because they believed that these natural bodies rise again. The old books and pictures of Egypt plainly show that they knew the earthly body is left behind forever at death and that the spirit enters on a new life. Embalming the body represented the preservation of heavenly qualities of life, and was in general an image of immortality. There is in the embalming of Jacob and of Joseph, this thought of the preservation of the heavenly qualities which they represent - Jacob (who is here called Israel), a spiritual goodness, and Joseph, a more interior state of nearness to the Lord. The body of Jacob was buried as soon as the days of mourning were over, which means the revival and permanent establishment of this goodness after the necessary period of temptation and effort. (Notice especially the mourning at the threshing-floor.) But the burial of Joseph was long delayed, "and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt." The things of interior life and nearness to the Lord for a long time hardly exist, but they are preserved by being concealed in

representative forms such as those of the Jewish Church. The charge to carry the bones of Joseph up from Egypt is a promise of return to interior life. (A. 6502-6516, 6592-6596)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Death

This closing chapter of the book of Genesis tells about the death of Jacob or Israel, and later of the death of his son Joseph.

Do you know what death is?

The body is only the covering or clothing of the soul or spirit, which is the real person. The body clothes the soul or spirit just as a glove clothes the hand. Look at a gloved hand. You see only the glove: you cannot see the hand. It looks as if the glove moved, but it moves because the hand within it moves it. So the whole body looks as if it lives and moves, but it lives and moves only because the soul or spirit moves it. Without the hand within it the glove is dead. Without the soul within it the body is dead. Look at the gloved hand again. Notice the shape, the folds and the wrinkles in it: they are all made by the shape, the folds, and the wrinkles of the hand that is inside of it, but they are not so fine and perfect. So the shape and everything in the body are made by the soul or spirit that is inside of it, though they are not so fine and perfect. A hand can feel through the glove, but not so acutely as without it. A hand can work through the glove, but not so skillfully as without it. And so the soul or spirit feels through the body, but not so acutely as without it; and it speaks and acts through the body but not so perfectly as without it. Take your hand carefully out of the glove, and you will find that the glove retains its shape for a while. When the soul or spirit is carefully taken out of the body by the angels whom the Lord sends for the purpose, the body still retains its shape for a while, but it no longer feels and moves.

This taking of the soul or spirit out of the body is called "resurrection," or "rising again." And then the soul or spirit can see, and feel, and hear, and smell much more keenly than before. The person can speak and act much more perfectly than before, and enjoy pleasures and delights much more intensely than before. All this is possible because that person no longer has a body covering his or her spirit. So you see that after resurrection people can be much happier and better than before.

The body's ceasing to live because the soul is being drawn out of it is called dying. The body is made of dust from the ground in a very wonderful way, and it is made by the Lord to be a perfect instrument through which we may do things in the natural world. When the Lord takes us to live in the spiritual world, it is because we are through with what He has wanted us to do here, and He wishes us to do things for Him in heaven. So our material body is not needed any more, and it gradually turns into dust again. This is the reason why it is put back into the ground from which it was taken.

Now, in the time when Joseph lived, hundreds, yes, thousands, of years ago - and long before that - the people of the Church liked to show that they believed in the resurrection. They believed that the soul or spirit could not die; that it could not rot away and turn into dust; and to show that they believed this, the people in Egypt took the dead body and filled it with myrrh and aloes and cassia, and treated it with salt, and in this and other ways they changed the matter of which the

body is made up, so that it would not be hurt by decay; that it would not rot and turn into dust. Many of the bodies so treated are still preserved, thousands of years after the souls have left them. They are called "mummies." By so keeping or preserving the body, they wanted to show, or represent, that the soul which used to live in the body was kept, or preserved, by the Lord from all evil. The tomb or grave where the body was laid represented heaven where the soul had gone, and therefore a bad person was not allowed to be buried, because a bad person does not go to heaven. Kings, because they represented the Lord, were buried in the big pyramids. These were made like mountains because mountains, as you know, also represent heaven.

When people go away from us to be gone for a long time, we feel badly, because we love to have them with us, and we miss them when they are gone. So when our friends or anyone of the family go to heaven we feel sorry for a while because we miss them. In the Old Testament we read of rules and customs for mourning thirty days, or a month. Now-a-days some people wear black for a whole year to show how sorry they are. But if they would think more of the happiness of those who had gone to heaven, they would not feel so very sorry so long, and they would not wear black so long, and perhaps not at all. The Lord takes people to heaven in order to give them greater joy and pleasure, for in heaven everything is much more beautiful than here. The sun, in which the Lord lives, is brighter and warmer than the sun of our natural world. The air sparkles, and in some heavens seems to be full of little tiny rainbows, or of flowers, and even of little tiny babies. The trees are wonderfully perfect and sometimes look as if they were alive. The flowers are of the most delicate colors, their perfume exquisite; the brooks and lakes are of the clearest water; some of the houses are built of gold and precious stones; the schools have the most beautiful living pictures on the walls; the men, women and children there have the softest, brightest garments, the colors of which change from time to time. Everything is so lovely that we cannot but be glad when anyone goes to heaven. And when our turn comes to die, or rather to rise again, then we shall meet again all those whom we loved who have risen before us.

## **Lesson 34**

### **Exodus 2: Birth of Moses: His Flight**

#### **THE STORY**

We took the five books of Moses for our study, and we have reached the end of the first book, Genesis. It has told us of creation and Eden, of Noah and his descendants, of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. There are four more books of Moses: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. You will know from its name that Exodus tells of the going out from Egypt; it tells, too, of the journey to Sinai, the receiving of the Commandments and the building of the tabernacle.

#### **Primary**

It is many years since Joseph died, and things have happened that have made great changes for the children of Israel. They are still in Egypt and the country is the same, but it has changed for them. They were happy in the land of Goshen while Joseph lived and for some time after, but now there was a king who "knew not Joseph." He was not friendly to them. The Egyptians treated them as slaves and set them to hard work in the fields and at making brick and building. And now

Pharaoh commanded that the baby boys among the children of Israel should be thrown into the river. Our picture shows us people making bricks in Egypt, mixing the soft mud with a little chopped straw and pressing it into a mould, and then drying the bricks in the hot sun. The taskmasters hurried the children of Israel in their work, not giving them straw, but requiring of them the full number of bricks. The children of Israel were in great trouble, and the Lord raised up for them a leader, Moses, who should bring them out of Egypt.

Moses was a baby boy, a goodly child, and his mother loved him dearly. She hid him for three months. Then when she could no longer hide him, she made a little basket of papyrus, tall reeds with plump heads, which grew in the water's edge, and daubed it to keep the water out, and made a cover for the basket. Then she put the baby into the basket and laid it among the plants in the edge of the river at a place where the princess and her maids would come to bathe. The baby's sister watched from a distance to see what would happen. Shall we call her Miriam? For we know that Moses had a sister Miriam. The princess came to the river and saw the basket, and sent her maid to fetch it. She opened the basket and the baby cried. She was sorry for the baby. His sister asked if she might find someone to take care of him. The princess said, "Yes," and she brought the baby's mother. So the boy grew in his mother's care, and afterward she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter to live perhaps at the palace and to be taught the wisdom of the Egyptians. The princess called him Moses, which means "drawn out," because he was drawn out of the water.

When Moses was a man, he left Egypt and came to the land of Midian. He had killed an Egyptian at his work. It became known, and Pharaoh wished to kill Moses. It was not safe for him in Egypt. The Midianites were shepherd people, living off across the desert. Moses met the daughters of the priest of Midian at a well and helped them water their flocks.

## **Junior**

We have reached the end of Genesis. What other books of Moses have we to study? What shall we read about in the book of Exodus? We realize as we begin the new book that the whole scene has changed. Egypt is not the happy home for the children of Israel that it was, in the days of Joseph, but it has become a land of slavery, of hard work in the fields and in brick-making and building, to which the people were driven by taskmasters. The stay in Egypt is spoken of as four hundred or four hundred and thirty years, counted from Abram's first going into Egypt. (Gen. 15:13; Exod. 12:40; Acts 7:6) The people had increased so greatly that the Egyptians feared them. A Pharaoh arose who was not like the friendly Pharaoh of Joseph's time. He may have been one of the native Egyptian kings, living at Thebes, who after the time of Joseph drove out the Hykos kings from the delta country and ruled all Egypt. Some of these kings, like Thothmes III and Rameses II, were great conquerors and carried their wars into distant countries. The children of Israel had to build for Pharaoh store cities in Goshen near the eastern border of the country, places for storing grain and supplies for his armies. Some of the chambers of Pithom have been uncovered, walled up with sun-dried brick. Then for fear that the people might become too many, it was commanded that the baby boys should be thrown into the river. We read more about the brick-making and the harsh treatment of the workmen in chapter 5. Someone turn to that chapter and read us verses 5-19. Old pictures on the walls in Egypt make the bondage of the Israelites real to us. They show the multitude of slaves at hard work in the fields, and making bricks, and hauling stones, with taskmasters, stick in hand, keeping them to their work. The people cried to God in their trouble.

Can you tell the story of the baby Moses? Read it again in Exod. 2:1-10, and make sure that you can tell it well. Have in mind, as you read, that Levi was one of the sons of Jacob, and that afterward the priests and helpers of the priests were from that tribe. The little "ark" was a basket made of papyrus stalks, which were plentiful in the edges of the river and the canals. It is a tall plant with a beautiful plumpy top. Papyrus to write on was made by pressing the pith of this plant flat and thin. Our word "paper" comes from "papyrus." Slime used to make the basket tight was bitumen such as we learned of in Gen. 11:3 and 14:10. The washing at the river was perhaps a religious ceremony. Notice the meaning of the name Moses.

After his babyhood, Moses was brought up as the princess' son. We think of him living at the palace, and learning from the priests in some great temple about public affairs and much of the wisdom of heavenly things which had been kept in Egypt from long ago. "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." (Acts 7:22) We may believe that the holy book of the Ancient Word was preserved in a library of Egypt, from which under the Lord's guidance Moses copied the first chapters of our own Bible.

The description and the pictures of slavery in Egypt help us to understand the first of the Ten Commandments: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." The Ten Commandments are for us and for all people. The bondage in Egypt must picture the bondage that we all are in when evil ways and worldly cares and interests are our masters and we their slaves.

Moses was about forty years old when he fled from Egypt, and he was away from his people another forty years. (Acts 7:23, 30; Exod. 7:7) During this time, he was with the Midianites, simple, shepherd people living on the east side of the peninsula of Sinai. They were related to the children of Israel, being descended from Abraham (Gen. 25:2), and Moses married the daughter of Jethro their priest and chief. He kept the sheep of Jethro, and led them to the green pasture spots among the mountains. What story that we have read before are you reminded of by Moses' coming to the well and watering the flocks for Jethro's daughters? (Gen. 29)

1. What picture of life in Egypt is given us in the last chapters of Genesis? In the first chapters of Exodus? What is the reason for this change?
2. Who was leader of the children of Israel in their happy days in Egypt? Who in the days of deliverance from bondage?
3. How was Moses saved when he was a baby?
4. How was he cared for as a young man?
5. Where was Moses safe after the killing of the Egyptian was known?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

What is the spiritual meaning of the change in Egypt from a happy home to a place of bondage? Egypt always represents natural states; natural learning, worldly interests and pleasures. When these are enjoyed innocently and are made serviceable to spiritual life, and are guided by a

knowledge of the Lord's presence, then Joseph is ruler in Egypt and it is a happy home for Israel. But when worldly interests and pleasures are made the chief things and spiritual life languishes, then a king arises who knows not Joseph, the Egyptians become masters and the children of Israel are made slaves and their children are destroyed. There is just this difference between following any worldly interest and enjoying any natural pleasure in the right or the wrong way. (A. 6651, 6652)

A new leader. Every leader of Israel taught them the Lord's will and represented the Lord in some way in which He may be known. Joseph represents a sense of the Lord's loving presence which leads us safely in gentle and innocent states. When we grow willful, and worldly interests and pleasures gain strong hold upon us, we need to know the Lord's presence in a sterner way; we must learn His commandments and laws and feel His power as we obey them. Moses stands for the Divine commandments and all the Word, in which the Lord is present with delivering and guiding power. (A. 6714, 6752) Follow this thought into some particulars of the story.

We have thought of stones used in building as representing sure facts on which we may safely rest our reasoning and our plans of life, and we have thought of bricks, which are made by people, as representing things not true, which an evil mind devises to justify and carry out its ends. Such falsities are represented by the bricks of Babel and of Egypt. The straw in the bricks is some small amount of truth or appearance of truth, perhaps from the letter of the Word, which is mixed with falsehood to give it acceptance. But when an evil motive is desperate it disregards even the appearance of truth in its falsehood; it makes bricks without straw. (A. 7112, 7113) Bricks in Scripture seem always to have a bad meaning. Yet possibly they may also have a better meaning, representing facts not necessarily so from the nature of things but made so by convention and by custom; artificial, but not necessarily false or evil.

Moses was put into an ark of rushes smeared with slime and pitch, to save him from the Egyptians. It represents the protection of the Lord's Word by the letter, composed of very simple truths and partaking even of the imperfection of human thought and feeling that it might not be rejected, but might come to people in a natural, worldly state. The whole letter of the Word is such an ark. It is interesting that papyrus, the same material on which the letter of the Word was written, also formed the ark for Moses. (A. 6719-6725)

Moses at the palace, kindly treated by the Egyptians, represents the Word preserved by worldly people for its natural wisdom and beauty, until it is seen to condemn the evil of their life. (A. 6750)

The shepherd people of Midian, far away from Egypt, represents those living in simple charity, who are more willing to hear and obey the Lord's Word than the learned. The Word strengthens their good affections, as Moses watered and kept the flock. (A. 6773-6781)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### **Leading Thought: Moses in the Ark**

Today we begin the story of Moses. We have learned that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph each represented the Lord. But because there are so many things in the Lord - indeed there are infinite

things in Him - therefore each one of these men stood for, or represented, some particular thing in the Lord.

What, would you conclude, did Moses represent? The Word. For, as you will learn later on, and indeed as you probably know even now, it was to Moses that the Lord gave the Ten Commandments for him to give to the people. In fact, the first five books of the Word were written by the Lord through Moses, and are therefore called "the five books of Moses." Because Moses was going to write the Word, therefore he represented the Word from the beginning of his life, even while a babe.

We read that his mother "took for him an ark of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch and put the child therein." This was in order to keep the child from harm. And that is what we do with our copies of the Word, is it not? In our churches, and sometimes in our homes, we have a case or shrine of some kind, which we call "the repository" for the Word. It is an ark, to keep the book safe from dust and smoke and accident, and to set it apart because it is holy. The minister opens it at the beginning of service on Sundays, and when the service comes to an end, he closes it again. In heaven, also, in every temple, the angels have a sacred repository, in which is kept a copy of the Word. The copy of the Word so kept in every large society is written by angels inspired by the Lord, so that no change can be made in it.

Arks are made variously, according to the necessities of each case. Our arks or repositories are generally made of very fine and expensive woods, to show how highly we value the Word. The tables of stone which the Lord gave to Moses, and on which He had written the Ten Commandments with His finger, were kept in a very beautiful ark made of shittim wood overlaid inside and outside with gold. In the same ark were placed later the scrolls on which Moses wrote the other laws, statutes, testimonies, precepts and commandments which the Lord gave for the government of the people. The ark had a lid of pure gold, with two cherubim of hammered gold rising out of the two ends.

The infant Moses, who represented the Word, was placed in a different kind of ark -one that could float on water, and keep the babe safe, so that the water could not come in and hurt it.

Now, can you tell me what the Word really is?

When I speak a word to you, what is it? Is it the sounds which I make with my mouth, and which you hear with your ears? It is that, and more. It is sounds and the meaning conveyed from my mind to your mind by means of the sounds. It is the idea or thought which I convey to you. So when I write a word, what is it? Is it the handwriting or the type on the paper which you see with your eyes? It is that, and more. It is handwriting or type and the meaning conveyed by it. Indeed a word is a thought clothed in sounds, or in written or printed symbols. There are therefore two parts to a word: the inside and the outside. The inside is the meaning or the thought. The outside is the expression. Do you remember our lesson about the ladder or stairway which Jacob saw in a dream? There we learned that the meaning of a word can also have an inside, and that the Word of the Lord, that is all that the Lord has written through Moses and the Evangelists, has several inside or inner meanings, one inside of another.

The outside meaning of the Word, which tells us sometimes about dark and evil things, is like the ark of rushes daubed with dark bitumen and pitch; but the inside meaning is always beautiful,

like the warm, living baby Moses, that was in the ark. The ark therefore represented the outside or literal meaning, and the baby Moses represented the inside or inner meaning.

While we are talking about the Word, can you tell me the books of which it consists? The books of the Word of the Old Testament are divided into three divisions. First come the historical books, which may also be called "the Law," because they contain the Law revealed through Moses; and afterward come the prophetical books. Between the two are the Psalms of David.

The books of the Word of the Old Testament are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges 1 and 2, Samuel 1 and 2, Kings 1 and 2, The Psalms of David and the prophetical books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. The books of the Word of the New Testament are Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and the Revelation or Apocalypse. The rest of the books which are bound up with them in our Bibles are very good books, but they are not the Word of the Lord, for they have not a continuous internal sense which treats of the Lord. This important fact has been revealed to the New Church by the Lord through His servant Emanuel Swedenborg.

If the historical books are represented by Moses, are the prophetical books also represented by someone? Yes, by Elijah or, as he is called in the New Testament, Elias. Read the beautiful story in Matthew 17:1-9

## **Lesson 35**

### **Exodus 3:1-9: At the Burning Bush**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Moses lived with the Midianites for forty years, and tended the sheep for the priest of Midian. He led the sheep to the green spots among the mountains and came to Horeb, the central group of mountains, and to Mount Sinai. The mountains are very bare and rocky, and the valleys are sandy. There are thorny desert shrubs and trees, thorny acacias with feathery leaves and pretty yellow flowers. One day as Moses led the sheep, he stopped at a strange sight. A fire was burning in a desert bush, but the bush was not burned. When Moses stopped to see, the Lord spoke to him from the bush and told him to take off his shoes for it was holy ground. The Lord told Moses that He would send him to bring his people out of Egypt, where they were so unhappy, to the land of Canaan, which He had promised to Abraham and Jacob. Could Moses do it? His brother Aaron would help him, and the Lord would be with them and give them power. At first Pharaoh would not be willing, but finally he would let them go and the Egyptians would give them presents and be glad to have them leave.

## **Junior**

Can you show me on the map the rough mountain region where Moses tended the sheep of Jethro? The mountains of this Sinai Peninsula are very bare and rocky, stained often with bright and dark colors. Between the mountains are valleys with sandy or gravelly bottoms, usually dry, but with torrents of water in the rainy season. Desert plants grow here and there, and thorny shrubs and trees, especially acacias with feathery leaves and yellow flowers. Here and there among the mountains is a spring of water with green grass and waving palms.

The ninetieth Psalm, "A prayer of Moses the man of God," seems to reflect the grand and lonely surroundings of this shepherd life, and suggests how Moses learned among these mountains the great power of God. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

In the middle of the mountains was the group called Horeb, and among these Mount Sinai. Moses came to this mountain as he fed the sheep. He saw a flame burning in one of the desert brambles, perhaps a thorny acacia. (A. 6832) Yet it was not a common flame, for the bush was not consumed. The Lord spoke to Moses, and told him to put off his shoes, for it was holy ground. And then the Lord told Moses that he should lead the children of Israel out of Egypt to the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, with plenty of pasture for the cattle and flowers for the bees.

The Canaanites were the lowlanders, living by the sea coast and by the Jordan; the Amorites were the highlanders of the mountain districts. The Hittites were remnants of an ancient people, living in Hebron and in other old towns. The Perizzites and Hivites were villagers of the middle country, and the Jebusites lived in Jebus which was afterward Jerusalem. The land of these people had been promised to Abraham and to Jacob, and it should be given to their children.

It would be a great work to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. Do you wonder that Moses was afraid? The Lord encouraged him in several ways. First, He told Moses who He was; the one God who is of Himself and who gives life to all things. This is the meaning of the name I AM, and of the name JEHOVAH, by which the Lord taught the children of Israel to know Him. The people would listen, and in time the Egyptians would let them go, and would be so glad to have them gone that they would give them presents. "Borrow," in verse 22, means to ask as a present.

Still Moses was afraid, and the Lord gave him three signs by which he could show that the Lord's power was with him. Still he hesitated, for he was slow of speech; and the Lord said that Moses' brother Aaron should be with him, and that Aaron should be the one to speak; he was already on the way to meet Moses. So Moses went, and his shepherd's staff had a new power given it by the Lord; we shall read of the rod many times in the story.

1. To what tribe did Moses and Aaron belong? (Exod. 2:1; 4:14)
2. Whose sheep did Moses keep? Among what mountains did he lead them?
3. How did the Lord appear to Moses as he led the sheep? What did He send him to do?
4. What signs did the Lord give Moses, by which to prove that He had sent him?
5. Who was to be with Moses to help him?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Moses will always stand to us for the Divine law, the commandments and in general the Word, which Moses was the instrument of giving to the people from the Lord. Moses at the palace, kindly treated by the Egyptians, represents the Word preserved by worldly people for its natural wisdom and beauty, until it is seen to condemn the evil of their life. (A. 6570)

The Midianites, who had received Joseph from his brethren, represent simple gentile people more kindly and receptive of the Lord than the learned in the church, represented by the brethren. (A. 4756) The Midianites receiving Moses represent again those in simple charity who are more willing to hear and obey the Lord's Word than the learned. The Word strengthens their good affections, as Moses watered and kept the flock. (A. 6773-6781) What we learn of the kind reception of Moses by the Midianites prepares us for their friendliness to Israel on their journey and for the help received by Moses from his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, in his task of leading the people. (Exod. 18; Num. 10:29-32)

It is interesting to think of Moses' shepherd life among the mountains of Sinai as preparation for his leading the people. David was called from leading the flock to be king. (Ps. 78:70-71) The stern strength of the cliffs of Sinai pictured the inevitability of law. We think of this when we hear the commandments spoken from the mountain, the people standing in the plain beneath the cliff. The ninetieth Psalm, "A prayer of Moses, the man of God," seems to reflect the grand and lonely surroundings of this shepherd life, and suggests how Moses learned among these mountains the great power of God. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

When did the Lord in the Gospel refer to this story of Moses at the bush? What lesson did He teach from the story?

What is expressed by putting off the shoes from the feet in the Lord's presence? (A. 6844)

Shrubs and little trees of the desert several times in Scripture represent a little knowledge of the Lord which we may have in states of trial, also simple truths of the letter of the Word. This is the meaning of the shrub in the story of Ishmael (Gen. 21:15), and of Elijah (1 Kings 19:4). A fire burning in the bush represents a sense of the Lord's love in the letter of His Word, and in this there is promise of deliverance from all bondage of evil and a promise of the blessings of heaven. (A. 6832)

Read an interesting account of the name Shaddai, translated in our Bible "Almighty." (A. 1992)

Moses' hesitation to go on his mission and to face the king of Egypt pictures well our doubt whether the Divine Word is able to face the evils of the world and to bring deliverance. The power of the Lord is in it to do this work. Aaron, who should be a help in speaking for Moses, represents doctrine interpreting the Lord's message. (A. 6998)

The three signs given to Moses are warnings of three degrees of harm into which we shall come if we will not believe and hear (obey) the Lord's Word. The subtle and insinuating serpent, as in Eden, represents the enjoyments and deceptive appearances of the senses. Cast on the ground

unrestrained, the serpent is dangerous; taken firmly in hand, in the strength of the Lord's commandments, the same sensual nature is a support to our higher life. This is a proof of the Lord's presence in His Word which we all may have. The leprous hand with its dead skin represents forms of conduct and worship with nothing living in them. The hand is healed when faith in the Lord and His Word makes the conduct and worship genuinely living. The water made blood represents the utter and hopeless perversion of all that is good and true in the character, if we persist in disbelief and disobedience to the Lord's Word. In this last sign there is no changing back again. (A. 6949, 6963, 6977)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Jehovah

Today we study the most holy subject treated of in the Scriptures, namely the Lord, and the way He made Himself known to Moses. Moses had been drawn out of the water by the daughter of the king of Egypt, was adopted by her as her son, was educated like a prince in all the learning of the Egyptians. Centuries before, Egypt had been one of the countries in which the Ancient Word was read and studied, and the Lord was known thereby, to Whom they built magnificent temples. But in the time of Moses the Egyptians had turned away to idols and no longer knew the Lord nor cared for the truths of His Word. So Moses knew not the Lord. The Hebrews also, of whom he was one, did not know the God of their fathers.

Now, because Moses was a man learned in many things belonging to the laws and government of people, he was chosen by the Lord to lead the Hebrews, or Israelites, out of the land of Egypt, in fulfillment of the promise made by the Lord to Israel or Jacob, to his father Isaac and to his grandfather Abraham. For this purpose it was necessary for Moses to be taught who the God of his fathers was. And so the Lord made use of his flight into Midian, to teach him what he needed to know. Here he was in the country where Mount Sinai towers in solemn grandeur. You have read the story in this chapter how in this awe-inspiring place, he saw a bush burn with fire, and yet not be consumed, and how he turned aside to see this wonder, and that when he did so, the Lord called to him out of the midst of the bush and told him to take his shoes off because the ground on which he stood was holy ground.

Who did the Lord say that He was? "I AM THAT I AM." "Thus shalt thou say unto the sons of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." And then He continued and called Himself by what seems to be another name. Look at verse 15, and you will read, "And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the sons of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob hath sent me unto you, this is My Name forever, and this is My Memorial to all generations." Notice that the name, The LORD, is printed in small capital letters. Wherever the name of the LORD is printed in this way, it always stands for JEHOVAH. The Lord said that His Name is JEHOVAH. But what does "Jehovah" mean? It is a Hebrew word which means "He who was and will be," or, He who is. It is therefore simply another name with the same meaning as "I AM."

Whenever we read of calling by name, in the Word, it means the character or quality of the person or thing. In ancient times names were given that fitted the character of the person. So that whether they spoke of the "name" or the "character" of a person, it was the same thing. Even at

the present day, we speak of a person as "having a name," when we mean that the person's character is so pronounced, that people generally know about it. We speak of the "fair name" of a person, meaning that he or she has the reputation of having an upright character. On the other hand, we hear of someone being given a "bad name," meaning that he or she is believed to have a bad character. In the Word, then, the name of a person or a thing, yes, of the Lord Himself, means character or quality: all that is known about that person.

So the Lord says here that "Jehovah" is His Name forever. What, then, does this mean? Why, that He always will be known as the one Supreme Being who alone Is. We people on earth, and angels in heaven are, only because He is. We live only because He lives. We could not live, we could not be, unless He were. If the Lord were not, we would not be. If for one moment He should cease to be, all of us - all people on earth, all people on the planets, all people in the whole universe, all people in all the heavens - would at once die, and cease to be. Of course, the Lord never will stop being. That is exactly what is meant by saying that "Jehovah will be His Name forever." The Apostle Paul said of the Lord, "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." (Acts 17:28)

Did you know that the Lord calls Himself "I AM" in the New Testament also? Look in John 7:58, "Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM." And that we cannot live without Him, and above all cannot live in heaven unless we know and believe this, He teaches in the same chapter, verse 24, "Unless ye believe that I AM, ye shall die in your sins."

Whenever you use this name "Jehovah," remember what it means. It is most holy because it expresses exactly what the Lord is. When Moses was getting ready to learn that name, he had first to put his shoes off his feet to represent that nothing soiled should enter the holy ground. The name was so holy, that the Jews were never allowed to pronounce it, but instead said "Adonai," which means "Lord." This is how we have come to have the name "Lord" instead of "Jehovah" in our English translation of the Old Testament.

In the New Testament the name Jehovah occurs as part of the Name Jesus. "Jesus" means "Jehovah our Savior." So you see how holy that name is. How sad, that there are people, yes and children too, who use it in vain.

The expression "Hallelujah" has the holy name in it also. That is a Hebrew expression, often recurring in the Psalms. "Hallelu" means "Praise ye," and "Jah" is "Jehovah." "Hallelujah" therefore means "Praise ye the Lord."

The Ten Commandments teach "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." The Lord's Prayer says, "Hallowed be thy Name." Let us remember this, and also bear in mind that when the Lord first made known the most holy name to Moses, the very ground was holy.

## **Lesson 36**

### **Exodus 5: Egyptian Bondage**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

Moses was away from his people and from Egypt forty years. The hard lot that we read of in Exod. 1:6-14 grew no better.

Among other tasks they made brick, and built for Pharaoh the store-cities Pithom and Rameses, near the land of Goshen, where they lived, on the eastern border of Egypt. The people were suffering under his bondage when Moses came to them, and when he spoke of their going out of Egypt their tasks were made still harder for them, for Pharaoh said that Moses let (hindered) the people from their work.

The bricks used in Egypt are not burned hard like ours. They are molded out of the soft Nile mud, and are dried in the hot sun. The houses of the poor people are built of such bricks, and they last longer than you would think, partly because there is seldom any rain. Bricks were made in the same way in the days of Moses. There are pictures of that time and earlier, which show people mixing the mud, and moulding bricks, and laying them out in the sun to dry. The taskmasters stand by with sticks to hurry the workers on. Chopped straw from the grain fields was used in the old time, and is still used today, being mixed with the mud to strengthen the bricks. In the old ruins we find bricks made in the days when the children of Israel were in Egypt. In the walls of the store-chambers at Pithom, some of them two or three yards in thickness, there are some bricks carefully made with straw, others with pieces of reeds, and some with no fibre at all. How these old bricks and the old pictures take us back to the bondage in Egypt when Pharaoh commanded that the people should not be given straw, or chaff (A. 7127, 7131), but should find for themselves stubble in the fields! And still they must make the full tale (the count, the number) of bricks!

It is believed that Rameses II., who left statues and records of himself in every part of Egypt, was the Pharaoh who made the bondage hard for the children of Israel, and that the son of Rameses, Menepath II., was ruling when Moses came back from Midian. (Exod. 2:23)

Rameses had been fond of the delta country, as we know by his buildings there; and it seems that his son lived much of the time at Zoan, by the eastern mouth of the Nile, and near to the land of Goshen. There are only ruins there today, in an expanse of dust and marsh, but the ruins and history both tell us that Zoan was a very old town. It was built seven years after Hebron, the old town of Canaan. (Num. 13:22) It was old before Joseph came to Egypt, and was perhaps his home. A Psalm speaks of the signs and wonders done by the hand of Moses and Aaron, as wrought "in the field of Zoan." (Ps. 78:12, 43)

Moses and Aaron first came to the elders of their own people, and they were glad and thankful. (Exod. 4:29-31) But Pharaoh refused to let them go. They only asked at first that the people might go a three days' journey into the wilderness to hold a feast to their God, but Pharaoh knew that

they would never come back to serve the Egyptians. It would mean that they were choosing to serve the Lord instead of Pharaoh. If he could, he would make them forget their God and their promised land.

1. Contrast Israel's happy days in Egypt with the days of bondage. Who was their leader in the happy days? Who came to lead them out of bondage?
2. What was their occupation in the happy days? In the days of bondage?
3. What did Moses ask of Pharaoh? What was his answer?
4. How were the tasks of Israel made harder after Moses came?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

What is spiritual bondage, the bondage of which we all have some experience? The Lord says to us all, "I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." (Exod. 20:2) The Lord Himself explained it at another time when He said, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." (John 8:33-34) We know how a bad habit gains a hold upon us, until if we let it do so, it makes us its slave. This is spiritual bondage, from which only the Lord can set us free. (A. 892, 905)

We have thought of bondage in general; now remember the meaning of Egypt, and then you can put the two thoughts together and see the meaning of bondage in Egypt. Egypt stands for a natural state, a state of worldly interests and pleasures and of natural knowledge. The happy life in Egypt in the days of Joseph is like children's innocent enjoyment of the world about them, when they ask a thousand eager questions about the things they see, and store their minds with knowledge from the world and from the letter of the Word. But suppose, as they grow older, they do not rise above these things, but let their care for natural learning, for bodily strength and pleasures, for riches, take possession of them and become their master, then the happy life in Egypt has become a bondage from which they need deliverance. (A. 1461, 5316, 6666)

How does Moses come to us to set us free? Our Moses is the Divine law, the Lord's commandments and all His Word, which if we learn them and obey them, have power to break the strength of habit, to hold back evil spirits, and to take away the desire to do wrong. The children of Israel were glad and grateful when they heard the offer of deliverance, though their hearts failed them many times before it was accomplished. So our better self is made glad by the promise of deliverance, and does not at first see all the trials that it will cost. The Pharaoh in us is the lower, natural self with its power of natural knowledge, which refuses, and resists, and tries to keep control. (A. 6651, 7089)

Moses was not to ask at first for leave for the people to go to the promised land, but only to go three days' journey to worship God in the wilderness. We cannot see the end of our journey from the beginning, but only a little at a time; and the Pharaoh in us cannot understand at all the heaven to which it leads. The first step is to choose the Lord and His service. If this choice is made in earnest and adhered to, all the rest will follow - the remainder of the journey and heaven. This

first step, represented by going three days' journey to worship God, is the essential thing, and it is just this which the Pharaoh in us will not consent to. (A. 7092-7095)

Stones used for building represent sure facts on which we may safely rest our reasoning and our plans of life. Bricks, which are made by human beings, represent things not true, which an evil mind devises to justify and carry out its evil ends. Such falsities are represented by the bricks of Babel and of Egypt. (A. 1296, 7113) The straws in the bricks are some small amount of truth, or partial truth, or appearance of truth, perhaps from the letter of the Word, which is mixed with falsehood to give it acceptance. But when an evil motive is desperate, it disregards even the appearance of truth in its falsehoods; it makes bricks without straw. (A. 7112, 7127)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The House of Bondage

You know the Ten Commandments. How does the first one begin? The Lord here tells Israel that He has brought them out of "the house of bondage." The Ten Commandments were given to Moses and through him to the children of Israel some time after the events took place that are told in our present chapter, and "the house of bondage" that he refers to is the land of bitter slavery which is described in this chapter, and also in Exod. 1. Read especially Exod. 1, verses 11 to 14. What a very miserable and sad time the Israelites must have had! This their bondage or slavery is often spoken of in the Word, and it is therefore well to read about it carefully.

The reason why it is spoken of so frequently in the Word is, that it represented, in the internal sense, a still worse kind of bondage or slavery, one that existed in the spiritual world, and which millions upon millions of people suffered for centuries, and until the Lord came into the world, and delivered them. The Lord came into the world for this very purpose, and His delivering them is called "Redemption." The internal sense of the Word tells us much about the spiritual slavery of human beings, and of the manner in which the Lord delivered them or set them free.

To tell you the story in a few words, it is this:

You have learned what death is, and that by death people go into the other or spiritual world. Good people go to heaven, bad people go to hell. But many good people are not yet quite ready to go to heaven as soon as they have entered the other world. Perhaps they have some bad habits. Perhaps they have wrong ideas about God because they were brought up from childhood where people did not have the truth, but worshiped idols. So they remain in a place called the World of Spirits (not "the Spiritual World"), which is between heaven and hell, and here they are punished until they get rid of their bad habits, or taught by angels until they see the truth and give up the wrong and false ideas they had. So also there are wicked people, who, when they pass by death from the natural world to the spiritual world, cannot yet enter hell, because they may have some good habits, which they have put on, not because they wish to be good, but so that they may deceive people; or because they have true ideas, which also they learned, not because they love truth but in order to deceive people and get money out of them, or to be honored by them. These wicked people, who are hypocrites, also stay in the World of Spirits, until they are rid or "vastated" of whatever good or truth they may have had. For in heaven, evil and falsity hurt the angels and cannot be tolerated, and in hell, good and truth hurt the devils and are not tolerated.

Now, centuries before the Lord came into the world - centuries before Moses' time even - when the Ancient Church had become very bad, the good people were no longer so wise and intelligent that they could see through the deceit of the evil and hypocrites; and in the spiritual world the hypocrites gradually grew in numbers, and began to have power over the good, and prevented their coming into heaven. The hypocrites stayed a long while in the world of spirits, and built great cities for themselves. They even went upon the mountains of the world of spirits near to heaven, and built cities and watchtowers there, and troubled with their disturbing influence even the angels of the lower part of heaven.

You see from this how the power of hell prevailed over the power of heaven. Since the evil were so strong, the Lord kept the good who were coming from this world in a special place until the time that He should come to deliver them. This place where they were kept is called the "lower earth," because it is the lower part of the world of spirits, near hell. Do you see how up side down the world of spirits was? The wicked people were near heaven and troubled it, and the good people were near hell. Being near hell, they were of course much troubled by the infernal or hellish people around them. It was just as our story tells it, where the children of Israel were in Egypt, and were troubled by the Egyptians who were round about them.

Do you recognize the picture? Look at it. Here in the story in the Word, we have Canaan (which, as you know, represented heaven) occupied by wicked nations, the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Gergashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites. These nations represented the hypocrites who were in the world of spirits near heaven. While in the land of the Egyptians (who represented hell) were the Israelites who worshiped Jehovah, and who represented the good in the world of spirits who lived in the lower earth.

The people in the spiritual world who lived in the lower earth were troubled not like the Israelites in Egypt, with having to make bricks, but with what these represent, namely falsities. When people are continually teaching others what is false, about God, about Heaven, about how we must live here, and when they try to force them to believe these falsities, when yet the good want to know the truth, it gives the good as much pain and sorrow, as when the Israelites were forced to make bricks, and were beaten and otherwise treated cruelly. When evil spirits so influence good people by telling them horrible falsities about God, as, for instance, that God consists of three persons, that He likes to punish people, that He pays no attention to the goodness of little children but sends them to hell unless He chooses to take them to heaven, and other horrible things like this - and so trouble the good by trying to make them believe that the Bible teaches this- this is called "infestation."

When the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world, people had the most horrible ideas about God. They made monstrous pictures and images showing what they thought of Him, and they taught that it was right to hate others and kill them. So you see that the world was in a very bad state indeed.

The worst was, that evil-minded people and evil spirits made people believe that all this was taught in the Bible. You can see how this would trouble and pain the good, who would like to think of God as a loving Father, and that we must love others, even our enemies. As you have been told, the internal sense of the story of the "bondage of Egypt" is the story of the good and simple-hearted people who were tormented this way for many, many years in the spiritual world. But as Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, and at last to the land of Canaan, so the Lord Jesus Christ,

while He was in the World, led these good people out of the lower earth, out of the neighborhood of hell, and having cast down the wicked people who had their cities near heaven, gave their places to the good, who were so happy that they sang for joy. They made up a grand heaven, called "The Spiritual Heaven."

But, sad to say, after the Lord had done all this, and had established a new church on earth through the preaching of the Apostles, who told people to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the same thing happened again. After a while people did not repent. Again did the wicked become powerful in the world of spirits, and built great cities, and made what seemed like heaven but was not. Again the good had to be protected by being kept in the lower earth. Again the Lord had to come, although this time He did not come in person on earth, but taught people through Swedenborg. This was His Second Coming. The internal sense of our story in Exodus treats of all this also, and you will find it described in the work entitled, *The Last Judgment, and Babylon Destroyed*.

Swedenborg tells us how he saw and heard the poor people who lived in spiritual bondage in the lower earth; he describes the great earthquakes and terrible winds by which the cities of the hypocrites were destroyed, and they themselves cast into hell; and how he saw the good taken into heaven, and heard their songs of joy and thanksgiving for their redemption.

## **Lesson 37**

### **Exodus 9: Plagues of Egypt**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

What signs had the Lord given Moses power to do, when He appeared to him at the burning bush? What had the Lord told him to take in his hand with which to do signs? (Exod. 4:1-17) You can read in Exod. 7:8-25 how two of these signs were done before Pharaoh and the Egyptians, but they were not willing to let the people go.

The story says that the magicians did the same by their enchantments. We remember in the days of Joseph, when Pharaoh had the dream about the kine and the ears of grain, that he "sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof"; but they could not interpret the dream. (Gen. 41:8; see also Dan. 2:2) These were people who studied the learning handed down from long ago, about spiritual things, but with an evil purpose. They were able to do signs by a power from the other world; but it was an evil power and wholly different from the Lord's power which was with Moses. Aaron's rod swallowed up the rods of the magicians, and some of the signs done by Moses and Aaron the magicians could not do at all.

In reading about the turning of the water into blood, we remember how all the water of Egypt is from the Nile and its branches and canals, and the reservoirs which are filled at the inundation, for watering the land. We think also of the jars which they fill at the river and carry to their houses. Another plague brought frogs; and another brought lice, but this the magicians could not do. There came next a very grievous murrain - a deadly disease - upon all the animals; and after

that, boils upon animals and people. A terrible storm with lightning and hail then fell upon the land of Egypt, where even a shower of rain was rare, which killed plants and animals and people. It was the first month of spring, when the crops had been growing in the fields and orchards all winter. Barley, which is an early grain, was in the ear; flax was bolled, forming its seed pods, or was still in flower. (Revised Version margin.) The wheat was later and had not yet grown tall, and also the spelt, a grain much like wheat. This, and not rye, seems to be the grain that is meant. Read the story of the hail. (Exod. 9:13-35) Next the land was overrun by locusts, the large brown grasshoppers which came in clouds darkening the sun and stripping the earth of every green blade and leaf. Then there was darkness for three days, and one last plague, when in one night the firstborn of all the people and cattle died in every Egyptian home.

In all these plagues the children of Israel were safe, and they learned more and more to trust the power of the Lord. And had the plagues changed Pharaoh's mind? More than once when he was in trouble he said that he would let the people go, but when the plague was taken away he again refused. How easy it is to promise and to make good resolutions when we are frightened or in trouble, and to forget them when the trouble is gone! But gradually Pharaoh yielded. He said that they might sacrifice in the land (Exod. 8:25); then that they might go if they would not go very far (28). He said that they might go, but might not take their children with them (Exod. 10:8-11); then that the children might go, but not the flocks and herds (24); but at last he bade them go with their children and flocks and all (Exod. 12:21-33). And the Egyptians gave them presents and were glad to have them gone (34-36). "Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them." (Ps. 105:38)

1. Read carefully Psalm 105:17-38, and see if you can follow this story of the children of Israel in Egypt.
2. How many plagues came upon the Egyptians? What were they in their order?
3. Who were the magicians?
4. What was the effect of the plagues on Pharaoh?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Remind me what spiritual bondage is, and who the Moses is who sets us free.

What can the plagues of Egypt mean in our spiritual experience of coming out from bondage? What is the first thing that the Lord must do to make us willing to give up selfish and evil ways and to follow His ways? He must help us to see the evilness and hatefulness of the life that we are in. This is represented by the plagues upon the Egyptians. They were not arbitrary punishments, but were the evil states of the Egyptians (and others whom they represent) made visible before their eyes. In the other world the quality of people's lives is made visible in such outward ways. Compare the plagues upon the Philistines described in 1 Sam. 5 and 6, and the signs described in Rev. 8. (A. 7273)

In regard to the magicians, and why they were allowed to do signs like those done by Moses and Aaron, read interesting things in A. 7296, 7298 end.

It is several times said in the story, that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart. It is one of the many things in the Bible which are expressed according to the way that people think and speak. Really the Lord does everything to lead people to be obedient and to do what is right. In some places it is plainly said according to the real truth, that Pharaoh hardened his own heart, and that he sinned in doing so. (Exod. 8:15, 32; 9:34; A. 7032)

What particular evil state is represented by the destructive hail? Gentle rain from heaven is like teaching from the Lord, which makes life beautiful and fruitful. (Deut. 32:1-2; Isa. 55:10-11) The deadly hail represents not truth from heaven, but teachings and assertions that are false which an evil mind uses to excuses its evil and to destroy the tender things of conscience and of heaven. Gentle affections are the good animals destroyed. True heavenly thoughts are the plants which are crushed down. The fire that came with the hail and "ran down to the earth" represents the low and evil loves which inspire the false teachings. (A. 7553, 7575)

The wheat and spelt were safe from the hail because they were not yet grown up, while the earlier barley and flax were destroyed. The barley and flax represent more external forms of goodness and truth, which are sooner developed, and which suffer harm when we fall into evil states. But there are many possibilities of heavenly affection and thought that are not yet developed, which the Lord in His providence keeps safely hidden, that He may bring them out and give us the enjoyment of them when we have turned away from evil and can be trusted with these precious things. (A. 7600, 7607)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### **Leading Thought: The Plagues of Egypt**

Last Sunday we learned what the slavery or bondage or captivity of the Israelites in Egypt represented in the spiritual world. We also learned what "infestation" means, that it means troubling good people by trying to make them believe things that are false, and proving them from the Word. We learned that before the Lord's First Coming, and also before His Second Coming, there were many millions of good people in the "lower earth" infested in this way, and who were waiting for the Lord to come and deliver or free or redeem them, and that when He came He did redeem them, and when He arose from the tomb He raised them into heaven with Himself, forming a new heaven of them.

But what became of those who infested and how could they infest? They could infest because they knew the Bible. If they had not known the Bible they could not have twisted and perverted what it teaches, and so trouble those who believed in the Bible. Now what became of them when the Lord came?

What they knew from the Bible was taken away from them, or - to use a word which is used in the Scriptures - they were "laid waste" or "vastated" of the good things and true which they had learned from the Word, but which they used for evil purposes. Remember that no one can be in

hell who has anything good or true. This must first be taken from that person. And this "vastation" of the "infestors" is described by the plagues.

How many miracles were there? Eleven.

1. Aaron's staff was turned into a serpent.
2. The waters in the rivers were turned into blood, so that the fish died, and the river stank.
3. From the rivers and pools frogs were brought up upon the land of Egypt.
4. The dust of the earth was turned into lice.
5. Swarms of noxious flying insects were sent into the house of Pharaoh and of his servants and into all the land of Egypt.
6. Boils broke forth with blains upon people and upon animals.
7. A rain of grievous hail mingled with fire rained upon the land of Egypt.
8. Locusts were sent upon the land, which devoured the herb and all the fruit of the tree.
9. A thick darkness came over all the land of Egypt.
10. All the firstborn of the land of Egypt died.
11. The children of Israel took from them their vessels of gold and silver, and raiment, and then the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea.

In this manner the Egyptians were gradually deprived of one thing after another, until they had nothing left, and they died in the sea.

In a similar manner those in the spiritual world who infested others, when the time of judgment came, were gradually deprived of all that they had from the Word, of all their knowledge of what is true and good, until they had nothing left and then they were cast into hell, which is represented by the Red Sea.

How this was done in every detail, what is meant by each one of the miracles, is very fully told in the internal sense of the story of these miracles, as made known by the Lord in the Arcana Coelestia. When you grow older, you will want to read it carefully. We cannot go into that now. But one very important thing you ought to know, which will help you to understand a little about the subject of "vastation."

The Word of the Lord is different from all other books, as you know, because it has a spiritual sense, which the angels who are with us understand while we are reading and thinking about the stories and prophecies and songs that are in the literal sense. It is in this way that the church on earth is together with heaven. This is the chief reason why the Lord always maintains a church, no matter how small it may be. So our principal duty, as New Church people, is to read the Word, but read it reverently, knowing that it is the Lord's Word, and doing what it teaches us. Angels can then be very near to us, and from their seeing the lovely things that are in the internal sense, a light comes to our minds, and a warm love into our hearts, and this warm feeling and bright light shine out and go out to others, just as sunlight does.

Now this wonderful power that the Word of the Lord has, of bringing angels near, it also possesses in the other world. In the world of spirits, the Word is very much like what it is here, and whatever we have learned from it, draws angels near. It is owing to angels being with us, that we can understand things right. But when the Lord is ready to judge between the evil and the good: when the "last judgment" comes, then the Lord gradually removes the angels from those who know much from the Word, but have not lived a good life, but have "infested" others. And when angels - whole societies of them - move away from people, then they no longer can think right, they cannot remember the truths which they have had, indeed they no longer care for them, and so the spiritual treasures which they had, that is to say, the things good and true which they had learned from the Word, are taken away from them. In this way, gradually, step by step, just like the plagues on the Egyptians, they lose everything that connected them with heaven and made them appear like human beings, and they finally become monstrous-looking devils and enter hell.

You can see from this how very important it is for people to study the Word, and live according to what is taught in it. The Lord taught this through John, who wrote the Book of Revelation, when He said "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and that keep those things that are written therein, for the time is at hand" [emphasis added].

## **Lesson 38**

### **Exodus 12: The Passover Kept**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The Passover was a feast which the children of Israel kept as they were leaving Egypt, and we find them in the Gospel days still keeping it each spring in memory of their deliverance. The father of each household had four days before chosen out a lamb or a kid for the feast; or if the families were small, two families took a lamb together. When the day came, they killed the lamb at evening – "between evenings," that is, between the sunset and the coming of the stars - and roasted it for the feast with great care that not a bone should be broken. The people were gathered in their homes, and no one must go out. They had taken a bunch of the little hyssop plant and, dipping it in the blood of the lamb, had struck it upon the side posts and above the door, and this was the sign that when death came to the Egyptian homes, where this mark was the people should be safe. They ate the feast by night, with the lamb, unleavened bread (flat bread made without yeast), and sprigs of bitter herbs. They ate it in haste and ready for their journey, girded up for walking, with shoes on their feet and staves in their hands.

While the children of Israel were keeping this first Passover, the Egyptians were also awake, for the oldest child in every house had died, even the son of Pharaoh who ruled with him. Without waiting for the day Pharaoh told the people to go, and they went, taking with them presents from the Egyptians. As they began their journey, a pillar of fire by night and of cloud by day was given them by the Lord to protect and lead them.

## **Junior**

Read about the Passover as I have described it to the primary children, and then let me ask you some questions as you read the chapter, Exod. 12:1-42. The first month of the year: they were to count their religious year from this deliverance. It was in the spring, at the time that we keep Easter. The unleavened bread was considered to be more clean, for in making raised bread a bit of old dough was used to leaven the new. What things are named which were to be on the table for the feast? Why were they to eat it in haste? Where was blood of the lamb sprinkled as a protection to the children of Israel? Why was the feast called the Passover? Note the charge to keep the feast each year in memory of the deliverance. There were years in the history of Israel when it was neglected, but it was again revived (2 Kings 23:21-23), and in the Gospel days it was being kept with care. Remember the Passover for which the Child Jesus went with Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem when He was twelve years old. And do you remember other Passovers which He attended in later years? In obedience to the charge in verse 27, it was the custom at a certain place in the Passover for one of those present to ask the meaning of the feast and for one of the old men to tell how on this night long ago the Lord had brought the people out of Egypt.

One thing more, and we shall be ready to go with the children of Israel on their journey. What did the Lord give the people to lead them by day and by night? (Exod. 13:20-22)

What feast was kept by the children of Israel on the night of their deliverance from Egypt? Why was it so named?

At what season and at what place was the Passover kept by the Jews after they were settled in the promised land? Was it still kept in Gospel days?

What Christian feast is connected with the Passover, and continues its meaning? What Christian festival helps you to remember the season of the Passover and of the going out from Egypt?

What was eaten at the Passover? How were the people commanded to eat it?

What lines of the twenty-third Psalm does this story of the Passover remind you of?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

Have you been thinking about the rod of Moses, and what it represents? Perhaps you have been reminded of the words in the Psalm, "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." Remembering that Moses is a type of the Lord's Word, you will see that Moses' rod represents the power of that Word to expose and to deliver from evil and to give comfort and blessing. (A. 8182; E. 726)

The plagues in Egypt, like the plagues upon the Philistines described in 1 Sam. 5 and 6 and those described in Rev. 15, are not punishments inflicted by the Lord, but revelations of the evil states in which the people were. Evil states must be revealed before we can be delivered from them, and the evil can be condemned. (A. 7273)

As the plagues represent the revealing of evil things, so the Passover represents the beginning of reception of heavenly blessings, of goodness and truth, which are a feast of good things to the

soul. A feast at the very going out from Egypt means that the Lord does not withhold all satisfaction until we have taken the heavenly journey. Even in our first efforts to obey Him, He gives a blessing, a taste of heavenly good things. What especially is represented by the lamb? (A. 7840, 7849, 7850)

The blood of the lamb upon the door posts kept harm away from the houses of Israel. The lamb is the symbol of innocent heavenly affection, and its blood of innocent thought which belongs to such affection. There is protection in having the mind busy with good thoughts. Evil influences cannot enter to do us harm; they see the blood upon the door and turn away. (A. 7846, 7847)

The bread must be unleavened, because the bit of old dough beginning to ferment and sour would represent some suggestion of evil creeping in, as the suggestion that we are safe and good of ourselves. The bitter herbs remind us that we must be prepared for trials in connection with the new blessing. (A. 2342, 7853, 7854)

The command was, not to eat of the lamb raw, nor sodden (boiled) at all with water, but roast with fire. Do you see the difference in meaning between food prepared with water and with fire? One suggests more of intellect, the other of warm affection. To eat of the lamb raw would be to have no living interest in the good things of heaven; to eat of it boiled would be to care for them intellectually; but to eat of it roast with fire is to love them with all the heart, and this is the right way. (A. 7852, 7856, 7857)

The Passover was to be eaten in haste and girded for the journey. The new blessings are not to be enjoyed idly, but with the desire to be up and doing. (A. 7862, 7866)

The beginning of months. Every deliverance from evil is the beginning of some new development of good life. The Passover was kept each year, both because we need always to remember with humble thankfulness what the Lord has done for us, and because so long as we live we must be making constantly new beginnings. (A. 7827, 7828)

The pillar of cloud and fire beautifully represents the Lord's guidance and protection. The cloud suggests His truth and the fire His love. We are told about this pillar of cloud and fire that it was caused by the presence of a society of angels, with whom was the protecting power of the Lord. (A. 8110, 8192; E. 59416)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### **Leading Thought: The Passover**

Read the description of the institution of the Passover very carefully (verses 1 to 28), for it is the most important of all the ceremonies that were provided for the Israelitish Church, and it has a very close connection with the most holy sacrament of the Christian Church, namely, the Holy Supper.

The Passover was instituted on the day when the children of Israel left the land of Egypt and were thus delivered from their slavery. For this reason it was to be commemorated every year "forever" (verses 17, 24). When, 1500 years later, the Lord came into the world, He changed the form of it, so that instead of eating the flesh of a lamb, and sprinkling the blood on the side posts and lintel

of the house, Christians eat only the unleavened bread, and drink wine, the one representing flesh, and the other blood. So you see that this ordinance is being observed and will be observed forever. But, not so much to remind us Christians of the freeing of the Israelites from bondage, as to remind us of the great work which the Lord accomplished when He came into the world, and which was represented by the delivering of the Israelitish slaves, namely the great work of freeing humanity from slavery to hell.

The Lord came into the world to overcome the hells and glorify His human. The hells had gradually grown up to such a height, that they overflowed and filled the world of spirits, and kept the Lord's sunshine of love and truth from flowing into people's minds. Just as Moses delivered the children of Israel, so the Lord Jesus Christ delivered all of humanity.

The Lord set out on this great and wonderful work when He was a mere child, a little baby. From the beginning He was troubled by evil spirits who tried to kill Him, and to lead Him to do wrong instead of right. But though they tried ever so hard, yet He always fought against them, and they never succeeded in getting Him to even think what was wrong. How He fought against them, you can see if you will read eleven verses in the fourth chapter of Matthew, where we read of Satan's tempting Him. By always overcoming, He gradually made them move out of the world of spirits, and out of the mountains and hills near heaven, where they had built up great cities for themselves, and He cast them into hell, where He shut them up so that they could not come out again to trouble people and prevent their thinking about the Lord and how to love their neighbor.

While our Lord Jesus Christ was doing this, His human nature which was outside of His Divine nature became changed. When He was born, the human nature (which He had from His mother Mary) was like yours and mine, full of inclinations to evil. By never doing what He was inclined to do, He made these inclinations gradually grow weaker, and in place of them His love of thinking and doing what is right, yes, and what is Divine, grew stronger and stronger, until it was far stronger than that of any good person or any angel who ever lived or ever will live. This love grew stronger than the combined love of all angels of all the heavens. Indeed it became the strength of GOD Himself: it became Divine.

This change in His human nature is called "glorification." You may have heard New Church people speak of "the Divine Human," or "the Divine Humanity." This means the changed nature of the Lord Jesus Christ: His Divine Body.

Because nothing of the nature which He had received from Mary when He was a little baby was in Him any longer, but because it was all changed to a Divine Nature, He no longer called Mary "mother." Did you ever notice that? Look in the Gospels, and you will find that, although others spoke to Him of His "mother," He Himself called Mary "Woman." (John 2:4; 19:26) Now you know the reason.

During all His life in the world, then, the Lord kept making His human nature more and more Divine, and at last, after His crucifixion, in the tomb He put off the last parts of His human nature, the actual earthly matter of His body, and put Divine substance into His body, and so rose with His body made fully Divine, or "glorified." Then the work of deliverance was complete, the world of spirits was cleared of all evil spirits, and He took the good spirits out of the lower earth, into heaven with Himself.

This is what was represented by the Passover, and for this reason He rose during the feast of the Passover, which, as you can see from this chapter in Exodus, lasted seven days. Because the good people whom He took to heaven were then all arranged into societies in that beautiful great country and all lived together in the greatest happiness, therefore, to show this, it was commanded in the rules about keeping the Passover that they should eat the lamb and the unleavened bread according to their households. (See verses 3, 4.)

But, unfortunately, though the Lord so delivered humanity, not long after this, people again began to be so evil, that in the course of seventeen hundred years, the hells again overflowed, the world of spirits again became filled with evil spirits, again people could not be reached by the Lord through angels, and so the Lord again performed the work of redemption. This time it was not necessary for Him to come in person into the world because people had the Word of both Testaments. But the Lord did appear in the world of spirits. He executed a judgment in the year 1757, of which Emanuel Swedenborg was an eyewitness, that is, he saw and heard all that was going on at this judgment in the spiritual world, and the Lord then told him to write about it so that people in the world might know about it. This he did in the work entitled *The Last Judgment, and Babylon Destroyed*; also in other books.

He tells us that the evil people who lived from the time of the Lord's life on earth until the year 1757, had made for themselves such splendid cities and regions on the mountains and in the valleys of the world of spirits that they seemed like heaven. But this heaven and earth were all destroyed at the last judgment by fearful earthquakes and cyclones. He concludes the story in one place, "Thus perished the old heaven and the old earth; and all those were cast into hell who had not lived a life of faith, which is charity; for they were called the 'goats' who stood on the left, who gave no one anything from internal charity, but only for some external reason. This lasted from March 31 to April 11th, at Eastertide, 1757."

You see from this that at the Second Coming as well as at the First, the Lord delivered humanity from hell at Passover, or Easter time.

## **Lesson 39**

### **Exodus 13: In Memory of Deliverance**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

The first Passover was kept on the night that the children of Israel left Egypt. They were strictly charged to keep the feast each year in the spring, in the month Abib, which they counted as the first month of the year. As we read on in the story we find times when the Passover was remembered, and a time when it was kept again after being long forgotten. (Num. 9:5; Josh. 5:10; 2 Kings 23:21-23)

This feast was to be a memorial, to keep always in mind how the Lord led the people out of Egypt by His great power. It was important that the people should remember the bondage of Egypt and the Lord's power which brought them out, so that they would always trust the Lord and obey His

commandments. If they should forget to trust the Lord's power and think they were safe without it, they would come again into trouble. They should remember Him in everything they did and in all their thoughts; this was meant by the charge to make the law a sign upon the hand and a memorial between the eyes. You know how some of the Jews kept this charge, writing lines from the law and tying them in little boxes called phylacteries on their arms and foreheads. But this was not the way the Lord wished them to do. (Matt. 23:5)

Every firstborn son, both of people and animals, was to be the Lord's. Some heathen people sacrificed their sons to their gods, but the Lord did not wish them to do so. Remember how He taught Abraham this lesson. (Gen. 22) It was not even required that every firstborn son should serve at the Lord's temple, for the whole tribe of the Levites were set apart instead to do that service. (Num. 3:12, 13, 40-51; 8:16-18) But each firstborn son must be presented to the Lord, and five shekels paid. (Num. 18:15-18) The shekel was a silver coin about the size of a fifty-cent piece. Remember how Mary and Joseph brought the child Jesus to the temple. (Luke 2:22-23)

We have read how on the Passover night Pharaoh told the children of Israel to go and how they journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, a district at the eastern end of Goshen. From Succoth, the short way to the land of Canaan would have been north-eastward to the shore of the Mediterranean, and so up into the Philistine country. But the Lord did not lead them "through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near." That was a much traveled road and there were fortified cities there. They were to go, as we shall learn, by a much longer way. And now, at the very beginning of their journey we read how the Lord led them by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The presence of the Lord and His angels with the people appeared to them in this way (A. 8192), and it was a beautiful reminder that they were never forgotten, but that the Lord was always leading and protecting them. They took with them from Egypt the bones of Joseph. You remember how he had charged them to do so before his death. (Gen. 50:24-26; Josh. 24:32)

1. By what other name was the Passover called? (Luke 22:1) Why?
2. What was this feast to keep always in mind?
3. How was the law to be bound upon the arm and between the eyes?
4. What way did the Lord not lead the people? What way did He lead them?
5. How did they see the presence of the Lord and angels with them?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The people were strictly charged to keep the Passover as a memorial of deliverance. It was to remind them of the bondage which they had been in and of the Lord's great power which had brought them out. In our spiritual experience, it is most necessary to remember what the Lord has saved us from and what we should now be if it were not for His saving power. The moment we forget this we are weak. Angels in heaven are safe only because they constantly remember their dependence upon the Lord's great power. (A. 8049, 8050)

The strict charge to put away leaven at the time of the feast means especially that this acknowledgment of dependence upon the Lord must not be spoiled by any secret thought that we are safe in our own strength. For leaven stands for selfish and false thought creeping in. (A. 8051)

The Lord told Nicodemus that heavenly life is a new birth from above. The law of the firstborn means that we must recognize that the new life is from the Lord and gratefully acknowledge it as His. This law also was to be kept in coming years, for the acknowledgment must be made not only in regard to the first gift of heavenly life, but in regard to all new gifts as time goes on. (A. 8042, 8043)

The firstborn of animals were the Lord's as well as children; they represent heavenly developments of a more external kind, which also are the Lord's. But the firstborn of the ass was to be redeemed with a lamb, that is, the lamb was to be offered in its place. This is because the ass represents something of knowledge and understanding, and the lamb something of innocent affection. The Lord does not value knowledge for its own sake, but wishes us to make it a means of gaining innocence and goodness. For every truth learned some goodness should be returned to Him. There is a similar meaning in the redeeming of the firstborn sons and the taking of the Levites in their place, for a son represents intelligence, and the Levites, like the lamb, represent charity and goodness. (A. 8078, 8088)

Having taught the fundamental principles of heavenly life, that the Lord alone protects from evil and that every good thing is from Him, the chapter takes up the line of march. The Lord did not lead the people by the short way of the Philistines, but through the longer way by the Red Sea and the desert. The Philistines represent a state of intelligence without obedience and charity. It is impossible to reach heaven by that short way, by merely knowing what is good. We must travel a longer road, working knowledge out into goodness; and this can only be done through experiences of trial and temptation, which are represented by the desert journey. (A. 8093, 8129)

Our cloud is our perception of the Lord's truth and the fire the perception of His love, both of them obscure and yet enough to guide and strengthen us at all times. (A. 8106, 8108)

## **Lesson 40**

### **Exodus 14: Crossing the Red Sea**

#### **THE STORY**

We are starting with the children of Israel on their journey out of Egypt to Mount Sinai and to the promised land. It will be well often to go over the line of the journey on a map and be sure that we remember the events that happen on the way. Today find the land of Goshen. The people gathered in Succoth in the eastern part of Goshen, as if to take the short way up to Canaan, but the Lord turned them southward along the sea. (Exod. 13:17-22) In the old days, the Red Sea reached farther north than now, where we find only the Bitter Lakes and Lake Timsah, the Crocodile Lake, today. The sea was before them and the chariots of Pharaoh behind them, and the Lord showed them His power.

## **Primary**

At last the children of Israel were to leave Egypt, where at first they had been happy in the days of Joseph but where they afterward were made slaves and very unhappy. Moses was their leader, and the pillar of fire and cloud would show the way. They gathered at the edge of the land of Goshen, but the Lord would not let them take the short road to Canaan. That way was guarded by soldiers. So the people camped by the shore of the Red Sea. They seemed to be shut in by the sea, and now to make their trouble worse Pharaoh came after them with his horsemen and chariots. The chariots were low, two-wheeled cars in which soldiers rode (Joseph also had his chariot). The people were terrified and blamed Moses. Moses answered, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." But the Lord said to Moses, "Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." The Lord helped them. First the pillar of cloud and fire, which usually went before them, removed and stood behind them, between them and the Egyptians. It gave light through the night to the children of Israel, but was dark to the Egyptians. Then at the Lord's command Moses stretched out his rod over the sea, and the Lord divided the waters by an east wind that blew all night, so that the way opened for the children of Israel to go over on dry ground. The Egyptians followed, but when Moses at the Lord's command stretched out his rod again over the sea the waters came again and the Egyptians were drowned. So the people began to know the power of the Lord and to trust His servant Moses. Moses sang a song of praise and rejoicing to the Lord, and several Psalms praise the Lord for this deliverance.

## **Junior**

By the help of our map we must take the journey with the children of Israel, and must make it real with pictures. You see on the map the line which marks the journey from Goshen to Sinai and to Canaan. Each week we will go a little further on this line and learn some new event and get acquainted with new country. Why do we find the name Goshen on the map? Pithom? (Exod. 1-11) Succoth and Etham? (Exod. 13:20) If the map showed the country as it was at the time of the exodus, we should see the Red Sea extending up to include the Bitter Lakes and Lake Timsah. Also the Mediterranean Sea came nearer in those days, before the shore had been built out by sand from the sea. I find also the words Suez Canal. Who can learn for us something about this water-way connecting the Mediterranean and the Red Sea? Did Moses ever see it?

The children of Israel are ready for the start. Shall they go by the short way to Canaan? (Exod. 13:17) Instead they camped by the sea. It seemed to Pharaoh that they were caught, entangled in the land. He gathered his chariots to pursue them. We have pictures of chariots in old Egyptian sculptures, and beautiful chariots were buried with some of the kings. Have you an idea what they were like? Imagine the danger and the distress of Israel. Between what two terrors were they? When they cried to Moses, what did he answer? (Exod. 13:13-14) What did the Lord say to Moses? (Verse 15) In any time of danger or when any work is to be done, we need to trust in the Lord, but we must not sit still and expect the Lord to do the work. As we do our part, the Lord can help us; He can work with us and give success. An old friend used to say, "Pray as if all depended upon the Lord; then work as if all depended upon you."

How did the Lord help the children of Israel in their great danger? How did He protect them from the Egyptians? How did He open the way for them to go forward? What was the fate of the Egyptians who pursued them? Read the song of rejoicing which Moses sang. (Exod. 15:1-19) And

Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, sang and led the dancers. (Exod. 15:20-21) What Psalms can you find which also rejoice in this deliverance?

Note in passing how they took the bones of Joseph with them. Look back to the charge which Joseph gave them. (Gen. 50:24-26) And look forward to the burial by Joshua in the field of Shechem. (Josh. 24:32)

1. Where did Pharaoh overtake the children of Israel? What made his army strong?
2. How were the children of Israel kept safe from Pharaoh's army through the night?
3. When the people were frightened, what did Moses say? What did the Lord say to Moses?
4. What did Moses do to open the way through the sea? What did the Lord send to divide the waters?
5. What was the fate of the Egyptian army?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The bondage and the plagues of Egypt represent the evil state in which many were at the time when the Lord came into the world, and evil states in which we may be today. The safe passage of the children of Israel through the Red Sea followed by the overwhelming of the Egyptians is a picture of redemption which the Lord wrought, the condemnation of the evil and the deliverance from their power of those who could be saved. The song which Moses sang and Psalms celebrating the deliverance, such as Psalms 77 and 106 (see also Psalm 32:6 and Isa. 43:1-2), are forever precious because they are songs of redemption. The Red Sea in the picture is hell, from which the good are saved and in which the evil destroy themselves. The east wind holding back the water as a wall on either side is the influence of heaven protecting. (A. 8200, 8206)

The lesson of trust and action in this story is important. We must act as of ourselves, at the same time believing and acknowledging that the will, the understanding and the power to do so are of the Lord alone. The words of Moses and of the Lord in this chapter are not in conflict, but express the two halves of the truth. (T. 6219; Doc. of Charity, 107)

It is several times said that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart. It is one of the many things in the Bible which are expressed according to the way that people think and speak. Really the Lord does everything to lead people to be obedient and to do what is right. In some places it is plainly said according to the real truth, that Pharaoh hardened his own heart and that he sinned in doing so. (Exod. 8:15, 32; 9:34; A. 7032)

Read about the pillar of cloud and fire in the Arcana, that it was a company of angels and in the midst of them the Lord, which appeared in this way to the people. Think of this when you read Exod. 14:19 and 24. Why should the cloud be bright to Israel and dark to the Egyptians? (A. 8197)

Read in A. 8261 beautiful things about the power of songs which relate to the Lord, His kingdom and the church. Have this in mind in reading the Psalms, which all in their inner meaning relate to the Lord, His kingdom and the church.

## **Lesson 41**

### **Exodus 16: Quails and Manna**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

After crossing the Red Sea the children of Israel were in a desert country-hot sunshine overhead and hot sands underfoot and hot south winds with stifling dust. There are rains in that country in winter, but the water quickly runs off and leaves the brook-beds almost dry. Here and there was a little water, but it was bitter. They came to such water and called the place Marah, "bitterness," and the Lord made it sweet for them. Then soon they came to Elim which means "trees." Here was water and shade, and the people rested.

From Elim they moved on, keeping near to the Red Sea, to the valley that would lead them up into the mountains and to Mount Sinai. More rocky hills and sand and desert shrubs. They were hungry and the Lord gave them food: two kinds of food, quails, which came in a large flock in the evening, and manna, which they found on the ground in the morning when the dew dried up. The manna was a heavenly food made natural for the people. It was strange to them. Manna means "What is it?" It was small and round, like hoarfrost, or like seed. It was pearly white in color and sweet to the taste. The people gathered it early, for when the sun grew hot it melted. They crushed it in mortars or ground it in their little mills and made cakes of it. It spoiled if they tried to keep it until the next day. Only on the sixth day they gathered for two days, and on the Sabbath there was none upon the ground; on that day the people rested. The Lord gave the manna through all of the journey and wandering until the people came to the land of Canaan. Do you remember any other time when the Lord gave bread to feed a multitude?

##### **Junior**

We are starting on the journey from Egypt with the children of Israel. We must look at the map with every lesson and follow along with them on the line of march. Notice how the route goes southward, following the shore of the Red Sea to the valley which would lead them in to Sinai. It was hot desert country, rocks and sand. They crossed brook-beds where water had rushed in winter, but now nearly dry. I find the name Marah on the map, which means "bitterness." What happened here? (Exod. 15:23-25) Further on I find Elim, which means "trees." What happened here? (Exod. 15:27) This was a beautiful oasis with water and shade, springs and palm trees, and the people rested nearly a month. Remember Elim, a beautiful place of refreshment and rest. Find also the wilderness of Sin, the name also of an Egyptian city, referring perhaps to the clayey soil. (Do not confound with the English word.)

As the people journeyed on from Elim they were hungry. Did the Lord feed them in the desert? What came in the evening? What in the morning? Quails in the evening. Do you know them? They do not live in Sinai, but in the spring they fly over in large flocks from their winter home in Africa. Flying low, they could easily be caught. Did the quails come more than once in the desert journey? Yes, twice. Someone find Num. 11:3-35.

Manna in the morning on the ground. It was a wonderful gift. Someone open to Exod. 16:11-36, and someone open to Num. 11:4-9, and let us learn all that we can about manna. Where did the people find it? When? What did it look like? It was in little pellets. "Bdellium" probably means pearl. What was its taste? How did they prepare and use it? What was the amount for each person for a day? An omer was a measure, two or three quarts. What was different on the Sabbath day? For how long a time was the manna given to people? The pot of manna and Aaron's rod, of which we shall learn presently, after the ark was made for the commandments, were probably kept not in the ark but by it. (Heb. 9:4) Note especially 1 Kings 8:9.

"Man did eat angels' food." All our food is from the Lord, who makes the grain grow and the trees bear fruit. When the Lord fed the multitudes in Galilee, the food came more immediately from His hand, and we call it a miracle. So the giving of the manna was a miracle. Spiritual food was made natural for the people. Where can you find the manna mentioned in the Psalms? (Ps. 78:24-25; 105:40) Where do you find it mentioned in the Gospels? (John 6:31, 58) Where in Revelation? (Rev. 2:17)

What is an oasis? What beautiful oasis did the children of Israel come to soon after beginning their desert journey? What did they find there?

When the people asked for food, what was sent them in the evening? What in the morning?

What was the manna like; in shape, size, color, taste? What does the name mean? Where was the manna from?

Of what words in the Lord's Prayer does the story of the manna remind you?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Why is the progress from a worldly to a heavenly life described as a desert journey? What does Elim represent, a place of rest and refreshment after the first stage of the desert? After every temptation and trial in which we are faithful, the Lord gives consolation, a Sabbath rest after a week of labor. The devil leaves us and angels come near to minister. Such a state of consolation is an oasis in the desert. The Lord does not withhold all blessings until heaven is reached. There are consolations by the way. What especially is represented by twelve springs of water? What by seventy palm trees? This tree of the desert, from very ancient times an emblem of victory, stands for a grateful sense of the Lord's salvation. (John 12:13; Rev. 7:9-10; A. 8366-8370)

Quails at evening and manna in the morning. You remember the evenings and mornings in the story of creation. Morning represents a full interior state, when the best faculties are active. Evening represents an external state, when the more intense activity is relaxed and outward

things are enjoyed. The "lusting" of the people for flesh and the breaking out of the plague among them in consequence, when quails were given a second time (Num. 11:4-5, 33-34), suggests that the quails represent external satisfactions which are in danger of being enjoyed in self-indulgent ways destructive of spiritual life. But there is a right use for external satisfactions. The Lord gives food both for morning and for evening. (A. 8452, 8455, 8462, 8487)

The references to the manna in John 6:31, 58 and Rev. 2:17 help us to see what was represented by this food of the desert. "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the son of Man shall give unto you." The manna represents the happiness of heavenly affection from the Lord, especially such as comes to one who is making the desert journey, meeting trials and hardships with the Lord's help. It comes with a sense of peace, with confidence in the Lord that He governs all things and provides all things, and that He leads to a good end. (A. 8455)

There is a beautiful lesson of trust in the gathering of the manna each day for the day's need. The Lord gives strength for each duty as it comes. It is useless and wrong to look forward and be anxious; it means that we are trusting in ourselves. The lesson of the manna is taught us again in the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." Read beautiful things about trust in the Lord in A. 8455 and 8478.

There was no manna on the Sabbath, and it ceased when the people came into the land of Canaan. (Josh. 5:12) This was because the manna represents the consolation which belongs to a state of trial. It is associated with the desert and the forty years. (Exod. 16:35) The Sabbath and the land of Canaan represent a fuller enjoyment of the good things of heaven. (A. 8505-8510)

## **Lesson 42**

### **Exodus 17: Water Given: Amalek Overcome**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The children of Israel are traveling on in the desert country and have turned into a valley which is leading them up among the bare rocky mountains. When they were hungry the Lord gave them food. What did He give them? Now they are thirsty. Can the Lord give them water? He did give them water in a wonderful way. Moses, with elders of the people, went up to the rocky wall of the mountain with the rod with which he had done so many signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea. He struck the rock with the rod and water flowed out for all the people and their cattle to drink.

The people were in the narrow valley among the mountains. There were stern bare rocks on either side. An enemy now attacked them from behind, the Amalekites, who were wandering and war-like people of this region. It was the first battle that the children of Israel had to fight, and in a wonderful way the Lord helped them. Moses told Joshua to choose men and go out into the valley to fight with the Amalekites. At the same time Moses went up to the top of a hill and held up his hand with his rod to the Lord. While he held up his hand the children of Israel had the victory and drove the Amalekites before them. When he let down his hand, the Amalekites had

the victory. But Moses' hands were heavy, so he sat on a stone and Aaron and Hur, one on each side, held up his hands until the going down of the sun, and the Amalekites were wholly driven away. Moses built an altar there for grateful offerings to the Lord.

## **Junior**

The map helps us again to go with the children of Israel from the wilderness of Sin to Rephidim. The Lord had fed the people. Now they needed water, and again wished themselves back in Egypt. The people were angry with Moses, but he said that their words were not against him but against the Lord. How did the Lord give them water? His power was still with the rod which had already done so many signs. Was water given from the rock at any other time on the journey? Yes, at one other time. (Num. 20:1-13) The water from the rock is mentioned in Ps. 78: 5, 20 and Ps. 105:41.

Another event of the journey is associated with Rephidim, the battle with the Amalekites, who were a fierce, wandering people. From other passages of Scripture we learn that the Amalekites lay in wait for the children of Israel and attacked the hindmost of them when they were weary. (Deut. 25:17-18; 1 Sam. 15:2) Joshua must choose men and go out to fight with Amalek. This is the first mention of Joshua in the story, and we hear of him many times as we go on, as Moses' helper and as leader of the people after Moses in their conquest of the promised land. Watch for Joshua as we go on in the story. But how was the battle with Amalek really won? The holding up of Moses' hand was a sign of looking to the Lord for strength and victory, and the Lord gave the victory. The altar which Moses built he called Jehovah-nissi, "Jehovah my banner." In His name I fight and conquer.

Verse 14 tells us that the Lord told Moses to write this history in a book. See also Exod. 34:27; Deut. 31:9. The first five books of the Bible are called the Books of Moses, because the Lord made use of Moses in writing them.

1. How did the Lord give the children of Israel food in the wilderness? How did He give them water?
2. What enemy fought with Israel among the mountains of Sinai? At what place did they attack them?
3. In what way did Amalek make the attack?
4. Who led the army of Israel in the battle? What did Moses do to help?
5. Were the Amalekites wholly conquered in this battle?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

The Lord gave both food and drink to the children of Israel on their journey. What are the food and drink of the soul? Good affections and true thoughts to nourish will and understanding. After the manna the people needed water. Food makes us thirsty, as new affections quicken the desire to know how the affections can be realized. (A. 8562, 8568)

What is meant by the giving of water from the rock? We know that the Lord's Word is our source of truth for spiritual life, but it may seem to us hard facts of history and law unrelated to our needs. But the truth which is related to our needs, to our needs today, is there. If we earnestly desire it and read the Bible to find the Lord's message to us, to learn how to live, the Lord will bring for us water from the rock, will show us the relation of His Word to ourselves and give us from it the guidance that we need. Water flows from the rock when we feel the living message of some Scripture to ourselves and our present need. It is the Lord Who opens His Word to each individual soul. Moses was rebuked when at a later time he assumed to bring water by his own power. (A. 8579, 8581, 8582)

Israel fought with Amalek. Who are our spiritual enemies? Evil feelings and thoughts and the evil spirits who suggest them. Some enemies meet us openly; they squarely oppose us in our efforts to do right and try to force us to do wrong. Other enemies are more subtle and take advantage of us when we are faint and weary, when we are tired out by other things. We know very well in experience how some things which we may easily resist if we are feeling fresh and strong we may yield to when we are weary and taken unawares. This sort of attack is characteristic of the deceitful evils which the Amalekites represent. The Lord said that He would have war with Amalek from generation to generation. This does not mean a doubtful conflict; it is a promise of the Lord's perpetual protection, if we are His faithful soldiers, from those deceitful evils which seek to attack us when we are weary and to take us unawares. (A. 8626)

There is a grand lesson in the story of this battle. We must fight as Joshua fought in the valley, but at the same time we must hold up our hands to the Lord as Moses did on the hill, acknowledging that our strength is from Him. When we stop looking to Him, our strength fails. While we trust the Lord's strength, we conquer. If we hold up our hands till the going down of the sun, till the season of conflict is past, the Lord gives us the victory. (A. 8593, 8604, 8607)

## **Lesson 43**

### **Exodus 19, 20:1-18: Commandments Spoken**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

This is Mount Sinai, the grand, stern mountain to which the Lord had led the children of Israel by the cloud and fire and by the hand of Moses. It is very bare and rocky, and rises like a wall out of the plain. The children of Israel were camping in this plain and in the side valleys. Seeing how the rocky cliff of Mount Sinai rises like a wall, we can understand the command that no one must go up into the mountain and no hand should touch it. The stern mountain would help the people to feel that the laws which the Lord taught them there must be obeyed. All the signs of power about the mountain were to make the people know that the commandments were Divine laws. The Lord called Moses up into the mountain and gave him many laws to teach the people, but they all heard the Ten Commandments spoken from the mountain. The people got ready three days before and washed their clothes. Then on the third day in the morning there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mount and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud so that all the

people that were in the camp trembled. For the Lord came down upon the mountain in fire and a great smoke rose from the mountain and the whole mountain shook. The people heard the trumpet sounding louder and louder. Then after Moses had been called once more into the mountain and sent down again to warn the people not to come near, the Ten Commandments were spoken by the Lord. And God spake all these words, saying, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Let all of us who can, say the Commandments which the people heard. And all the people saw and heard the thunderings and the lightnings and the noise of the trumpet and the mountain smoking. And when the people saw it they removed and stood afar off.

## **Junior**

Look well at the picture of Mount Sinai. It will help you to understand the account of the giving of the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel by the Lord. Reading our lesson, we think of Moses several times going up into the mountain to be instructed by the Lord and coming down to instruct the people in the plain. He was preparing them for a great event, for hearing the Ten Commandments spoken by the Lord from the mountain. Where must the people stand? Why were they not allowed to go up into the mountain or even to touch it? Because they were in a low, worldly state. They also could not know the heavenly meaning of the Lord's laws, but could receive them only as stern, literal laws forbidding evil. Contrast this scene at Sinai with the scene when Jesus led His disciples and the multitude into a mountain in Galilee and spoke to them the Sermon on the Mount, opening to them some of the stern laws of Sinai and showing their Christian and heavenly meaning. Do you see why in one case the people must stand beneath in the plain and in the other case they were gathered about the Lord in the mountain?

What signs of power did the people see and hear about Mount Sinai, given to make the people feel that the Commandments were Divine? The laws were not wholly new in the world. These and similar laws had long been known in many nations, but people must learn again what they had forgotten, that they are God's laws. Many instructions were given to the children of Israel through Moses, but they all heard the Ten Commandments spoken from the mountain. Read Deut. 5:22-24.

The Commandments are not given to make life hard, but to warn us of dangers and to show us the safe ways to go in. They are like friendly signposts which tell the stranger: "Not this way, there is a bog or a precipice here. This way the road is safe and comes out to a beautiful place." The Commandments not only warn us and tell us the safe ways, but give us strength to do right.

1. How long were the children of Israel on the journey from Egypt to Mount Sinai? (Exod. 19:1) How long did they stay at the mountain? (Num. 10:11-12)
2. Where did the people stand to hear the Ten Commandments?
3. What signs of power did the people see and hear when the Commandments were given? How did these signs affect them?
4. Were the Ten Commandments given for the children of Israel only, or for everybody? How do the words of the first Commandment in Exod. 20:2 apply to us?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

In the coming to Sinai we find the fulfillment of the Lord's saying to Moses at the bush, "Ye shall serve God upon this mountain" (Exod. 3:12), and also of the saying to Pharaoh that they must worship God in the wilderness (Exod. 3:18). In reality the blessings of Canaan lay beyond, as the blessings of heaven lie beyond for us. But the essential thing is to choose the service of the Lord; the rest will follow.

Consider the significance of the scene at Sinai, the stern, rocky mountains (remember again the ninetieth Psalm), the signs of power given to impress the people with the Divineness of the Commandments. (Exod. 19:19; T. 282)

Why the strict and repeated command that the people should not come up into the mountain nor touch it? Can it mean unwillingness on the Lord's part that the people should come near to Him? No, but it shows the impossibility for those in low and evil states to come near to Him, like the guard at the gate of Eden. The association of everyone with heaven while in this world and hereafter must be according to the kind and degree of that person's own heavenly quality. The association of the spiritual is with the spiritual, of the celestial with the celestial. (A. 8794, 8797)

It is an interesting study to compare the scenes at Sinai and on the mountain in Galilee when the Lord spoke the Sermon on the Mount. Another interesting contrast is between the dark clouds which shrouded Mount Sinai and the bright cloud of the mountain of transfiguration. (Matt. 7:5) A cloud represents such simple knowledge as we have of the Lord and heaven, which reveals the Lord to us and at the same time veils the Divineness of His truth and love. If our thought is very ignorant and obscure, the cloud is dark; but if more of heavenly light and some sense of the Lord's goodness shine for us in the knowledge that we have, the cloud is bright. Remember the clouds and the rainbow in the story of Noah. (A. 8781, 8814)

"I bear you on eagles' wings." Find the same figure in Deut. 32:10-12. Think how it is that the eagles' wings are symbols of the Lord's protecting, sustaining power. Birds are types of powers of thought, and the eagle which is a bird of extremely strong sight and of lofty and long sustained flight, represents lofty spiritual thought. The wings are especially the power for such thought. So in the highest sense the eagle becomes the type of the Lord's Divine thought and providence, and the eagles' wings become types of the power of His providence, protecting and sustaining and bringing us to Himself. (A. 8764)

"The voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder." Several times in the Book of Revelation the announcement of truth from the Lord is made with a trumpet. Remember also the silver trumpets that were blown for setting forward on the march and for going to war. (Num. 10:1-10) And remember the trumpets with the ark before the walls of Jericho and in the hands of Gideon's men. The trumpet blast suggests the power of the Lord's truth speaking from His love. The sound growing louder and louder, represents the clothing of the still small voice of the Lord's truth in successively lower and more natural forms as it comes down to those in natural states. (A. 8815, 8823)

The Commandments are the laws of life for all human beings and even for angels. How can that be? Have not good people and angels learned not to do the wrong acts which the Commandments forbid, and not to indulge the wrong thoughts and feelings which they also forbid? Still even angels need the Commandments and will forever need them, for each one opens the door to some heavenly good, when the opposite evil is repented of and this good can develop and increase forever. There is no good which can possibly be enjoyed in this world or in heaven for which the way is not opened by one or another of the Ten Commandments. (A. 8862, 8902 end)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Giving of the Ten Commandments

You will remember that it was at Horeb that Jehovah, that is, the Lord, appeared to Moses, and told him who He was, namely, that He was the God of his fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and also what He was, namely, the I AM, that is, the Divine Being from whom comes all the life there is in the world. And at that time Jehovah gave Moses this sign, as proof of His being the God of his fathers, and the I AM: that the children of Israel would come out of Egypt and worship at that same Mount Horeb.

In today's lesson we read of the fulfillment of the promise, of the giving of the proof; and it is a story that you need to read and re-read until you know every detail of it perfectly.

Horeb was a group of mountains, among which was a peak higher than the rest, which was called Mount Sinai. On this Mount Sinai, Jehovah, or the Lord, came down in the sight of all the people, and gave to Moses the Ten Commandments, written on two tables of stone, with the finger of God.

You have learned that when people see the Lord, or when they see angels, they cannot see them with the eyes of their body, but only with the eyes of the spirit. To see things and people in the spiritual world with the eyes of the spirit is called seeing a vision. It is not imagining something; it is actually seeing real things and real people in the spiritual world. So, when the Lord appeared on Mount Sinai with angels, it was a vision which all saw, though everyone saw it differently, according as each was prepared to see. Probably not one of the children of Israel saw the Lord Himself, but instead of Him they saw the thick cloud, and the lightning, and the fire and smoke, and heard the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, and the thunder, and felt the earthquake; all this took place in the spiritual world and was felt by the senses of their spirits. The people heard the Lord's voice as thunder, but Moses heard it as a voice and understood the Lord's words, and afterward went down to where the people stood at the foot of the mountain, and told them what the Lord had said.

It was all very majestic and awful, and they knew that only God could come down on Mount Sinai like that: and they thought that therefore the Ten Commandments that were given in such a fearful and terrifying manner, were indeed the Commandments of God, and must be kept.

We learn elsewhere that the Commandments, although ten in number, were divided into two tables: one table was for God, and the other for humanity, for when the Lord came down on Mount Sinai, God and humanity met. The Commandments are the covenant, or agreement, between God and humanity. If human beings will do their part, God will do His. The one table

teaches us how to love the Lord our God; the other table teaches us how to love the neighbor. The first table contains the first three commandments, and the second table, the last six. The fourth commandment, about honoring father and mother, unites the two, for it teaches us about both, "father," meaning, in the spiritual sense, the Lord; and "mother" meaning, in the spiritual sense, the Church.

Of course, the children of Israel, and especially Moses, had known before this that it was wrong to steal, not to honor one's parents, or to commit adultery, or to lie, or to covet. Then why should they be told this again, in such a solemn and awe-inspiring manner? So that they might know, and that we might know, and that everyone who reads the Word forever after, might know, that it is not only wrong and criminal to do these evil things, subjecting us to imprisonment or other punishment under the civil laws of the land, and making us liable to aversion on the part of others under the moral laws of society; but that far worse than this: doing these evils is sinning against God; it hurts our souls; it endangers our everlasting welfare; it keeps us from Heaven, and from our Father's Home.

So very important are the Commandments that it is one of the three things which, at the baptism of children, New Church parents are particularly told to teach them.

The Ten Commandments are quoted and explained a number of times in the writings of the New Church. The explanation of them in The True Christian Religion is called the "Catechism." A beautiful little book called the Doctrine of Life for the New Jerusalem, is devoted to an explanation of the "Decalogue," as the Ten Commandments are often called.

Do you know why they are called the Decalogue? From two Greek words, Deka, meaning ten; and Logos, meaning word. The Decalogue means "The Ten Words." Why were there ten commandments, or words? Because the number ten signifies something that we must learn to know and have in our hearts, without which we cannot be saved. Such things are called in the New Church "Remains" because, when we have once learned them, they stay or remain with us, even though we seem to forget them. The Lord keeps them warm and bright away inside in our hearts, where no one but He knows where they are, and where no evil spirit can see them and take them away. But when the time comes that we need them, then He lets them come out into our thought where we can see them and feel them, and makes use of them. Remember then, that the number "ten" means "remains," and that the Ten Commandments must be learned and loved by us because the Lord has appointed them as among the most important remains.

## **Lesson 44**

### **Exodus 32: On Tablets of Stone**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The Commandments which the children of Israel had heard spoken were also given them by the Lord written on two stones, so that they should not be changed. The Lord called Moses again up into the mountain, and Joshua, his helper, went perhaps part way with him. Do you remember

Joshua? Moses was in the mountain forty days and forty nights while the Lord taught him many laws which he should teach the people, and the Lord gave him the Ten Commandments written on two tablets of stone. The tablets were slabs of stone, not too heavy for Moses to carry in his hands. Moses was bringing these precious tablets to the people.

But now he heard the sound of voices from the camp in the plain below. Joshua thought it was the sound of war, but Moses knew it was the voice of singing. They came nearer to the camp and saw the people feasting and dancing before an idol, a golden calf. The people had grown tired waiting for Moses and had cried to Aaron to make them an image such as those worshiped by people who did not know the Lord. The Lord had just taught them in the first of the Ten Commandments not to make and worship images. So soon they disobeyed and brought to Aaron golden ornaments, and he made this idol. They could not have the tablets of stone which the Lord had given if they were so quick to disobey. Moses cast them out of his hands and broke them beneath the mount.

After a time Moses cut out two other tablets by the Lord's command at the foot of the mountain, like the tablets that were broken, and took them up into the mountain, and on them the Lord wrote the same words which were on the first tablets, the Ten Commandments. These were the tablets which were presently put into the ark and went with the children of Israel in all of their journey, and were brought at last into the temple in Jerusalem.

### **Junior**

I have been telling the younger children how the children of Israel got the precious stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them, which they kept afterward in the ark in the tabernacle and temple. Let me look up with you the verses which tell the story. We must look back first to Exod. 24:12-18 to learn how the Lord had called Moses up into the mountain to teach him many laws and to give him the Commandments written; how Moses went up (and Joshua perhaps part way with him), and was in the mountain forty days and forty nights. Turn next to Exod. 32:1-10. We read here of the idol, the golden calf, which Aaron and the people made while Moses was in the mountain - just what the Lord had commanded them not to do. They no doubt had seen such idols in Egypt where sacred bulls were worshiped. Now we can read Exod. 32:15-19, how Moses was bringing the precious tablets down to the people and how he broke them at the foot of the mount.

Exod. 34:1-8 tells how the Lord told Moses to cut out new tablets at the foot of the mountain like unto the first, and to bring them up into the mountain, and that He would write upon them the same words which were on the first tablets which were broken. Moses obeyed. In Exod. 34:29-35, we see Moses coming down from the mountain with these second tablets, the ones which were kept in the ark in the tabernacle and temple. When Moses came from the mountain the skin of his face shone so that he covered his face with a veil when he spoke with the people.

Let us draw the two tablets. On one stone were written the first commandments which tell our duty to the Lord, and on the other stone the last commandments which tell our duty to one another. The command to honor father and mother seems to belong to both, for we are to honor the heavenly Father and our earthly parents. It was perhaps partly on one stone and partly on the other. And remember that the Hebrew writing was from right to left. (T. 286, 456; A. 9416; E. 1026)

Children will think of the tablets as not too big for Moses to carry in his hands. We have another hint presently when we are told the size of the ark in which the tablets were kept, three feet nine inches long, and two feet three inches wide. The tablets must have been somewhat smaller.

Now let us read the Commandments from the tables.

1. Who heard the Ten Commandments spoken at Mount Sinai? Who received the other laws from the Lord and gave them to the people?
2. Tell me about the first tables. Where did Moses get them? Who wrote the Commandments upon them? What became of these tables?
3. Tell me about the second tables. Who made them? Who wrote upon them? What was done with these tables?
4. What idol was made at Sinai? Of what was it made? Who made it?
5. Why should the people have known better?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Both the writing of the Commandments and the stone on which they were written express the fixedness of the Commandments. They are the Lord's truth and cannot be changed. Compare Pilate's saying, "What I have written, I have written." (A. 8620)

To worship an idol is to live for and worship some ambition of our own and not the Lord. And what in particular is represented by worshiping an ox or calf? Cattle in a good sense represent affections for good things of the world and for natural usefulness. But if the things of the world are made the chief end of life, we are making them an idol and worshiping it. They are then the five yoke of oxen which keep us from the marriage feast of heaven. (Luke 14:19) We change our glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. (Ps. 106:20) The worship of cattle by the Egyptians was in keeping with their character, for they lived for worldly things. There was the same tendency with the children of Israel; and the calf at Sinai especially represented their care only for the forms and ceremonies of worship, not valuing its spirit. (A. 10393, 10394) We think of gold as representing something good, love to the Lord and one another, but it can mean, and does mean here, evils made to appear good. (A. 9391, 10406)

The tablets on which the Commandments were written were like the letter of the Word which contains its heavenly meaning. The breaking of the first tablets is said to mean "that the sense of the letter would have been different if the Word had been written among other people, or if the people had not been of such a quality." The first tablets given to Moses suggest a more beautiful and heavenly letter which might have been given if the people had been capable of receiving and caring for it. But incapable of this, a letter was provided taken from the facts of their own history and from earthly things - the tablets cut out by Moses at the foot of the mountain. But note well that the Lord wrote on these tablets the same words that were written on the first tablets which were broken. The same heavenly and Divine truth is contained in the letter which we have which might have been given in a different and more lovely letter. (A. 10453)

How beautifully the shining of Moses' face as he came from the mountain with the Commandments suggests the shining of the Divine through the letter of the law and of all the Word! Remember the shining of the Lord's face as the sun in the mountain of transfiguration. (A. 10691)

How can we understand Exod. 32:10-14, which speak of the Lord as angry and repenting? Read carefully A. 10431, 10440.

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Golden Calf

You have seen pictures of the ruins of temples in the land of Egypt. On the walls there are still to be seen sculptured pictures and in front of the temples are remains of the double row of sphinxes which formed an avenue through which the temple was approached. Sphinxes had the bodies of lions and the heads of men. In and about the temples there were many other statues and pictures which have not been preserved down to our times. There were images of gold and silver and of other substances.

Why were all these things? What was the original reason for their being used? Merely because they looked beautiful and served as ornamentation? No! In the Ancient Church they originally had all kinds of pictures and carved molten images because when the people looked at them they helped them to think of spiritual things ("spiritual things" means things belonging to the spirit of a human being). The temple itself made them think of the Lord and of heaven, for heaven is the Father's house. Every picture or image in the temple meant some particular thing. For instance, over the gate of the temple they had the picture of a sun with wings on each side. This was because the warm sun helped them to think of the Lord's warm love. Because a bird shelters her young under her wings and thus cares for them, the wings helped the worshipers think of the Lord's care for people, or providence. A horse led them to think of understanding the truth. A chariot led them to think of the teachings they received in the temple. A man led them to think of reason, or rationality. A spear, and bows and arrows, led them to think of the truths they learned from the Word of the Lord, with which to fight against their evils. The evils and falsities which they had to fight were represented by evil animals and by enemies. For this reason you see pictures of battle and of hunting. The science of correspondences taught them what each thing corresponded to and therefore represented.

They had many images of a calf, because the calf especially represented something that all the Egyptians had. And what was that? The pleasure we feel when we learn something new, especially some new truth. It also represented the pleasure in doing what is good. For this reason they often made the calves of gold, because gold signifies what is good.

All this was when the Egyptian people were good. But after a long while they no longer cared to think much about heavenly things, although they still attended the worship in the temples. Instead of finding pleasure in learning things from the Word, and in doing outward deeds of love and charity and kindness to others, they cared only for their own pleasure. Just like children who do not care to do things that their parents wish them to do and take no interest in them, but always want to have what they call "fun," whether it is fun for others or not. And when the people

became bad like that, then the golden calf no longer represented the pleasure of learning what is good and true, and the pleasure of doing kind things for others, and of having fun with others, but it represented the selfish pleasure which they then enjoyed. Then, when they went to church, instead of worshiping the Lord, and looking at the calf to help them think about the lovely pleasures He gives to us, they worshiped the golden calf itself, making an idol of it. So you see what manner of idolatry arose.

At the time that the children of Israel were in Egypt, the Egyptians were idolaters and the chief idols they had were calves. The children of Israel also worshiped these idols, for they did not know who the God of their fathers had been, until Jeovahah showed Himself to Moses, and taught him.

After Jehovah had shown Himself to Moses, and later by the wonderful miracles in Egypt had proven His power, His omnipotence, and that He was indeed God, and that the idols of Egypt were not God, you would think that the Israelites would stop entirely worshiping the calves, and would worship Jehovah their God. But no, they did not like the idea of worshiping Jehovah because they could not see Him with the eyes of their body. They wanted a god whom they could see and touch, and so when Moses stayed such a long time - forty days - on the mount, they thought he had perished. They paid no further attention to Jehovah, but remembering the golden calves of Egypt, they brought all their gold jewelry and made a golden calf in the way that our chapter describes.

You will think that they must have had a very short memory or have been a very fickle people, that they would turn to worship an Egyptian idol within little more than a month after the wonderful manifestations of the Lord's power in giving them bread from heaven, and water out of the Rock, and revealing the Ten Commandments amid great earthquakes and lightnings and thunderings. And they were fickle. But are not many people that way now-a-days? Do you know of children who, very soon after they have been impressively taught on the holy Sabbath day in the lovely church or Sunday school, and have made up their minds to be good, will then do something just the opposite of what they have been taught? Perhaps we have many among us who are like the children of Israel, and who worship a golden calf, that is who care only for their own pleasure and selfish fun. For, remember that there are two kinds of fun. The Lord wants all children to have fun, but there is selfish fun and unselfish fun. Wishing to have "a good time" only for ourselves is one thing. Loving to give others "a good time" is quite another, but there is much pleasure in it.

## **Lesson 45**

### **Exodus 36-38:20: The Tabernacle**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

We have learned how the Lord gave the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, first by a voice and then written upon tables of stone. Now we learn what was done to keep the precious tables safe and holy. The ark was made, which we shall learn about in our next lesson, and the tabernacle was built and the ark was put in its inmost chamber. All the people who were willing-hearted

brought gold and silver ornaments and brass (or copper) and shittim wood (usually believed to be the thorny acacia of the desert) and skins. (Exod. 25; 35) The women spun and wove curtains and the most skillful workmen took charge of the work. And Moses told them how every part of the tabernacle should be made, for the Lord had told him in the mount and had showed him the pattern.

On the ground the building was ten cubits wide and thirty cubits long. (The cubit is the length from the elbow to the end of the fingers, about a foot and a half, making the building only 15 x 45 feet.) It was divided into two chambers. The inner chamber, which was called the most holy place, was square; the outer chamber, called the holy place, was twice as long as it was wide. The walls of the tabernacle at the back and on the two sides were made of heavy planks of shittim wood covered with gold. The planks stood on end and were ten cubits high, the same as the width of the building. Each plank had two tenons at the bottom which fitted into a silver base which rested on the ground. The walls were made stiff by two tenons in each plank, which fitted into the plank next to it, by special couplings for the corner planks, and by poles run through rings in the side of the planks. (Poles half the length of the building near the top and bottom of the planks, and one pole the whole length, in the middle.)

The coverings of the building were curtains. Remember the people themselves lived in tents. The innermost covering was of "fine linen" in beautiful colors (perhaps in stripes) and embroidered with cherubim, which we may think of as angel forms. The most holy and the holy chambers were separated by a veil of this same beautiful cloth, supported by four poles covered with gold. This delicate cover was protected by a tent of coarser goats' hair cloth; over this was a cover of rams' skins dyed red, and over all to keep it safe from the weather, a cover of leather, called in our translation "badgers' skins" and believed by some to have been the skins of seals or dolphins, from the Red Sea.

The beautiful embroidered cover and the goats' hair tent were made not in one piece but in long narrow curtains something like the boards of which the walls were made, and these curtains were, like the boards, joined into two sets, and these two into one. In the "linen cover" there were ten curtains which were fastened together into two sets of five each, and these two sets were securely coupled together with loops of blue and gold fastenings called taches. In the goats' hair cover there were eleven long narrow curtains fastened into two sets, five in one and six in the other, and these two sets were held together by taches of brass. The front of the tabernacle was closed by a special curtain of bright colors and needle work, hung by golden hooks upon five pillars covered with gold, resting in sockets of brass.

Around the building there was a large yard or court enclosed by a sort of fence five cubits high, half the height of the tabernacle walls, made of "linen" curtains hung upon little posts of brass, resting in bases of brass, but with silver hooks and caps. The whole court was one hundred cubits long and fifty cubits wide. At the east end, in which direction the tabernacle faced, the curtain of the court for a length of twenty cubits was beautiful with bright colors and needle work. This was the gate. The tabernacle opened to the east because in the ancient time people knew that in heaven the Lord is seen by the angels in the east. So they also looked to the east in worship.

This was the holy tabernacle. The people came only to the gate of the court. The priests performed the services in the court and in the holy chamber, and only the high priest once in the year went into the most holy place.

1. How did the people know how to make the tabernacle?
2. What was the tabernacle? How were the walls of the tabernacle made? How was the roof of the tabernacle made?
3. How many divisions of the tabernacle were there? What were they?
4. Why was the tabernacle holy?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The ark was for the safekeeping of the Commandments and the tabernacle for the safekeeping of the ark. Notice that instructions for the making of the ark come first of all. (Exod. 25:10-22) Note the statement in T. 283 that the holiness of the whole tabernacle was from the Law in the ark.

Instructions were given to Moses for building the tabernacle and the pattern was also shown him in Mount Sinai. (Exod. 25:40; 26:30) Note Swedenborg's statement in M. 75 that he was permitted to see in heaven a tabernacle both outside and inside exactly like the description of the tabernacle built for the children of Israel, the form of which was shown to Moses on Mount Sinai.

The tabernacle was called the Lord's dwelling-place, and it represents every dwelling of the Lord: heaven, His dwelling in every human being who is in true order, and best of all the Lord's own Divine Humanity, the perfect dwelling-place of the Divine with humanity. Read John 2:19-22; Rev. 21:3, 22. Knowing that the tabernacle represents a human life in true order, a true church and a true heaven, we must take to ourselves the charge: "See that thou make them after the pattern which hath been showed thee in the mount."

Note the position of the three metals in the building: the gold within, the brass beneath and without. Think especially of the golden taches as representing the love which holds together interiorly the Lord's disciples, and of the brass taches as representing works of service which bind them outwardly together. "Uses are the bonds of society, and there are just as many of these bonds as there are good uses." (T. 746)

Are there divisions of heaven answering to the three divisions of the tabernacle, the most holy place, the holy place, and the court? There are three heavens, the inmost heaven called celestial, in which the Lord is most immediately present and where His law is written on the angels' hearts. There is the middle heaven called spiritual, the heaven of intelligence, which answers to the holy place in the tabernacle, where we shall learn the lamp was kept burning. And there is the lowest, natural, heaven represented by the outer court. (A. 9594)

There are also three regions in every person, the inmost region of love, where the Lord is most immediately present, the region of conscious thought and worship, and the outer life open to the view of the world. The Lord needs all these for His dwelling. We shall return to this thought when we study the furniture and worship of the tabernacle.

## **Lesson 46**

### **Exodus 37; 38:1-8:The Holy Furniture**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

Who will remind us about the tabernacle, its walls and coverings; the most holy place, the holy place and the court? Now we must learn what was in these different parts of the tabernacle.

In the most holy place was the ark with the Commandments in it, written upon the two tables of stone. The ark was a sacred chest made of shittim wood and covered with gold within and without. It was 2 1/2 cubits long and 1 1/2 cubits broad and high. (Remember that the cubit was the length from the elbow to the end of the fingers, about 18 inches. The ark then was 3 feet 9 inches long and 2 feet 3 inches broad and high.) There were four rings near the corners, two on the front side and two on the back, into which were put staves of wood covered with gold, by which the ark was carried. The ark had a crown of gold about the edge. The lid, which was called the mercy seat, was of solid gold, and from the two ends of it arose two cherubim. We may think of them as angel forms. They faced each other and stretched out their wings toward each other over the mercy seat. The presence of the Lord was felt and answers were given "from above the mercy seat." He was called, "Thou that dwellest between the cherubim." (Ps. 80:1) No one ever entered the most holy place but the high priest once a year.

The priests every day came into the outer chamber of the tabernacle. Standing at the curtained doorway, on the right hand (which was the north side, as the tabernacle faced the east) stood a table made like the ark of shittim wood covered with gold. (2 cubits long, 1 cubit wide, 1 1/2 cubits high; show me about how large it was.) It had a border and a crown around it and four rings at the corners, in which the staves were put for carrying the table. Upon this table were golden dishes and two piles of thin loaves of bread called showbread; six loaves were in a pile, with pure incense laid upon the top. The showbread was put in order upon the table every Sabbath; and that which was taken away was eaten by the priests in the holy place. (Lev. 24:5-9)

Opposite the table, on the left of one entering the tabernacle, was the "candlestick" or branching lamp of pure gold. It was no doubt in general form like the lamp sculptured on the Arch of Titus at Rome, which represents the triumph after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. It had a middle stem and three branches from each side. Under each pair of branches there was a knob or enlargement of the central stem, and the branches were wrought in the form of knobs and almond flowers, each ending in a little cup for oil. The lamp was carried upon one bar. The people brought the best olive oil for the light, and the priests trimmed the wicks and filled the lamps every morning and lighted them every evening. So the holy place was bright while the most holy place was dark. (Lev. 24:1-4)

There was one other thing in the holy place of the tabernacle, just in front of the priest as he entered, from the court, the little altar of incense. It was of shittim wood covered with gold, a cubit square and 2 cubits high, with a crown of gold about it and horns, and two rings, one in each side, under the crown, in which the staves were put to carry it. Aaron burned sweet incense on

this altar every morning when he trimmed the lamps and every evening when he lighted them. (Exod. 30:1-10)

In the court before the tabernacle was a much larger altar. It was made of wood covered not with gold but with brass or copper, and part of it was also of open work of brass. It was 5 cubits long, 5 cubits broad and 3 cubits high. There were horns at the four corners. All the vessels and instruments of the altar were of brass. There were rings in the sides in which the staves were put to carry it. This altar was not for incense but for burnt offerings which were made every morning and evening and at many other times. (Exod. 27:1-8)

Between the altar and the tabernacle was placed the laver of brass, which was made of the polished mirrors of the women. It was like a large basin resting upon a base. It was filled with water from which Aaron and his sons must wash their hands and feet before going into the tabernacle or offering sacrifices on the altar. (Exod. 30: 17-21)

Study Exod. 37; 38:1-8 in preparing the lesson, but the brief account of setting up the tabernacle (Exod. 40) is better for reading with the class.

1. What was in the most holy place? What was in the ark? What was the mercy seat?
2. What was in the holy place? What was the showbread?
3. What was in the court?
4. What must we do which is represented by the priests' washing their hands and feet at the laver?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The tabernacle represents every dwelling-place of the Lord: heaven, His dwelling in every good person, and the Lord's own Divine Humanity. Think first of the tabernacle as representing a human life in true order.

Begin with the court, which represents the outward life open to the view of the world. What does the laver mean where the priests must wash their hands and feet? It means the duty of making our life pure and right by the rule of the Divine commandments. The altar where burnt offerings were made shows us the duty of consecrating every faculty and ability to the service of the Lord. The offerings were killed at the altar to represent the entire giving up of our abilities as our own. When we give them to the Lord, a new life from within kindles them like the fire of the altar. (A. 10235, 10042)

Within this pure and consecrated outward life there are thoughts and feelings hidden from the world. Look into the tabernacle and see what they should be. All is beautiful and golden. There is the table of showbread, which represents our feelings of love for what is good, the bread which strengthens a person's heart; and the bright light of the lamps is the clear understanding of what is true; and the altar with its sweet incense is the prayer and worship which rise to the Lord from our grateful heart. These feelings and thoughts are hidden from the world but we ourselves are

conscious of them, and we ought to order them every week and every day before the Lord. (A. 9548, 10177)

Away in the centre of every good heart, hidden from the world, and largely even from one's own consciousness, there is a chamber where the Lord is immediately present and His laws become written upon the very heart. Here the holiest affections surround the Lord's presence like the cherubim with their outstretched wings. From this inmost region of the soul the Lord speaks in the voice of conscience; we hear it in the chamber of conscious thought, and we obey it in the outward life of the world. (A. 9485)

Again, if the tabernacle represents perfect life and character it represents the Lord, for His life with people is the only perfect life. He called Himself the tabernacle and temple. (John 2:19-22; Rev. 21:3, 22) The glory of the Lord filling the tabernacle at its completion was a prophecy of the greater glory which filled Him when His work on earth was done. (A. 414; R. 882)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Tabernacle

The Ten Commandments which were written by the finger of God upon two tables of stone are likewise called the "Covenant" and also the "Testimony" - for they testify or bear witness to the Divine Truth, and thus to the Lord. Indeed the "Testimony," having been given directly from the Lord, represented Him.

When we read the story of the newly born Moses in the ark of bulrushes, we learned of the splendid ark of shittim wood overlaid with gold, in which the Commandments or Testimony was kept. This ark, with the golden mercy-seat, or "propitiatory" over it, was called "the ark of the testimony" and also "the ark of the covenant." The tables of stone, with the precious Commandments written on them, were kept safe in this ark, which was nearly four feet long, and about two and a half feet wide, and of the same height.

But where was the ark kept? In a beautiful tent or tabernacle, which is carefully described in Exodus 26 and 27. It had two rooms, the inner room was called the "holy of holies," where the ark was kept, and where no one was allowed to enter, except the high priest, once a year. The other room was larger and was called the "holy" place, and contained the table of showbread, the candlestick or lampstand, and the golden altar of incense. Around the tabernacle was an enclosure, which was called the "court" and here, between the door of the tabernacle and the gate of the court, was the large brazen altar of burnt offerings, and the brazen laver, or wash-basin.

The tabernacle stood in the center of the encampment of the children of Israel. Directly around it the tribe of Levi, who had charge of it, encamped according to their families; and around these, the twelve tribes of Israel, all in their order.

We have seen that the "Testimony" represented the Lord. What then did the tabernacle represent? Heaven. As the testimony was in the tabernacle, and the tabernacle would not have been holy unless the testimony had been in it, so the Lord is in heaven, and heaven is not holy, it is not heaven, unless the Lord be in it.

But why were there three parts to the tabernacle - the "holy of holies," the "holy," and the "court"? Because there are three heavens.

The holy of holies represented the third, or celestial, or highest, or inmost heaven.

The holy represented the second, or spiritual, or middle heaven.

The court represented the first, or natural, or lowest heaven.

And everything belonging to the tabernacle, the furniture, the curtains, the boards, the hooks, the staves, the pins, as well as the number of planks, the number of curtains, the number of cubits in the various dimensions - every little or big thing that is told in the description, represented something that belongs to heaven. It would take a book to tell it all. Indeed, more than one volume of the Arcana Coelestia or Heavenly Secrets is devoted to explaining what it all means to the angels. The Lord has been so good and kind to us as to explain it; and you may learn at least a few of the most important things in this lesson.

The "Testimony" represented the Lord, and His Word of Truth. The table was made for the showbread, and the bread represented the same thing as did the manna which came down from heaven, and also as did the bread of the Holy Supper - namely, the food which sustains the life of the angels. The lampstand or candlestick, with its light, represented the truth which enlightens the minds of angels. The golden altar of incense represented the worship which the angels render to the Lord with their pious thoughts, as in their prayers and in the love for the neighbor which they show forth in accordance with the Lord's commandments. The brazen altar of burnt offerings represented the worship which the angels accord the Lord with their loving hearts.

Swedenborg tells us the special reason why the Lord desired to have a tabernacle reared to Him - for this tabernacle was used not only in the desert, but also after they entered the land of Canaan, where it was set up at Shiloh, and later in Zion, being used throughout a period of about five hundred years. Now, why should the Lord desire a tabernacle or tent, instead of a house such as a temple? Because the people whom the Lord had loved most of all, namely, the Most Ancients, who had lived during the golden age, had all lived in tents. Because the good life of this people was associated with tents, therefore genuine goodness and everything celestial is represented by tents or tabernacles.

In the work entitled Delights of Wisdom concerning Conjugial Love (n. 75), Swedenborg describes a visit which he once paid to these most ancient people, who are now all angels.

The Lord sent an angel to Swedenborg to be his companion on the way, for they had to make a long and hard journey, which took them for some time through a very dark forest, full of lurking dangers from giants and wild animals, and full of chances to go astray. But with the angel as his guide, they passed through safely and gradually went higher and higher, until at last they came on a high, sunlit mountain tableland. And here they found these most lovable and excellent angels still living in tents as they had done on earth. As far as the eye could reach, Swedenborg saw tents and tents. The inhabitants of the mountain called it "the camp of the Lord Jehovah," and they called themselves the "hosts of the Lord Jehovah." This will help you to understand why the Lord is called, in the Word, "the LORD of Hosts," or "Jehovah of Hosts." In the midst of the encampment was a hill, and from that came a wonderfully beautiful light that shone out in every direction. Swedenborg asked one of the inhabitants, what that light was and was told that it came from the

sanctuary of the tent of their worship. He asked for permission to go near to see it, and this being granted, he found that it was built,, inside and out, exactly according to the description of the tabernacle which was built for the children of Israel in the desert. You may remember that the Lord showed the pattern of the tabernacle to Moses on Mount Sinai. (Exod. 25:40; 26:30)

Is it not lovely to know that when we read the description of this tabernacle we are reading the description of one that exists at the present day in heaven, and among the very best and most lovable of the angels? The Lord provided that the children of Israel should make such a tabernacle so that we may have the description of it in the Holy Word, and that we may picture to ourselves more fully the life of the angels in heaven. While Swedenborg was examining the tabernacle he asked, "What is inside in that sanctuary, from which there is such a great light?" And he was told, "It is a tablet, with this inscription, 'The Covenant between Jehovah and the Heavens.'"

And so in like manner in the encampment of the children of Israel there was a great light that came from between the two cherubim on top of the ark where the Testimony was. The light came from the Lord's presence.

## **Lesson 47**

### **Exodus 39:1-31: The Holy Garments**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

We have learned about the beautiful tabernacle. There must be priests to take care of the tabernacle and to offer the sacrifices and burn the incense and trim the lamps and to do many other things connected with the worship. Aaron and his sons were appointed by the Lord, and Aaron himself should be the high priest. (What can you tell me about Aaron?) Holy garments must be made for the priests to wear while they were doing their holy duties, "for glory and for beauty," and special garments for the high priest more than for the rest. In many ways the garments were like what Eastern people wear today.

The garments for all the priests (Exod. 28:39-43; 39:27-29) were four. (1) A long close-fitting shirt of linen (or cotton or possibly silk) reaching to the feet, with sleeves. This is called the "coat" in our translation. It was woven in one piece and in a checkered pattern of different colors. (2) Short drawers or breeches of linen. (3) Something which if we should see it stretched out we should call a shawl or large scarf of embroidered linen. It was wound around the body as a "girdle," the end hanging to the feet or thrown over the shoulder. (4) A turban, called the "mitre," which was of linen wound around a little tight-fitting linen cap called the "bonnet." The priests were barefoot at their service.

Besides these simple garments which all the priests wore, there were four other beautiful garments for the high priest. These were (1) the "robe," which was woven without seam; it was of blue (though we should call the color purple, and what is called purple in our lesson, we perhaps should call crimson). It was embroidered with colors and gold. (Read Exod. 39:3.) The robe had no sleeves, but only holes for the neck and arms. The hole for the neck was bound about very

strongly, that it should not be rent. The robe reached nearly to the feet and a border was made about its lower edge with pomegranates of embroidered work, probably like tassels, and between the pomegranates little bells of gold which tinkled as Aaron went in and out from the tabernacle.

(2) The "ephod" was a kind of vest, made of bright colors and embroidered with gold, opening not in front but at the sides. The front and back were fastened together by shoulder pieces in which were set two onyx stones engraved with the names of the children of Israel, six names on each stone. Also a beautiful band secured the ephod at the waist.

(3) The breastplate was fastened upon the front of the ephod. It was, like the ephod, of linen in bright colors and embroidered with gold. It was made double. It was square, a span each way (the length from the tip of the little finger to the tip of the thumb when the hand is spread out, about eight inches). In the breastplate were placed twelve precious stones in four rows, three in a row, each in a gold setting and each engraved with the name of one of the tribes of Israel. The stones in the first row were of warm, fiery colors, those in the second row were of cooler colors; the third row was again warmer like the first, and the fourth row cooler like the second. There were rings of gold upon the breastplate which were fastened by chains of gold and by a "lace of blue" to gold clasps and rings in the shoulder pieces of the ephod; and the breastplate was never loosened from the ephod.

(4) There was also on Aaron's turban something more than the other priests wore. It was a plate of pure gold, on which were the words "HOLINESS TO THE LORD." This was fastened to the turban by a "lace of blue."

The words Urim and Thummim are used in speaking of the precious stones of the breastplate, which mean "shining fire" and "resplendence." For when Aaron wore the breastplate and went into the tabernacle before the veil and asked questions of the Lord, answers were given by the flashing of lights and colors from the gems, which were sometimes interpreted to him by a voice. (A. 9905; S. 44; T. 218; E. 431, 717) These were the holy garments made "for glory and for beauty."

Let us recite or read together Ps. 133.

1. Who were anointed priests for the children of Israel? Who was high priest?
2. What beautiful garments were made for Aaron more than for the other priests?
3. What was heard when Aaron went in and out from the tabernacle?
4. What was seen when he asked questions of the Lord in the tabernacle?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Think of garments that are mentioned in other places in the Bible. A Psalm speaks of the ointment going down to the skirt of Aaron's garment. (Ps. 133) The "coat of many colors" which Jacob made for Joseph is called by the same name as the priests' inner garment. (Gen. 37:3) The little coat which Samuel's mother made and brought him from year to year is called by the same name as

Aaron's outer robe. Samuel was also girded with a linen ephod. (1 Sam. 2:18-19) We remember too the Lord's garments, which brought healing to the sick, and which the soldiers divided at the cross. (John 19:23)

The Lord's garments represent the outward things of His life which clothed His Divinity to people, especially the forms of truth in which He expressed His love. When we know that Joseph and Samuel and Aaron as the high priests represent the Lord, we see that their beautiful garments also represent the truth in which the Lord has clothed His love, such as we have in the Holy Word. And now you see why there were inner garments and outer garments, chiefly three, the coat, the robe, and the ephod; for there are inner and outer meanings in the Word; in general three, the inmost meaning, the middle meaning, and the outer, literal meaning. (A. 9822-9826)

And now again we see what our breastplate is, and how the Lord gives us answers through it. The breastplate was the outmost garment of all and really a part of the ephod. It is then like the letter of the Word; and the gems in the breastplate are the holy truth in the letter of the Word, which like little windows are transparent to the Lord's love and wisdom within. Some holy truths of the Word are more warm and glowing in color, some more cool. For example, here is a holy truth from the Word, a fixed, hard gem, "The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His work." What is its color? It is warm with love, perhaps red like the gems in the first row of the breastplate. "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God," is another gem, but cool in color, like the stones of the second row. (A. 9864-9872) We too receive answers in the stones of the breastplate if we look into the holy truths of the Lord's Word to learn of His goodness and of our duty.

## **Lesson 48**

### **Numbers 9: The Guiding Cloud**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

It was just a year since the children of Israel left Egypt. Do you remember the feast that they kept the night before they started on their journey? And now it was time to keep it again, for the Lord told them to observe it every year in memory of their deliverance from the Egyptians. Do you remember at what season of the year it came? Do you remember how they kept the feast? What did they eat? How were they dressed? What question did one of the youngest of the family ask? With what thing that happened at the going out from Egypt is the name "Passover" connected?

There were certain things that made the people "ceremonially" unclean, as it was called, and so unfit to take part in the religious feasts; one of these things was to have touched the body of one that was dead. This some of the people had done, and they came to Moses and asked what they should do. Moses did not know, but told them to stand still and he would ask the Lord. And the Lord answered him and told him that whosoever was thus unclean should eat the Passover a month later at the same time. But one who was clean and would not observe the feast should be cut off from among the people - should be put to death. It is a very beautiful picture, the people

coming to Moses to ask what they shall do, and Moses taking the question right to the Lord and receiving an answer.

The Lord told them also that a stranger living among them should eat of the Passover as the others did. A "stranger" or "sojourner" means one who had adopted their religion and worship.

Another important thing was done for the children of Israel at Mount Sinai. They came to the mountain as a disorderly multitude; before they journeyed on they had learned how to camp in order and how to march in order by their tribes.

We have learned about the tabernacle which the people built exactly according to the pattern given them by the Lord. In this tabernacle were kept the two tables of stone upon which were written the Ten Commandments. This tabernacle was to be in the center of the camp, the Lord told them. Around it the Levites were to encamp, the tribe to which Moses and Aaron belonged, which was chosen by the Lord to care for the sacred things of the tabernacle, the taking down and carrying on their journeys, the setting up and keeping in order when they camped. There were still twelve tribes, besides Levi, for instead of one tribe of Joseph there were two tribes, the descendants of his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. How many tribes were there, then, to encamp on each side of the tabernacle? It will be a good idea to make a little plan of the encampment, writing the names of the tribes in their places; and it will be worth while to learn the names quite perfectly, for we shall so often hear the names as we read more of their story.

On the east were Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; on the south, Reuben, Simeon, and Gad; on the west, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin; on the north, Dan, Asher, and Naphtali.

What was the sign for the people to leave the place where they had been camping and move forward? Suppose the sign has been given, let us watch the people in the camp. First Aaron and his sons go into the tabernacle and cover all the holy things. They take down the veil (where did it hang?) and lay it over the ark; over this they put a cover of skins, and over all a cloth of blue. So all the other holy things were covered, usually with a bright cloth first and then with a cover of skins; and the staves of each were ready for carrying. Then the Levites came who were given charge of the holy furniture, and took up on their shoulders the burdens which the priests appointed them. (Num. 4:5-20)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Guiding Cloud

While studying the Book of Exodus we learned about the beautiful tabernacle, with its holy of holies, its holy place, and its court, and that in the holy of holies was the ark of the covenant, containing the two tables of stone, on which the Ten Commandments had been written by the finger of God, and that the twelve tribes of Israel encamped around it. The center of the camp then was the holy Ark, with its mercy-seat or propitiatory. The Lord was present here. Here, between the two cherubim of the mercy-seat, He spoke to Moses or to the high priest.

So the Lord is the center of all humanity in heaven and on earth. He is in the sun of the spiritual world, and His heat and light, that is to say, His love and wisdom, go out in every direction to give love and truth and life to angels and people on earth.

And was there in the wilderness any sign of the Lord's Presence, which could be seen by the whole camp, just as the whole of heaven can see the Sun of Justice? Yes. We read in today's chapter of the pillar of cloud which abode over the ark in the daytime, and the appearance as of fire which was there in the night time. No doubt this cloud rose like a column to such a height that it could be seen afar off.

Now, why should the Lord have chosen a cloud to represent Him? He might have made use of some other phenomenon, but He used a cloud, because of what a cloud means. It means the same as the Ten Commandments, namely, Divine Truth. It means the Word of the Lord. How do we know this? Because in the other world where all things are pictured forth in the sky and on the earth in perfect correspondence to the states of angels and spirits, clouds always appear where there is Divine Truth clothed in expressions adapted to the comprehension of the people who live there. The different shapes and colors and movements of the clouds there always tell those who watch them just what the Lord wishes to convey to them about the Divine Truth of the Word. Besides, a cloud consists of tiny drops of water, and water means truth.

Just consider how the cloud over the ark acted. It moved when the tabernacle was to be taken down and the people were to continue on their journey. It stood still, when the tabernacle was to be set up, and the people were to go into camp again. As the children of Israel were guided by the actions of the cloud, or the pillar of fire, following it by day or night, at any time, just so the New Church is to be guided by what the Word of the Lord teaches.

The beautiful stories that we are told in the Word about clouds all tell us about beautiful things connected with the Word of the Lord.

Because a cloud represents the Word, therefore the prophecies regarding the Second Coming of the Lord, and the consequent establishment of the New Church, tell us much about clouds.

"Behold He cometh with clouds." (Rev. 1:7) "Then shall ye see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." (Matt. 24:30) These and other prophecies refer to the Second Coming. For the Lord made His Second Coming in the holy Word of God. For, as you know, in Swedenborg's writings the Word is explained, so that we can understand it truly. We can see the light of truth of the internal sense shining in the literal sense of the Word, just as sunlight makes dark clouds look white and dazzling.

And when we understand the Word according to its internal sense, and see the light of truth and the fire of goodness in it, then we must follow it. We must live according to what we so learn. In this way we gradually move forward in the wilderness, until at last we reach the heavenly land, just as the children of Israel, following the cloud by day and the fire by night, were led into the land of Canaan.

Then the line of march set forward. Let us draw them. (Num. 10:14-28) The ark goes first. (Num. 10:33) Then, at the blast of the silver trumpets, the three tribes which camped on the east set forward, with their standards. (Num. 10:1-10) Which were they? Then the Levites, who were given charge of the curtains and hangings of the tabernacle. They were given two covered wagons with four oxen to carry the heavy curtains. After them came those who were given charge of the planks and pillars and sockets in four wagons drawn by eight oxen. (Num. 7:1-9) These went before those who carried the holy furniture, so that the tabernacle might be set up before the others came. After the tabernacle marched the three tribes that camped on the south. Which were

they? Then came the Levites that had charge of the holy furniture, carrying it on their shoulders, and after them the tribes that camped on the west, and last of all the tribes that camped on the north. Let us write the names on our plan over the tribes.

Remember the cloud that led the people out of Egypt. (Exod. 13:20-22) The same cloud from the Lord was with the people all the way. (Exod. 40:38; Deut. 1:33) When it was taken up they journeyed. They followed where the cloud led, and where it rested, there they set the tabernacle and pitched their tents about it.

1. When was the first Passover kept? When and where was the Passover kept the second time?
2. What rule was given in regard to those who for certain reasons could not keep the feast at the appointed time?
3. Who are meant by the strangers sojourning among the people of Israel? Might they keep the Passover?
4. What guided the children of Israel on their journey?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

We know from our study of the Passover, as it was kept at the time of leaving Egypt, that it represents the heavenly feast of new innocent life from the Lord. The flesh of the Passover lamb represents the new heavenly goodness, and the bones of the lamb, which must not be broken, represent the principles of truth that give form to this goodness and support it, which must be scrupulously regarded. The bitter herbs of the Passover represent the temptations that attend the reception of the new life. The spiritual deadness of those who refuse to acknowledge the Lord and to receive His gifts of life is represented by the punishment of death which was prescribed for those who willfully neglected to keep the Passover. (A. 3812, 7840, 9965)

The permission to those who were at the time of the feast defiled by contact with a dead body, or who were on a journey afar off, to keep the Passover at the same day a month later, suggests the Lord's consideration and patience with us in coming into a state to receive His gifts. The one ordinance for the stranger or sojourner (a convert to the worship of Israel) and for the native born expresses the Lord's equal mercy to one newly entering by instruction the ways of heaven and one well established in that life. (A. 4444, 7900)

The words "at even," in verse 3, literally translated "between the two evenings," are usually interpreted to mean some period of late afternoon, perhaps between the sunset and the shining of the stars. Swedenborg speaks of them as meaning the whole night, between the twilight of evening and the twilight of morning. (A. 10135) The evening represents an external state, and obscure as regards things of heavenly life. In a special sense the evening prescribed as the time for keeping the Passover represented the external quality of their feast and of all the Jewish worship of sacrifices. The command that nothing of the lamb should be left till the morning is interpreted to mean that "when the Lord came, sacrifices should cease." (A. 2405)

We have learned before that the guiding cloud and fire were an expression of the presence of the Lord and angels with the people. (A. 8192-8195) The cloud represented His presence in Divine truth, though obscurely perceived, and the fire His presence in Divine love. These rested upon the tabernacle, which was especially the Divine dwelling-place and represented the heavenly character in everyone to which the Lord can come near with blessing and protection. (E. 504, 594) The journeying and resting as guided by the cloud, suggest not only our duty to be active in doing the work that the Lord gives us to do, but our duty to be patient when we seem to be accomplishing nothing and making no progress. The Lord may know that one is as necessary as the other.

You see also the meaning of the ark going before, and of the blast of silver trumpets, like the voice of the Commandments, calling the people to go forward. (A. 8815; R. 226; E. 489)

The order in which the tribes encamped about the tabernacle and the order in which they marched, which are fully described in the Book of Numbers, is representative of heavenly order among the faculties of the mind, as they rest in a state that has been attained or advance to a new state. We shall learn more about this order when we read Balaam's blessing as "he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes." (Num. 24; A. 4236; E. 431)

## **Lesson 49**

### **Numbers 13: Report of Spies**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The children of Israel must now leave Mount Sinai where they had been nearly a year, for the cloud that led them moved forward. (Num. 10:11-13) Their way was through rough and sandy valleys toward the eastern arm of the Red Sea and to Kadesh at the southern border of the land of Canaan. Here they waited while twelve spies, one man from each tribe, went up through the land to bring them back word about the land and its fruits, and about the people living in it. Two of these spies you will want to remember: Caleb of the tribe of Judah, and Joshua, whom we already know, of the tribe of Ephraim. As we move slowly up the map going with the spies, we come to many places where we have been with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Here is Beersheba; and here is Hebron, where both Abraham and Jacob lived. The valley of Eshcol was near Hebron, where the spies cut the big bunch of grapes, so big that two men carried it on a staff. Still going on, they may have passed Bethel and Shechem, and went far to the north to the springs of the Jordan and near to the great mountains Hermon and Lebanon. Then they came back to the people at Kadesh after forty days to show them the fruits of the land and to tell what they had seen. They said it was a rich land with fine fruits, and they showed the fruits that they had brought, but they said that the people of the land were strong, living in walled cities, and some of them giants.

## **Junior**

The children of Israel moved on from Mount Sinai just a year after leaving Egypt, as you know by their again keeping the Passover. (Num. 9:1-5) Have your little map ready to go with them in their journey. At first they were passing through the country of the Midianites, who were friendly and helped them. Note one thing that happened near Hazeroth, the second gift of quails, which was followed by a plague. (Num. 11:31-35) Follow the line of march up to Kadesh at the southern border of the land of Canaan. From here they sent spies up into the land. Why twelve spies? Remember Caleb and Joshua (His name at first was Oshea or Hoshea, meaning "help," and was changed to Jehoshua or Joshua, meaning "Jehovah is my help" or "my Savior," Num. 13:16.). The spies went up through the land from south to north to the region of Hermon and Lebanon. What places which they saw have we known before in the story of Abraham and Jacob? You will remember Hebron. Our lesson shows that it was an old city and that the valleys about it bore fine fruit. (Zoan was Pharaoh's city, where Moses did his signs. Ps. 78:12) How long were the spies on their journey? What report did they bring back about the fruitfulness of the land? What fruits did they bring to show? What did they say about the people of the land and about their cities? We learned of giants in the time of Abraham. (Gen. 14:5) And do you remember a giant in the time of David? "A land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof" probably refers to the war-like character of the inhabitants, destroying each other by fighting.

1. Take the map on which we drew the line showing the journey from Egypt to Sinai, and continue the line to show how the people went from Sinai to Kadesh.
2. What were the twelve men called who were sent from Kadesh into the land? Tell me the names of two.
3. Show me on the map how the spies went, and some places which they saw where Abraham and Jacob had lived.
4. What did the spies report about the land and about the people in it? What was the effect of their words upon the children of Israel?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

We know that this journey of the children of Israel represents the journey to heaven and the heavenly life. We remember the short way from Egypt to Canaan, the way of the Philistines, which the people were not allowed to take. The way of the Philistines is merely knowing about heaven, knowing what is true and good. If merely knowing made us heavenly it would indeed be a short journey. (A. 8093)

What is the spiritual thought in spying out the land of Canaan? It is learning about the heavenly life and seeing how good it is. This is a very different thing from making the heavenly life our own. An intellectual state is suggested by approaching from the south and in the time of grapes. The chief trophy which the spies brought to show them was a great cluster of grapes. We can know about Christian life and many things about heaven, but before they can be ours there are strong enemies to be overcome and work to be done. (A. 1458, 8595) To Moses the Lord said, "I have

caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither." (Deut. 34:4) But to Joshua: "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses." (Josh. 1:3) To see is a matter of understanding; to possess is a matter of life.

It was the time of the first ripe grapes and the great bunch of grapes was the chief trophy which the spies brought from the land, and grapes represent spiritual intelligence. Another long stage of the journey remains, from understanding to loving and doing, which is really taking possession of Canaan.

At the same time that we see the beauty and goodness of heavenly life we perceive how many and how great difficulties stand in the way of attaining it. These are represented by the giants and their strong cities. We are tempted to say as the spies did, "Yes, a heavenly life is beautiful, but I can never overcome the wicked things that stand in the way; it is no use for me to try."

But this is wrong. We should not be discouraged if we remember that the Lord will help us and that He can overcome every enemy. The name Joshua means "whose help is Jehovah." Remember this and take courage. We are taught that these giants in the land of Canaan represent, in particular, evil spirits whom the Lord contended with even when He was a child and overcame them, and He did this in order that He might help us to overcome in our temptations, and to enter our Holy Land, our heavenly home. (A. 581, 1673)

Notice the statement about Hebron and Zoan, in Num. 13:22. Which come first, heavenly states of childlike innocence, or the gaining of worldly knowledge? Does the seven years tell something about the holiness and the abundance of the early states? (A. 1482, 1616)

## **Lesson 50**

### **Numbers 14: To Wander Forty Years**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The spies frightened the people by their report. What spies? What people? What report? Two of the spies, Caleb and Joshua, tried to encourage the people. They told them that with the Lord's help they were well able and that the Lord would give them the good land. But the people were still afraid, and they were told that they must live in the wilderness till forty years were passed from the time of leaving Egypt, and until the faithless people had died, before they could go into the promised land. (Num. 14:26-34) So they lived a long time in the wilderness about Kadesh. You will often hear of the forty years in the wilderness. (Exod. 16:35; Deut. 8:2)

##### **Junior**

Caleb and Joshua (who were they?) tried to encourage the people to trust in the Lord's help. But the people would have stoned them. Then the Lord spoke with Moses and told him that the people must wander forty years in the wilderness till all who were now grown men and women had died, and their children should enter the land. All should die except Caleb and Joshua who

had trusted the Lord and had not been afraid. And so it was. The spies who had brought the evil report died at once by the plague, and when by and by the people entered the land only Caleb and Joshua were left of all who were twenty years old and upward when the spies brought their report to Kadesh.

When the people ought to have gone bravely up into the land they were not willing. Now that they were told not to go they went, trusting in their own strength, though Moses warned them that the Lord would not be with them, and Moses and the ark remained in the camp. They went up from the plains of the south into the "mountain" - the highland, but as Moses had said, the people of the land came out against them and chased them, smiting them down as they fled.

Our lesson speaks of the Amalekites among those who pursued them. We have already learned something about the Amalekites who lived in the South Country and even as far south as Sinai. Why was it that the Israelites overcame them when they fought with them before, but now they fled before them? We shall learn more about the Amalekites by and by. There were Canaanites too among those who pursued the people. Their usual home was in the lowlands by the sea and river. In the first chapter of Deuteronomy, in which Moses is reminding the people of this experience, the Amorites are named the highlanders. They chased the people "as bees do," and destroyed them in Seir, the mountains of Edom. Then the people wept and the Lord seemed not to hear them, for they had been disobedient. Read the story in Num. 14:1-25, 40-45, and in Deut. 1:19-46.

It was two years and more since the children of Israel left Egypt, and it would be forty years in all before they might enter the promised land. How shall we think of them as living all this time? We are told that they "abode in Kadesh many days" (Deut. 1:46), and when after the forty years they took up their journey again, it was at Kadesh. (Num. 20:22) We may think of the people as spending all these years in the pastures of the wilderness in the region about Kadesh. (Ps. 29:8) There were few towns and there was little land good for farms and orchards, but still there were green places in some valleys where flocks could feed. The people lived in tents as the Bedouins do today, and moved about with their flocks from place to place wherever there was pasture. We must remember also that they had the manna all these years. (Exod. 16:35)

1. Where were the children of Israel when the spies went up through the land of Canaan? Which of the spies tried to encourage the people to trust in the Lord and not fear the nations of the land? To which tribes did they belong?
2. What happened to the people because they did not obey or trust the Lord?
3. When some of the people disobeyed the Lord and Moses and went up to fight with the people of the land, what happened? Why was this?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

On what did success always depend in the battles of the children of Israel? On the size of their army? (Exod. 17:11; Judges 7:2; 1 Sam. 14:6) No, they succeeded when they obeyed the Lord and trusted Him. It is so in our spiritual battles. A little child can gain a victory over a wrong thought

or feeling as easily as a strong adult if the child asks the Lord's help; but the strongest adults will fail if they trust themselves.

Caleb and Joshua tried to encourage the people to trust in the Lord, and they alone of those of adult age lived to enter the land. They were from the tribes of Judah and Ephraim. Each tribe represents some element of heavenly character. Judah represents especially the innocent affections of childhood, and Ephraim spiritual intelligence applied to life. Heavenly love and intelligence are not yet strong in us and we sometimes refuse to listen to them when they tell us to be of good courage and to trust in the Lord. But what there is of these qualities will be preserved by the Lord through the seasons of temptation and become strong elements of the heavenly character. The fears and the self-trust must die; they have no place in heaven.

The wilderness. What sort of state is like a wilderness? A happy state full of enjoyment? No, it is a barren state when there seems to be little to make life worth living. It is especially a state of temptation when we are leaving behind pleasures which we know are wrong, and have not yet come fully into the enjoyment of good things. How is the wilderness associated with temptation in the Gospels? (A. 8098)

The people wandered forty years. How long was the Lord in the wilderness of temptation? (Matt. 4:1-2) How long did the storm rage at the time of the flood? (Gen. 7:12) How long did Moses fast in the mountain? (Exod. 34:28; Deut. 9:9, 11, 18, 25) Four, we know, expresses the idea of a full, evenly developed character. Forty does the same. But this fullness of character is reached only through temptation. So the number forty comes to be associated with temptation. It also always seems to say that the trial is for a purpose and will help to make the character more full and perfect. See how the idea of temptation is often intensified by the mention of forty nights. (A. 730; E. 633) The years of wandering were the same in number as the days spent in spying out the land. The forty days seem to suggest the fullness of the heavenly ideal, the forty years the temptations by which it is made ours.

## **Lesson 51**

### **Numbers 17: Aaron's Rod**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

During the years in the wilderness some of the people rebelled against Moses and Aaron, saying that they took too much upon themselves in being leaders and taking charge of the tabernacle and the worship. We read of this in Num. 16. This was wrong, for the Lord had appointed Moses and Aaron as leaders. The earth opened and swallowed up the leaders of the rebellion.

The Lord then showed the people by a beautiful sign that the tribe of the Levites was chosen to take care of the holy things, and the family of Aaron among the Levites to be priests. The princes of the tribes brought twelve rods, which perhaps they carried as a sign of office. They wrote the name of each tribe upon its rod and Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi. Moses took the rods into the tabernacle and laid them up before the Lord, before the ark. On the morrow when he went

into the tabernacle Aaron's rod "was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds."

You may have seen the little pink blossoms of the flowering almonds in the early spring. In Palestine they open as early as January, and this probably is the reason for the Hebrew name for the almond, "watchful." The blossoms are much like peach blossoms, and the almond nuts are like peaches, only it is the kernel that is good to eat and there is no soft pulp.

All the people saw the blossoms upon Aaron's rod, and it was taken again into the tabernacle to be kept, to be a sign to the people that there might be no more murmuring against the Levites and the family of Aaron. The rod was put "before the testimony." The pot of manna had also been laid up "before the Lord." We understand that the rod and the pot of manna were kept not in the ark but near it. (Heb. 9:4; 1 Kings 8:9) Read Num. 17.

1. How long did the children of Israel wander in the wilderness? In and about what place did they live during this time? Why did they have to spend these weary years and delay their entrance into the promised land?
2. What other place in the Bible do you remember where the number forty is associated with temptation?
3. What tribe did the Lord appoint to care for holy things, and what family of this tribe to be priests?
4. By what beautiful sign did the Lord show the people that the Levites and Aaron should be leaders?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The tribes of Israel represent different elements in heavenly character. The rods belonging to the princes of the tribes stand for the different principles which rule and guide us in our life. Are all good principles of life of equal importance, or are some more important than others? Is there one that stands out above all the rest? There is such a one; and it is represented by Aaron's rod. The tribe of Levi was chosen to minister in holy things because the Levites stand for heavenly love. Aaron and his family, who were chosen from the Levites to be priests, stand especially for love to the Lord, and the rest of the tribe for love to one another. When the Lord chose the Levites and the family of Aaron to be leaders He taught the same lesson as when He said that the first of all the commandments is to love Him, and the second is to love our neighbor. The rebellion against Moses and Aaron takes place in us when we feel that other motives besides love to the Lord and one another deserve to rule and to take the first place. These loves must come before all others; and the principles which spring from these loves must be our rule and guide; they are Aaron's rod. (A. 4876; E. 727)

The Lord said that a tree is known by its fruits, and He meant that every principle of conduct must be judged by the life to which it leads. This test of principles as to their fruitfulness is suggested by bringing the rods before the Lord and by the blossoms and fruit upon Aaron's rod.

No other principles of life are so fruitful as those that spring from love to the Lord and one another; no others are so "watchful" for opportunities to do good. The almond is a fruit with nothing that is soft and perishable about it; it stands for good works of charity done not from any superficial or passing delight, but from the unchanging conviction that it is good to do them; they are good works which are constant, enduring, reliable. (A. 3858, 5622)

## Lesson 52

### Numbers 20: Passage Refused

#### THE STORY

##### Primary and Junior

The first verse of our chapter says that the people came into the desert of Zin, and abode in Kadesh. Probably this looks back to the time when they first came there on their journey from Sinai, and they stayed in the neighborhood of Kadesh till the forty years were past.

There Miriam died, the sister of Moses and Aaron, who led the people in their songs of rejoicing after the crossing of the Red Sea. (Exod. 15:20) Perhaps she was the sister who stood by to watch when Moses was found by Pharaoh's daughter. (Exod. 2:4; Num. 26:59)

There also the Lord gave the people water from the rock a second time. You remember the first time, before they reached Sinai. (Exod. 17:1-7) Now again in Kadesh the Lord commanded Moses to take the rod, the same which budded and bore almonds (Num. 17:10; 20:9), and to speak to the rock, and there would be water for the people and their beasts. But Moses spoke proudly, as if the miracle were done by his own power instead of by the Lord. He smote the rock twice, as if it depended on his strength, and said, "Must we fetch you water out of the rock?" Pride and self-confidence have no place in heaven. The Lord told Moses and Aaron that they could not bring the people into the promised land.

Reaching southward from the Dead Sea to the Red Sea is a great valley with uplands and in places rugged mountains on the sides. On the east side of this valley, about midway of its length, rise the highest mountains; they are called Mount Seir. Here are cliffs with caves which in Abraham's day were the homes of the cave dwellers, the Horites (Gen. 14:6; Deut. 2:12); and here long after the time of our story, in the Roman days, the buildings of Petra, the "rock city," were cut out, which you may see in pictures. Among these mountains we believe was the high top which is called Mount Hor in our lesson. We learned something about these mountains of Seir a good while ago; they were the home of Jacob's brother Esau, who was called also Edom, and of his children the Edomites. (Gen. 36:6-8)

The way of the children of Israel from Kadesh to the eastward, toward the Jordan which was to be their gate of entrance to the promised land, would naturally lead through this land of Edom; but the Edomites would not let them pass through. The Lord commanded the people not to fight with Edom. (Deut. 2:5; 23:7) They were their brethren; Jacob and Esau were brothers, the two sons of Isaac. They asked leave to pass through their country peaceably and pay for what they ate and drank, but the Edomites said, No. Perhaps they would not trust them. They guarded the passes of

their mountains against them. What then must the people do? They must journey down the valley to the Red Sea "to compass the land of Edom."

But meanwhile, as they lingered by these mountains, Aaron died on Mount Hor. The priestly robes of Aaron were put on Eleazar his son. It meant that he should be high priest in his father's stead. And Aaron died in the mountain, and was gathered unto his people. He was a hundred and twenty-three years old. (Num. 33:39) The people mourned for Aaron thirty days before they journeyed on.

1. Near what place was the greater part of the forty years in the wilderness spent?
2. How was the power of "the rod of God" shown in Egypt? How was it shown in the desert?
3. Who was Miriam?
4. Compare the two miracles of water from the rock. How are they alike? How do they differ?
5. Why were Moses and Aaron not to lead the people into the Holy Land? Where did Aaron die? Who became high priest in his place?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The rod of the Lord in the hand of Moses and Aaron was an emblem of the Lord's power with them. With this rod they did signs in Egypt and opened a way through the Red Sea, and the same rod was twice the means of giving them water. Its power to do signs in Egypt represents the Lord's power to deliver us from evil; its power on the journey represents the Lord's power to teach and guide us in the way to heaven. The rock from which the water comes is especially the letter of the Lord's Word, which when He opens it to us gives all the guidance and refreshment which people and angels need. Moses' words and action in bringing water from the rock express confidence in his own strength. There must be no pride and self-confidence mixed with our trust in the Lord, and reception of instruction from Him. (A. 8562, 8581; T. 208)

The coming of Israel to the land of Edom takes us back to the story of Jacob and Esau; they represented the two elements of faith and charity, or truth and goodness, in practical life. Jacob represented the truth which for a time leads, and Esau the goodness which in the end is united with it, and becomes first in importance. (A. 3296, 3330, 3603, 4353) The people of Edom in a good sense have the same meaning as their father Esau and represent goodness, but of an external, natural kind, as is suggested by their home being outside of the Holy Land. Such goodness is related to a heavenly life, and therefore the children of Israel were commanded not to fight with the people of Edom nor harm them. But when Edom refuses to let Israel enter its country it represents external interests and pleasures which seem to be good but are really not so, and are a hindrance to heavenly life, because they refuse to be instructed. (E. 514; A. 3322)

Moses and Aaron both would die before the people entered the Holy Land. Both Moses and Aaron represent the Lord's presence with His people; Moses the law-giver, the Lord's truth, and Aaron as the high priest, His love. (Aaron as the spokesman of Moses had another meaning. A. 7009) Does it mean that the Lord's truth and love will fail and not be able to lead us all the way to

heaven? It does not mean that, but it means that our present apprehension of the Lord's truth and love is inadequate and mingled with much pride and self-confidence; it must give place to a truer apprehension of the Lord: Moses and Aaron must die and other leaders must take their place. (A. 9806)

Perhaps we can see some connection between the difficulty of passing the land of Edom and the death of Aaron. We pass the land of Edom on the way to Canaan when we take the steps in natural goodness that Edom represents. The effort to go straight through the country paying for food and drink represents our first thought that these steps are easy and that we can take them in our own strength. But we cannot; we must be more humble, we must gain a new sense of the goodness of the Lord and of our dependence upon Him in doing good. So Aaron dies before we compass the land of Edom. (A. 5488)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: At Kadesh

Once before, we read about water being brought out of the rock. That was soon after the exodus from Egypt, near Rephidim, before Mount Horeb. There was no water to drink, and Moses, at command of the Lord, struck the rock, and water gushed out. Now, nearly forty years later, at Kadesh, not far from the land of Edom, the people murmured again for water. This time the Lord did not tell Moses to strike the rock, but to speak to it. But Moses did not obey the Lord, but spoke angrily to the children of Israel, and said, "Hear, ye rebels, must we bring you forth water out of the rock?" just as if he and Aaron had the power to do this; and then he smote the rock twice.

He committed several sins. He was angry; he ascribed power to bring the water out of the rock to his brother and himself; and he disobeyed the Lord by striking the rock instead of speaking to it. We learned that the rock means the Word of the Lord, and that truths come out of His Word, as the waters did out of the rock. After the many years' wandering in the wilderness, which represents our life in the world when we fight against our hardheartedness, our hearts ought to be soft and humble before the Lord, and when we feel the lack of truths, we must pray humbly to the Lord for them. This is what is meant by speaking to the rock. But to smite it, contrary to the Lord's command, is stubbornly to demand truth of the Lord. For this disobedience and sin, Moses and Aaron were punished by not being permitted to enter the land of Canaan. So if we sin up to the end of our life in the natural world, we cannot enter heaven.

We read of Aaron's punishment at the close of the chapter. They went to the top of Mount Horeb, and there he was stripped of his priestly garments, and his son Eleazar was invested with them, and then Aaron died. The robes were the badge and sign of the priestly office; when they were taken from him and put upon Eleazar, this represented that he was no longer high priest, but that the priesthood was transferred to Eleazar.

Of Moses' death before the Israelites entered Canaan, we read in the last chapter of Deuteronomy.

From Kadesh also a request was sent to the king of Edom to allow the children of Israel to pass through the land. And Edom would not.

You will remember that Edom was another name for Esau, just as Israel was another name for Jacob, Esau's twin brother. The Israelites and Edomites were therefore related, for both were descended from Abraham and Isaac. And you will also remember that of the twins, Edom was the older and therefore represented good, and Jacob was the younger and therefore represented truth.

But goodness may be turned into evil. And the Edomites, being opposed to the people whom the Lord was leading to Canaan, represented evil.

What kind of evil? What is the greatest good? The good that comes from loving the Lord. And the greatest evil which is opposed to that good is the evil that comes from loving ourselves. This love of self, wishing everything for ourselves, wishing to have our own way in everything, wishing to gratify our own pleasures at the expense of others, at the expense of duty and love - that is what is represented by the king of Edom when he refused to let the children of Israel pass through his land. And by that act he represented that the love of self does not wish to take in any truth which the Church believes. For the children of Israel, as the descendants of Israel the brother of Edom, represented truths - that is to say truths such as the angels have, and such as the Church possesses, "truths of faith."

Have you ever noticed that when you were in an ugly state of mind, when you did not like to obey your parents, that then you did not care to read the Word, or to learn anything about the heavenly teachings that the Lord has given us? But when you are in a different state of heart, when you are behaving yourself, then you also enjoy reading the Word, and learning the truths of the Church. The desire to be disobedient, and to have your own way, is like the king of Edom who would not let the children pass through his land, even though they did not even drink a drop of water in his country.

## **Lesson 53**

### **Numbers 21: Fiery Serpents**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

It was time for the children of Israel to end their wandering life in the wilderness and to go into the promised land. They were not to go as the spies had done, from the south, but from the east through the River Jordan, which would open for them as a gate. Their shortest way would be through this land of Edom, and so up on the east side of the Dead Sea. The people of Edom were their cousins, the family of Esau, Jacob's brother. But they were not friendly and would not let the people of Israel go through their land, not even when they promised to keep to the road and to do no harm to the country. Edom was a land of rough mountains and narrow passes, where a few people could stop the way against many. How disappointing, how discouraging to have to take a long journey away from the promised land to go around the land of Edom. While they were still near the mountains of Edom, Aaron, who was the chief priest of the people and the brother of Moses, died. Moses and Aaron and Eleazar, Aaron's son, went up into a mountain, Mount Hor.

Aaron died there, and Moses put the priestly garments on Eleazar, Aaron's son. He was now priest in his father's place.

Another trouble met the people as they were traveling to get around the land of Edom, and "the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way." Poisonous serpents bit the people and many of them died. Once more the Lord told Moses what to do, to make a serpent of brass and to lift it up on a pole, and when those who had been bitten looked at the serpent of brass they were made well and lived. So the people journeyed around the land of Edom and reached the plain of Moab by the Jordan. They were now at the gate, but they rested here for some time before going into the promised land.

## **Junior**

The children of Israel were journeying southward to compass the land of Edom. It was a desert region, hot, and barren, and their faces were turned away from the promised land. No wonder that "the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way." There came also fiery serpents and bit the people and many of them died. Let us read verses 1 to 9. Do you remember how the Lord once spoke of this serpent in the wilderness when He talked with Nicodemus, who came to him by night? (John 3:14-15) Someone look up for us and tell us what finally became years afterward of the brazen serpent which Moses made. (2 Kings 18:4)

Reaching the head of the Red Sea, the children of Israel turned northward, passing to the east of Edom. This is a wild and interesting country, but as yet not much visited by travelers and not well known. As we look at the map of the eastern country, we notice two large brooks; the Arnon runs into the Dead Sea at about the middle of its eastern shore, and the Jabbok runs into the Jordan about half way between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee. The Zered, a smaller brook, enters the Dead Sea near its southern end. The story of the journey of Israel through this country is told in our chapter and also more fully in Deut. 2 and 3.

As we read verses 10-12 of our chapter, we follow the people up the eastern border of Edom; at verse 12 they reach the Zered; in verse 13 they move on and cross the Arnon. They have passed the land of Moab on their left, which lay by the Dead Sea south of the Arnon, and the land of Ammon was to the north and on their right. These nations were descendants of Lot, the nephew of Abraham, and they were told, as in the case of Edom, not to fight with them. But having crossed the Arnon they came to the Amorites, who were their enemies. They fought with them and conquered them. The Amorites were enemies of Moab, too, and had taken from Moab the country north of the Arnon, perhaps not very long before. The king of the Amorites was Sihon, who lived in Heshbon, nearly opposite the head of the Dead Sea.

The children of Israel journeyed on and crossed the Jabbok, among the hills and beautiful groves of Gilead. They were now in the land of Bashan. There were famous pastures here, and to the north there was a wild region of volcanic mountains called Argob, where the king of Bashan had his city. He was a giant named Og. The people fought with him and took his country. Many giants had lived in this country in the old days. (Deut. 2, 3; Gen. 14) The children of Israel now camped in the meadows on the east side of Jordan, north of the Dead Sea, looking across to Jeshimon, the wilderness of Judaea.

1. What people lived in Edom?

2. What hard experience did the people have as they journeyed southward to compass the land of Edom? What was done to bring them relief?
3. What large streams run into the Dead Sea and the Jordan from the east?
4. What four nations did the children of Israel find in the eastern country? With which of these did they fight?
5. What king did the people meet who reminds us of giants who lived in this country long before?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

What sort of trouble in the journey of life is pictured by the biting of the people by fiery serpents? What is represented by the serpent that tempted the good people of Eden? All the animals represent affections of the human heart. Do the serpents represent affections that are high and noble, or ones that are external and near the world? They lie on the ground and come and go with a stealthy movement; some of them charm their prey, and some have poisonous bites. They represent affections of a very external kind, for pleasant things of sense. These are innocent in their place, but how they insinuate themselves until some fierce appetite has one in its power! The pleasure charms the person; its bite benumbs the person's conscience. (A. 195, 6400)

What is represented by the serpent of brass that Moses raised upon a pole and by which the people were healed? When appetites charm us, and get their coils about us, and benumb us with their bite, what can save us from spiritual death? The Lord only can help us. He "lifted up," He glorified, made Divine, these affections in His human life, and He will make them good in us. Brass represents what is good in the plane of outward life, as gold represents good love in the heart. Read John 3:14-15. (E. 581; A. 197, 8624)

If the land of Canaan represents heaven and a spiritual life, the region beyond Jordan represents natural states, work and pleasure connected with the body and the world, which may be helpful to the heavenly life or may be opposed to it. Moab and Ammon, descendants of Lot, in the best sense represent what is good and true or seems to be good and true in the outward forms of worship and daily life. For this reason, the children of Israel must not fight with Moab and Ammon. (A. 1571, 2468) Moab and Ammon had conquered the ancient giants and taken their country. So in the Lord's providence outward forms of goodness are made to hold evil things in check. But they are not interiorly strong and are themselves easily misled and perverted. This is suggested in our lesson where we read that Moab had been lately conquered and robbed by the Amorites.

The children of Israel fought with the Amorites and the people of Bashan and conquered them. This is because they represent what is wholly false and evil, with which no compromise must be made, but they must be thoroughly overcome. When evil thoughts and motives are wholly conquered, then all parts of outward life, all pleasures and duties connected with the body and the world, may be enjoyed innocently and may become useful to heavenly life. This is represented

presently when the country of the Amorites and Bashan is given as a home to some of the tribes of Israel. (E. 434, 435, 440; R. 351-355)

In verse 14, "the book of the wars of Jehovah" is mentioned, and words are quoted from it. In verse 27, "they that speak in proverbs" are spoken of, and several verses are quoted. "The book of the wars of Jehovah" was an historical book belonging to the Ancient Word which was given to humanity before our present Bible. "They that speak in proverbs" was a prophetic book of the same Ancient Word. Read about them in T. 279.

## **Lesson 54**

### **Numbers 22: Balaam Called**

#### **THE STORY**

A few introductory words with the map may be useful. The children of Israel had journeyed up through the picturesque country east of the Dead Sea, crossing the brook Zered and the Arnon. They passed east of Edom and Moab and left Ammon on their right (the three nations which they should not harm). North of Arnon they found the Amorites, whose king was Sihon, whom they fought and conquered. They kept on across the Jabbok and conquered the people of Bashan and their king Og, who was of a race of giants. You read this story in Num. 21, and more fully in Deut. 2 and 3. Now the children of Israel were resting in the meadows by the Jordan.

#### **Primary**

After their journey and after wars with people living in this country east of Jordan, the children of Israel were resting in the meadows by the river. The land of Moab was nearby, and Balak, the king of Moab, was afraid of them and wished to do them harm by bringing a prophet to curse them, to predict bad things for them. Far away to the east in the land beyond the Euphrates River there were still some people who had knowledge of the Lord and heavenly things handed down from ancient times. It was probably in this same country that the wise men lived long afterward who saw the star at the Lord's coming. Among those people at the time of our story lived a prophet named Balaam.

So the king of Moab consulted and sent messengers to Balaam with a present, asking him to come and curse the people of Israel, for they believed that what Balaam would say would come true. Balaam would gladly have done what they asked, but the Lord forbade him and he dared not go. Balak sent more and more honorable messengers than at first. Balaam wished in his heart to go with them, and this time the Lord let him go, but charged him to speak only the words which the Lord should give him.

As Balaam went with the messengers of Balak, riding upon his ass, wishing to do harm to Israel, the Lord sent His angel to meet him in the way to warn him again to speak only the words which the Lord would give him. We must read this part of the story (Num. 22:21-35), how the ass stopped three times when the angel stood in the way and at last Balaam's eyes were open to see the angel, and once more he was warned to speak only the Lord's words.

## **Junior**

See where the children of Israel were camping by the Jordan. See how they had come. They had left Edom and Moab and Ammon undisturbed (Why?), but had fought with the Amorites north of Arnon and with the people of Bashan north of the Jabbok, and conquered them. Balak, king of Moab, feared the children of Israel and tried in a subtle way to harm them, sending for Balaam the prophet to curse them.

Where was Balaam's home? We read in Num. 23:7, "Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram out of the mountains of the east." Again he is called "Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia." (Deut. 23:4) You remember the names Aram and Mesopotamia as names of the land beyond the Euphrates in the story of Abraham and Jacob. Read how the Lord at first forbade Balaam to go, and then repeatedly and severely charged him to speak only the words which the Lord should give him to speak. It was because Balaam wished in his heart to do Israel harm, and although he spoke a blessing from the Lord he consulted with Balak and showed him how to lead the people of Israel astray into idolatry and wickedness. We are told this in Rev. 2:14 and in Num. 31:16. This is made still plainer by Swedenborg in R. 114 and E. 140, in which this verse of Revelation is explained.

Read especially the verses about the angel and the ass in the account of Balaam's journey. We read that the ass spoke to Balaam. It seemed so to him. We know that an ass has neither the mind nor the mouth to speak a human language; but for the sake of the lesson to Balaam and to us, it was provided by the Lord that the words should seem to come from the ass.

1. Who was the king of Moab? Why did he send for Balaam? Who was Balaam?
2. Where was Balaam's home?
3. What was the result of Balak's first sending? Of his second sending?
4. What happened to Balaam on his journey?
5. What did Balaam wish in his heart to do to Israel? How did he accomplish it?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

Notice the references to the Ancient Word in Num. 21:14 and 27. The Ancient Word was a Scripture given to the Ancient Church before our Scripture was written. "The book of the wars of Jehovah" was an historical book, and "They that speak in proverbs" was a prophetic book of the Ancient Word. Read about them in T. 279.

It is interesting to see in this story of Balaam evidence of remnants of heavenly knowledge from the Ancient Church, enduring in the eastern country from which Balaam came, probably the same country from which the wise men came to worship the infant Lord. (A. 1366, 1675, 4112)

It is of interest to read the passages in R. 114 and E. 140 explaining Rev. 2:14. They bring out clearly the desire of Balaam to destroy Israel, and his advice to Balak which brought them into evil.

Read in E. 140 what is said about the appearance that the ass spoke, for it was an appearance and not an actual fact. Consider also the lesson of this incident. The ass, we know, represents quite natural faculties of understanding and the rider represents the higher spiritual nature. May it be sometimes when we are perverse and set upon some wrong course that we are not open to interior guidance from the Lord, and in His providence He must meet us in quite external ways, blocking us in courses of action which we are following, compelling us by force of circumstance and necessity to refrain and perhaps to take a safer course? Are not such dealings of the Lord's providence pictured in this blocking of the way to Balaam's ass?

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### **Leading Thought: Balaam the Wizard**

The countries of which we have been reading were among those lands where people used to have a true religion. Centuries before the children of Israel existed, the people in Egypt, in Arabia (including the land of Midian, Mount Horeb, etc.), in Canaan, and other countries, had the Word of God. Not indeed the one we have now, the Word of the Old and New Testaments, but the Ancient Word, portions of which we have in the first seven chapters of Genesis, and elsewhere. The people who read this Ancient Word, and so knew the Lord, and worshiped Him, constituted the Ancient Church. They were well acquainted with the Science of Correspondences, far better than we are at the present day - for it was only by knowing correspondences that they could read the Ancient Word. And their worship all consisted of correspondences. The plan of their temples, the way these were constructed, their ornamentation, the clothing of the priests, the clothing of the worshipers, the ceremonials, etc., etc., all were according to correspondence. And this helped them to think the thoughts of angels, and be united in love with heaven and with the Lord, for what is done on earth according to correspondence, avails in heaven.

But when people began to become wicked, they made a bad use of correspondences. They continued to study them, but applied them to selfish and evil purposes; and so, instead of coming in contact with the angels of heaven, they came in touch with evil spirits. Instead of having a beautiful worship that helped them to be better, they indulged in magic, or, as it is also called, sorcery, and divination, and incantation, and necromancy, and the like. That was the age of spiritism, although it was not called so.

Among the people who preserved a knowledge of correspondences for a long while, were the "children of the East," or the Syrians. Balaam, of whom we read in today's chapter, belonged to that people, and was a wizard, or magician. King Balak knew this, and therefore he sent for Balaam, offering him valuable presents in payment for his magic, or as it is translated in verse 7, he sent him "rewards of divination."

You will notice that the Lord did not want Balaam to go to curse Israel, but Balaam was so anxious to have the rewards offered by Balak, that the Lord let him go, although He did not wish him to go.

The Lord never forces people. He tries to lead them, but lets them have their own way if they insist upon it.

It turned out afterward, that, although Balaam made use of all his knowledge of correspondences, especially of his knowledge of the number seven, yet he could not curse Israel, but had to bless them, because they were encamped according to a certain order which corresponded with the order in which the angel societies are arranged in heaven, and this caused Balaam to see heaven, in spite of himself, so that he could not curse them. He tried to get away from the powerful effect of the correspondential order of the encampment, by having his altars placed where he could not see the whole camp, but only a small end of it, but even then he did not succeed; the influence of heaven was too great.

Afterward, he showed his deceit by teaching Balak how to lead the Israelites astray by wickedness of the worst kind. He had blessed them; now he led them into the greatest sins. So he was not only an enchanter but also a hypocrite. You will find that he stands for hypocrisy in Revelation 2:14.

But we have been going ahead of the story of this chapter and must return to it.

You will be especially interested in that part of the story which tells about the ass which Balaam rode, and which turned three times out of the way because she saw the angel with the drawn sword and, when Balaam whipped the ass, she spoke to him.

When Balaam was riding the ass, he was thinking all the time about the enchantments that he was going to use against the children of Israel, and about the money which he would receive for them. But the ass upon which he rode represented his enlightened mind. He knew and understood that it was wrong for him to think of sorcery and of obtaining money by means of sorcery. How did he know? As we all know: by the Divine Truth which he had learned. This Divine Truth which enlightens the mind and fights against wrong thoughts was signified by the angel with the drawn sword. Therefore the ass turned out of the way three times, for Balaam's enlightened understanding did not agree with his thoughts about sorcery, and a "way" means the way a person is thinking when he or she is intending to accomplish something. Although Balaam was not a good man, yet he knew that there is a God, and from his knowledge of correspondences, he knew that he would die if he would use enchantments against Israel. This is the reason why the angel spoke as he did in verse 33.

This very interesting story therefore tells us the beautiful and very important and comforting truth, that those who are in good and truth - as represented by the children of Israel in their encampment - cannot be harmed by those who speak from seeming enlightenment, and yet would like to lead astray.

Many people have wondered how the ass could speak to Balaam. The fact is that the ass did not speak, but that it sounded to Balaam as if she spoke to him. He did hear someone speaking: it was spirits speaking to him, for his spiritual ears were opened. And because what the spirits said was in accordance with enlightened thought, it sounded as if it came from the ass.

Swedenborg tells us that he has often heard horses apparently speaking to him, when yet the speech was not from them, but only seemingly so. (E. 140)

## **Lesson 55**

### **Numbers 24: Balaam's Blessing**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

When Balaam came, Balak took him up to one of the mountain-tops, no doubt a place of worship, from which he could see a part of the camp of Israel in the plain below, and then to a second top, and at last to one from which he saw the whole camp. On each mountain they offered sacrifices and hoped for some word of prophecy against Israel, but the Lord gave only blessings, beautiful blessings. Balak was disappointed, and Balaam took his journey home.

##### **Junior**

East of Jordan on many mountain-tops there are altars to which people used to go in the old days to make sacrifices to their idols. Balak took Balaam to one of these mountain-tops, from which he could see the utmost part of the camp of Israel in the plain below, and then to a second top, and at last to one from which he saw the whole camp. On each mountain they offered sacrifices and hoped for some word of prophecy against Israel, but the Lord gave only blessings.

Let us imagine that we are standing with Balaam and Balak on the mountain looking across the broad meadows of Jordan. Far out in the plain was the dark line of trees which showed where the river ran. Beyond were the hills of the promised land, directly opposite being the wilderness of Judaea, Jeshimon, "the waste." In the meadows, near the foot of the mountain on which Balaam and Balak stood, among the groves of acacia trees (Num. 25:1) were the tents of Israel.

We know the position of each tribe, for when the people were at Mount Sinai the Lord told them in what order they should camp and march. In the middle of the camp was the tabernacle with its court about it. Next around the tabernacle camped the Levites, the tribe set apart to take care of the holy things. At the east before the tabernacle, camped Moses, and Aaron and his sons. (Num. 3:23-39) Round about at a distance all the people camped, each tribe by itself with its standard. Three tribes were on each side of the camp; on the east Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; on the south Reuben, Simeon and Gad; on the west Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin; on the north Dan, Asher and Naphtali. (Num. 2) Balaam looked from the mountain and "saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes."

Balaam spoke not his own words but a beautiful blessing from the Lord. As you read it you will feel that it is like a Psalm, not the words of any human being. "Lign-aloes" (verse 6) was a tree with fragrant wood or gum. Agag (verse 7) was king of the Amalekites. We shall learn about him in 1 Sam. 15. "Unicorn" (verse 8) means, perhaps, "wild ox." In verses 17-19, we find the promise of a Star to come out of Jacob, and of One who should have dominion. We know who is meant. "Sheth" (verse 17) is translated tumult in the Revised Version.

Balaam looked also on Amalek in the pastures of the South Country. The Kenites (verse 21) were the family of the Midianites with whom Moses had lived; their home was now among the

Amalekites. (1 Sam. 15:6) Asshur (verse 22) was Assyria, by and by to become so strong. Chittim (verse 24) was somewhere on the Mediterranean islands or shores. Eber was an ancient ancestor of Israel (Gen. 10:21-25), from whom they were called Hebrews, and the name probably stands here for that people. The prophecy was ended, Balak was disappointed, and Balaam took his journey home.

1. The king of Moab was \_\_\_\_? And the prophet from the east was \_\_\_\_?
2. From where did Balaam look and what did he see?
3. Where were the tribes of Israel camped? Can you tell me something about the order of their camp? How did each tribe know its place?
4. To what was Israel likened in the blessing which Balaam spoke?
5. Of what in the Gospel are we reminded by the verse which speaks of the Lord's coming as a Star?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Balak took Balaam to the mountain-tops, which were high places where sacrifices were made to idols. The custom of worshiping on mountains had come from very old times, when people knew that a mountain represented an interior state of heavenly affection, near to the Lord. (A. 795, 796, 2722)

In verse 2 it is said that the Spirit of God came upon Balaam. The words which he spoke from this Spirit were not his own, nor such as he wished to speak. Remember how it was when Isaac blessed Jacob. Speaking from the Lord's Spirit, he could not take back or change the words that he had spoken. (Gen. 27:33)

There was a meaning in the order of the camp of Israel. Each tribe represented some element of heavenly life. And the encampment showed the relation of these among themselves. "Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes," was a picture of a heavenly life in its true order, every element in its place; it was a picture also of heaven, where every society and every angel is in orderly relation with the rest. The blessing which the Lord gave Balaam to speak was not so much a blessing of Israel as a people, as of human life in its true order in an individual and in heaven. Read beautiful things in E. 431.

Thinking now of the position of the tribes, you see why the tabernacle was in the center of the camp and the Levites next about it. The tabernacle is the Lord's own presence, and the Levites are inmost love for Him and for one another. The tribes were placed according to the points of the compass: this is because in heaven and in the Bible certain qualities are associated with the quarters. The east is associated with nearness to the Lord in innocent affection. This quality is represented by the tribes camping on the east with Judah at their head. The west is associated with more external forms of goodness; this is represented by the tribes on the west under the lead of Ephraim. In the south are those who are in the bright light of intelligence; this faculty is represented by the tribes on the south under the lead of Reuben. More obscure intelligence is

associated with the north and is represented by the tribes under the lead of Dan. Every tribe, every faculty, in its place, in relation to the Lord and to all the rest. (A. 3920, 3961, 3971; E. 432-450; R. 349-359) In studying the meaning of the tribes you will notice that they are named in different order in different places in the Word, and that while each tribe keeps always its essential meaning, that meaning is modified by the position in which the tribe stands in the list.

Balaam's prophecy is called a parable, and a parable has a deeper meaning. In this deeper meaning, his words describe the blessedness of a true life and of heaven. Israel is compared to fruitful trees (verse 6); this points especially to the beauty of heavenly intelligence. (A. 2702, 3079) It is compared to a unicorn and a lion (verses 8, 9); this describes the strength of heavenly affection. (A. 6367) The prophecy foretells the coming of the Lord, and it means also the recognition of the Lord in a heavenly life, as King and Savior. Other nations mentioned in the prophecy are evil or external things, which will be overcome by the Lord's strength. This is the Lord's own promise to His people. (A. 3322)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Balaam's Prophecy

As you well know, the most important thing that ever happened was the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world. Ages before He came, He told people that He was going to come. The first time that this was foretold was when people began to be wicked, as related in the story of the serpent in the Garden of Eden. It was then prophesied, that "The seed of the woman shall crush the head of the serpent." (Gen. 3:15) "The seed of the woman" meant the Lord. "The head of the serpent" meant the chief evil love in people.

The people of the Ancient Church, who had the Ancient Word, knew very well about the future coming of the Lord, for the Ancient Word was full of teaching respecting this great event.

As Balaam belonged to the "sons of the East" who belonged to the Ancient Church, he also knew about the Lord's Coming.

When he saw the children of Israel in the wilderness, encamping in regular order according to their tribes and families, each tribe by their banner, and all around the holy tabernacle, he realized that this beautiful orderly arrangement of their tents and dwelling-places was in correspondence with the beautiful order according to which the societies of the angels in heaven are arranged. He saw heaven spiritually, while his natural eyes saw the encampment, and this made his mind to be filled with the spirit of heaven, so that he uttered another beautiful prophecy about the children of Israel.

He said, "How good are thy tabernacles, O Jacob, thy habitations, O Israel: as the valleys are they spread out, as gardens by the river," etc. By this are meant homes of the angels in the heavens, the "tabernacles" meaning those angelic homes where angels live who more especially love what is good, and the "habitations" meaning those angelic homes where angels live who more especially love what is true.

And while Balaam was full of the vision of heavenly things, the Lord revealed to him what would happen at the close of the history of the Israelitish people -"in the latter days" - namely, that then

the Lord would come into the world: "I see Him, but not now: I behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the sons of Sheth."

So Balaam was led, by the prophetic spirit, to foretell the Lord's Coming about 1450 years before it actually took place.

The wise men of the East who followed the star when the Lord was born were from the same country as Balaam, -- so long did these Syrian people preserve their knowledge about the Lord.

But while the star of which Balaam told, reminds us of the star that went before the wise men, until it came and stood over the place in Bethlehem, where the young child Jesus was, it really meant the Lord. So also did the "Scepter." The Lord is called a "Star" because He was the Light or the Divine Truth that was to give spiritual light to people who were in the darkness of ignorance regarding God and heaven. And He was called a "Scepter" because He was to be King, since a scepter is the symbol of kingship. Balaam's saying that this Star and Scepter was to smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the sons of Sheth meant that the Lord would fight against the hells and overcome them, and that this was the reason for His coming into the world.

Balaam's prophecy therefore tells the same truth as that first prophecy in the Garden of Eden, about the seed of the woman crushing the head of the serpent, only that it tells it in a different way. "Moab" means the evil that is in hell, and the "sons of Sheth" means the falsities that are there. A "corner" stands for power, for the power of a building, or of a chest, or an ark, etc., is in the corners, which must be especially firm. To "break the corners of Moab" therefore means to destroy the power of evil, which, at the time when the Lord came into the world, had become greater than the power of good.

## **Lesson 56**

### **Numbers 32: Homes East of Jordan**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We must have the map before us which shows the Jordan River and the country to the east. The valley through which the Jordan runs is a deep gorge, at the Sea of Galilee six hundred and twenty-seven feet below the Mediterranean, at the Dead Sea twice that depth. At Jericho there are wide, sunny meadows on both sides of the river, some eight miles across between the high bluffs on the east and west. Seen from the hills of Canaan the country beyond Jordan looks like a purple wall, with here and there a large valley breaking down to the meadows. Show me where the Arnon runs into the Dead Sea in the middle of its eastern shore, and where the Jabbok meets the Jordan half way between the two seas.

Some of the people of Israel, who had many sheep and cattle, wanted to live in this fine pasture country east of Jordan. When they told Moses their wish, he was afraid that if they stayed outside the land all the people would again be discouraged as they had been at Kadesh; but the men

promised that they would leave their families and their flocks in this country east of Jordan and would go before their brethren, armed, and help them get possession of their land; then they would come back and live in the country which they had chosen. They were told to do so, to help their brethren first, and then they might come back to their own homes.

What tribes were these which were given homes east of Jordan? On my map I find the name Reuben by the Dead Sea along its northern part. That was one of the tribes. Moving north I find Gad in the land of Gilead; that was another tribe. They were given the country from the Dead Sea to the Sea of Galilee. Still further north in the old land of Bashan I find the name Manasseh; that was another tribe. But see, here is the name Manasseh on the west of Jordan right in the middle of the land of Canaan: Yes, half the tribe of Manasseh chose a home outside the land and the other half found a home in the land. What tribes then had homes given them east of Jordan? Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh. As we read on in our story, we find that they kept their promise and helped their brethren as they had agreed to do and came back with a blessing to their homes.

## **Junior**

Our story has to do with the country east of Jordan. Learn what you can from maps and descriptions about the physical features of this country. A raised map or a picture of a raised map will help you. See the deep Jordan valley and the upland pastures. Notice the deep cuts made by a few fine streams, the Arnon at the middle of the Dead Sea, the Jabbok half way between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee, and the Yarmuk just south of the Sea of Galilee. Think of groves of trees in Gilead about the Jabbok, and fine oaks and cattle in Bashan.

How was this country occupied when the children of Israel came? Read Num. 21:12-35. They found Moab living south of the Arnon, for the Amorites, their neighbors on the north, had lately driven them southward and made the Arnon their boundary. From the Arnon to the Jabbok the children of Israel found the Amorites and their king Sihon, and conquered them. North of the Jabbok they conquered Og, king of Bashan, and took his land.

Now what was the wish of the children of Israel about this land east of Jordan? Why did Moses at first fear to grant their request? What did they agree to do which brought them leave to settle east of Jordan? Did Joshua, after Moses' death, remember this agreement? (Josh. 1:12-15) And was it finally carried out? (Josh. 22:1-6)

What tribes settled east of Jordan? (Num. 32:33) Your map may help you. Reuben? Yes, where did they settle? Gad? Yes, where was their home? Manasseh? Yes, half the tribe of Manasseh. Where did the other half find a home? Inside and outside the land together, what a large allotment was given to this tribe! Who were they? Who was Manasseh? One of Joseph's sons; and Ephraim was his brother. Remember how Jacob loved Joseph, how he blessed these sons in Egypt and gave them a place among his own sons. (Gen. 48)

Do you remember whether the Gospels tell us that our Lord ever visited this east of Jordan country?

1. Draw me two little maps showing the Jordan river and the Dead Sea, and two brooks coming from the east. On one of these maps show four nations which the children of Israel

found in the country east of Jordan. On the other map show how the country was divided among the tribes.

2. What kind of country was it east of Jordan? Why did some of the children of Israel wish to live there?
3. What is said in the New Testament about the country beyond the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

What is represented by this country beyond Jordan; for the Jordan in a strict sense was the boundary of the land of Canaan? Canaan represents a spiritual or heavenly life. Then this country beyond the border must represent good natural states of interest in natural knowledge and enjoyment in natural pleasures and occupations. The people desired this country on account of their cattle. The cattle, especially the cows and oxen for which Bashan was famous, represent affection for natural pleasures and usefulness. Can we see now what is meant by permission given to some of the tribes to make their home outside the promised land, and by the requirement that the men should go first before their brethren and subdue the land of Canaan? Then they might return and enjoy their homes in this country. External pleasures and activities, rest and recreation, are good and are pleasing to the Lord when they are made helpful to the spiritual life. You will keep in mind this story when you read in the Gospels of the Lord's crossing the Sea of Galilee to this farther shore, first to cast out devils from people who were possessed, and then to bless the loaves and fishes; and when you learn of His ministry in the beyond-Jordan country in connection with His last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. (A. 4255; E. 440)

Perhaps we may carry our study a little further and think of the meaning of the tribes who were given homes outside the land. Reuben was the eldest son of Jacob. His name relates to "sight," and this tribe represents a first knowledge of heavenly things. Reuben's lot outside the land reminds us that knowledge is not in itself heavenly, though it introduces to a heavenly life. The mountain from which Moses saw the land, though he was not allowed to enter, was in the tribe of Reuben. (E. 434; R. 351)

Gad means a "troop," and the tribe represents strength in good works, but of a natural and self-confident kind. It may help us to remember the kind of goodness represented by Gad to think that it was probably in that same country beyond Jordan that the rich young man met the Lord and said, "All these (commandments) have I kept from my youth." It was an external kind of goodness, not free from self-confidence. Yet it is said that the Lord looking upon him loved him. (Mark 10:17-23; E. 435; R. 352)

Manasseh was the elder son of Joseph. Joseph himself represents a very heavenly development of loving nearness to the Lord. His two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, represent goodness and truth on the practical plane of life derived from this spiritual source. The fact that they stand upon the plane of practical life is represented by their adoption among Jacob's sons; but they are from a higher source, and the greater value placed upon goodness and truth from this higher source

seems to be suggested by the large assignment given to these tribes, especially to Manasseh with assignments both inside and outside the borders of the holy land. (A. 4117; E. 440; R. 355)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Outside Heaven

On a former occasion we learned that there is an inside and an outside to everything. That this is so with our souls, the Lord taught by the parable, "Cleanse first the inside of the cup and platter, that the outside may be clean also." A cup that has only an inside and no outside would be impossible. A plate that had only an inside and no outside would also be impossible. There can be no inside without an outside, nor an outside without an inside. So with our behavior: the outside is what is seen by people, the inside is what is seen by the Lord. We must cleanse our thoughts and our reasons for doing things, so that the outside behavior may not only appear to be good, but really be good.

The Lord's Kingdom has an inside and an outside. The inside is heaven, the outside is the church on earth, when the people of the church try to live a heavenly life.

The church has an inside and an outside. The inside is the love of the Lord, and the belief in what He teaches in His Word and His Doctrines; the outside is acting in one's business according to the laws of charity, and also attending to one's duties in school and at home, or in one's worship at church, in Sunday-school, and at home.

Since, as we all know, the land of Canaan represented heaven and the church, was there an inside and an outside to that land also?

Yes. Generally, when we talk about the land of Canaan, or "the holy land," we think only of that part of it which lies west of the river Jordan. But as a matter of fact, the land of Canaan included also portions of the country east of the Jordan. The reason why we generally think only of the part west of the Jordan is because most of the history recorded in the Word was transacted there, for that part represented the inside of heaven. The part east of the same river represented the outside of heaven. The Jordan represented the boundary between them.

The twelve tribes inherited the whole country west and east of the Jordan. To two tribes and a half was given the land east of the Jordan, and to the other nine tribes and a half, that west of the Jordan. Those who settled on the east side, as we learn in this chapter, were Gad and Reuben and half of the tribe of Manasseh.

Now, I want to tell you a secret. It is a heavenly secret. A secret that no one has ever found out, until the Lord Himself told it to His servant Emanuel Swedenborg, for the New Church. It is this: that the tribe of Gad was given an inheritance in the country east of the Jordan, or in the outside part of the land of Canaan, because that tribe represented the outside part of heaven and of the church, namely, doing good works. He represented the good life that people lead when they are sincere, honest, faithful and diligent in their work. Remember: the doing of good works, the pious attendance on Divine worship in church and Sunday-school and at home, the kind acts to the poor, the lame, the blind, the deaf -all this is represented by Gad.

"But," you may ask, "if Gad represents good works, do you know the secret about Reuben: what he represents?"

Reuben represents the truth that you learn in order that you may do good. Unless you have the truth, you cannot know how to do good.

It may help you to remember that Reuben represents this, by turning to Genesis 39:32, where we are told why he was called Reuben. It was because his mother realized that the Lord saw her and her trouble. Reuben is a name made up from the Hebrew word which means to see. So the Reuben part of the outside church is to see how to do good. And as we cannot see unless we have light, and the truth gives light to our minds, therefore Reuben represented the truth which we learn from the Word and which gives us to see how to do good works, how to live a good life.

And what about Manasseh? Can there be anything else besides seeing the truth and living according to it?

O yes! there is something still more important than these: something without which we would not care to see the truth nor to live a good life. And what is that? It is love. Manasseh represented love. The love to learn the truth, the love to do what the truth gives us to see.

We might want to love to live a good life simply in order to have people speak well about us. Many do so. But would this be the kind of love and the kind of life that would be well-pleasing to the Lord? No! for the Lord tells us to love Him above all things, but if we lead a good life simply to be thought well of by people, then we care more for what they say, and for ourselves, than we do for the Lord. This would be like Manasseh living only in the outside Canaan, in the country of Jordan. The real inside church consists in loving the Lord above all things, and since the love of seeing the truth and leading a good life must come from this inside love, therefore Manasseh, the tribe that represents love, was both in the inside and in the outside Canaan.

Where do we find out these great heavenly secrets about Gad, Reuben and Manasseh? In that wonderfully Divine work, *The Apocalypse Explained*, 434, 435, 440.

## **Lesson 57**

### **Deuteronomy 6: Obedience to the Lord**

#### **THE STORY**

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers; there is one more book of Moses, Deuteronomy. There is a very tender spirit in this book. It is filled largely with the last talks of Moses with the people before his death, as they were camped in the plain by the Jordan. He reminds them of the Lord's mercies in the hard experiences which they have come through together, and appeals to them to be obedient to the Lord in the land which they are about to enter. The name Deuteronomy comes from the 17th chapter and 18th verse of the book, where in the old Greek version the phrase "a copy of this law" is wrongly translated, "this copy or repetition of the law." The name is not, however, inappropriate, for Deuteronomy does repeat the Ten Commandments and other laws, and rehearses again the story that we have read elsewhere.

## **Primary**

We must think of the children of Israel camping in the meadow by the Jordan, looking across at the hills of the promised land; and must think of Moses, now a hundred and twenty years old, their wise and faithful leader many years, talking to them as to his little children, charging them earnestly to obey the Lord. And if Moses longed to have them good children and obedient, much more did the Lord Who gave the laws long to have them so; and He longs to have us learn and keep them and find them the way to heaven.

Listen, Moses is speaking. (Deut. 6:1-5) Do these last words sound familiar? They are the first great commandment, almost as we recite it together.

Listen again. (Verses 6-9) Mothers and fathers must talk with the children about the Lord and His laws, that make life good and beautiful. We can talk of them at home and when we walk among beautiful things in the country. "For a sign upon thine hand," etc. How ought this rule to be kept? The Jews wrote words of the law on parchment and put them in little boxes which they bound on the forehead and arm at times of prayer. Is this what the Lord really wants us to do?

Moses is speaking again. (Verses 10-15) It was truly a beautiful land that they were soon to enter, all the more so in contrast with the wilderness in which they had been living. How easy it is, when beautiful things are plenty and we have all that we want, to forget that the Lord is giving us these things and to be grateful to Him.

Verse 16, the tempting at Massah, was when the people wanted water and doubted the Lord's good care. (Exod. 17:7) They must not do so again. (Verses 17-19)

It would be useful, also, and help them to be humble and faithful to remember the hard experiences in which the Lord had helped them in Egypt and in their desert journey. Children may learn much from what older people can tell them of the trials that they have had in which the Lord has helped them, and we can all learn from the story of trials and help which the Lord has given us in these books of Moses. (Verses 20-25)

## **Junior**

We must get the picture of the children of Israel in the plains by the Jordan where Balaam saw them "abiding according to their tribes," and of the old leader Moses giving them his last earnest charges to be obedient to the Lord. It was the eleventh month of the fortieth year since the people came out of Egypt. (Deut. 1:1-5) In a few weeks they would cross the Jordan and keep the Passover in the promised land. Before that, Moses would die. Listen to Moses speaking, reading a few verses at a time.

In the 5th chapter we read the Ten Commandments as Moses repeated them again to the people and reminded them how they had heard them at Mount Sinai, with signs of power, and how the Lord wrote them on tables of stone. If only the people will remember and obey!

As we read of binding the law upon the hand and between the eyes, and writing it upon the posts of the house, perhaps someone can show you one of the phylacteries, or at least a picture of one, in which the Jews wrote extracts of the law, to be worn upon the arm and forehead. They were little square black boxes, a larger one for the forehead and a smaller one for the left arm. They

were made most carefully according to rules, and tied on with their long straps exactly so. In compartments in these little boxes were strips of parchment carefully folded up, on which were written words from the law. (Deut. 6:4-9; 11:13-21) They were the verses which speak of binding the law upon the hands. Some of the verses you see are in this very chapter that we are reading today. The charge to write upon the door posts was kept by putting a parchment in a little cylinder which was nailed at the side of the door. What does the Lord say in the Gospels about the phylacteries worn by the Pharisees? (Matt. 23:5) How ought the law to be written on our hands and foreheads and door posts?

The chapter speaks of commandments, statutes, judgments and testimonies. You find these several words in the Psalms describing the Lord's laws; as, for example, in the 19th Psalm and in the 119th Psalm. Commandments and testimonies mean especially the Ten Commandments and other laws of life. Statutes were especially laws which taught forms of worship which it was important for the children of Israel to keep because they all represented holy things. Judgments in passages like those in our chapter are civil laws which also reflect the laws of heaven. (A. 8972)

What in general is pictured by the story that we have been studying in Exodus and Numbers and Deuteronomy? What by Egypt and its bondage? What by the wilderness journey? And now what is represented by the beautiful and fruitful land just across the river? Will the laws learned at Sinai still be needed? How may the memories of Egypt and the wilderness still be useful?

1. Where were the children of Israel at the time that the words of Deuteronomy were spoken?
2. Who is reminding the people of the Lord's commandments, and charging them to keep them?
3. Of what danger do we especially need to beware in prosperity?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The name "Deuteronomy," "copy of the law," is from verse 18 of chapter 17, where in the old Greek translation, the words "copy of this law" were wrongly rendered "this copy of the law," "this deuteronomy." This book is the last of the five books of Moses. Can you name them in their order? What name is sometimes given to these five books together - a name which means "the five books"?

Commandments, statutes, judgments, testimonies. Commandments or testimonies were the Ten Commandments and other laws of life. Statutes were laws which taught the forms of worship, which were all representative of heavenly things. Judgments, in passages like those in our lesson, are civil laws, also representative of heavenly things. (A. 8972) Can you find examples of each?

"That thy days may be prolonged." Will people who keep the Commandments necessarily live long in this world? They may not live long in years, but their lives will be full in usefulness and happiness. (Compare Deut. 11:21; Ps. 55:23.)

The Lord's commands are bound upon our hands and between our eyes when they are made the guide of all our acts and thoughts. They are written on our door posts and gates when they guard the door of the mind to prevent evil things from entering in, or from going forth in words and deeds. (A. 7847, 9936)

Verses 10, 11. In what a beautiful sense it is true of the blessings of heavenly life that we have not prepared them and cannot prepare them for ourselves! Who can see what spiritual blessing is meant by any one of the good things named? (E. 617, 638)

"Thou shalt fear the Lord." What kind of fear should we have toward the Lord? The fear of love, which will not do anything to grieve Him. (A. 3718)

"And shalt swear by His name." Swearing with the Jews was the most solemn way of affirming a truth. To swear by the Lord's name meant to believe His words because He spoke them. Our Lord said, "Swear not at all," for in the Christian Church truth is not to be taken merely on authority but can be understood. (A. 2842, 9166)

## Lesson 58

### Deuteronomy 8: The Lord's Mercy

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

The children of Israel could see the hills of the promised land across the meadows and the Jordan, rosy in the morning light and purple in the evening shadow. Moses talked to them very earnestly. He reminded them of the hardships of the journey through which the Lord had helped them. What were some of these, as you follow the line of the journey on the map and look over the pictures that you have put into your scrapbooks? The crossing of the Red Sea, the bitter water, Elim, the quails and manna, water from the rock, defeat of the Amalekites; and after leaving Mount Sinai, quails a second time, another gift of water, fiery serpents, and so to the Jordan where they were camping. Moses speaks of the forty years, of the manna, of water from the rock, of fiery serpents and scorpions (spider-like creatures with a poisonous sting). These trials and the Lord's loving care should have made the people humble and obedient to the Lord. The Lord had let the hard things come to teach them this lesson.

And now they might look forward to the beautiful land. It was a land different from the wilderness in which they had been living, and different from Egypt from which they had come. Read Deut. 11:10-12. In Egypt there was almost no rain, and water was from the river Nile; but in the land of Canaan, between November and April, there are rains. It "drinketh water of the rain of heaven." It has splendid great springs where large streams come at once from the rocks. There are several such springs near Mount Hermon in the north, some near the Sea of Galilee, and the beautiful Gideon's fountain at the foot of Mount Gilboa. And the rains and springs and streams with the good soil make the land fruitful. Have you seen wheat growing, and barley? Do you know fig trees and pomegranates and olives? And honey; bees make the honey, but for honey there

must be flowers. It was a beautiful land, and it would be a happy home if - if what? If they would not forget the Lord but would remember Him and trust Him and obey Him.

## **Junior**

How long do you think the children of Israel were camping by the Jordan before they went into the promised land? Not long, possibly about forty days. They were there when Balaam saw and blessed them. The other important events of those days were Moses' earnest appeals to the people and the death of Moses. The 6th chapter of Deuteronomy has very earnest words of Moses, urging the children of Israel to be obedient. The 8th chapter is another, and the 11th chapter another of the same kind. Chapter 8, which we read today, looks back to the experiences of the wilderness and looks forward to the promised land. Let us, as we read the chapter, note first the events of the journey and the wilderness which are mentioned; then we will note what is said about the promised land.

Have you made your list of the journey and the wilderness? Forty years twice mentioned, manna twice mentioned, water from the rock, serpents and scorpions. Did we learn of all these in the story? All but one. What is the reason for remembering the trials? Why not forget them now that they are passed?

And the list of things said about the promised land: brooks and springs, hills and valleys. Do you remember some of the streams, and can you show them on the map? And do you know some of the beautiful great springs? I have suggested a few of them to the little children. And the fruits and the honey. What metals are mentioned which could be mined from the hills? Iron and copper (here called "brass") are both found in the land, especially in the mountains at the north. Job 28:1-11 gives a vivid description of mining (better in the Revised Version). What fears has Moses for the people when they come into the land and enjoy all its good things? It is so easy when we are anxious and in trouble to remember the Lord, but when all goes well it is so easy to forget Him. Then even the good things are no longer blessings.

1. What kind of country had the people been in for forty years? Who had cared for them and given them food and drink?
2. What kind of land were they about to enter?
3. What excellences of the land are especially mentioned?
4. Would they need to remember the Lord any more?
5. Do we need the Lord's help when things go well? Shall we need it in heaven?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

The language of verse 1 reminds us of the commandment "that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Remember also Deut. 11:21, "As the days of heaven

upon earth." Why are these blessings, even the blessings of heaven, made conditional on keeping the Lord's commandments?

Why was it a wilderness journey from Egypt to Canaan? Read carefully verses 1-6 and 14-16; also Deut. 5:15 and 24:17-22. What was the reason in the Lord's providence for permitting these trials? What lessons were they intended to teach the people? Trials that come to us must be intended to teach the same lessons. (1) One lesson was humility and dependence on the Lord, which should prevent the feeling that they were strong without the Lord's help. (2) Another lesson was not to set their hearts on things of the world, but to turn them to things of heavenly and eternal value, verse 3. (3) Memory of their trials should teach them to have sympathy with others who were poor and in trouble. (A. 10155)

Read verse 5. We can understand many things about the Lord's providence with us by comparing our relation with children. We often must refuse the children what they want because we know that it would be bad for them and make them unhappy. There must sometimes be punishments to check ways of doing that are harmful to themselves and others. At such times we may seem to the children to be unkind, but our feelings may be only kindness. Our wish is to save the children from unhappiness and to lead them into good and happy ways. If we have such motives in relation to the children, how much more the Lord! (Matt. 7:11) Read Rev. 3:19. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten," which refers to the temptations which are inevitable in getting rid of evil and finding the blessings of a heavenly life. (R. 215; E. 246)

Read verses 7-9. Can we recognize the spiritual blessings which are represented by these good things of the land of Canaan? We shall know that the streams and springs of Canaan represent the abundant truth from the Lord, more internal and more external, relating to more spiritual and more natural states. The fruits named represent the satisfactions of heavenly uses, more internal and more external. And what is represented by the honey? (E. 374) The iron and brass we recognize as types of fundamental principles relating to truth and goodness, the rightness and kindness of the heavenly life. These are the blessings for which the trials previously considered should prepare us. The Lord help us to be steadfast lest by a return to pride and selfishness we lose the blessings!

## **Lesson 59**

### **Deuteronomy 11: Moses' Farewell Charge**

#### **THE STORY**

#### **Junior**

As you read verses 1-9 of our chapter, you go back in your mind and remember the story that we have been learning, about the leaving Egypt, and the desert journey. What miracles and acts are meant in verse 3? What story does verse 4 recall? What things that happened in the wilderness do you remember as you read verse 5? Do you know the story referred to in verse 6? You find it in Num. 16, near to the story of Aaron's rod. Stop a moment and think, as you read verses 2 and 7, who these people were to whom Moses was speaking. Only three were living who were grown

men when the children of Israel left Egypt, and camped at Sinai, and sent the spies from Kadesh. The rest who remembered these things were children when they happened.

Verses 10-12 put two different pictures before us: one of a flat land where there is almost no rain; where water is pumped from the river and led about in little trenches to water the fields, the earth being opened and closed up with the foot as one square after another of the field is watered: the other a land of hills and valleys and abundant rains. And you do not forget as you read of the Lord's care for this good land, that it is a picture of heaven, and of the life of everyone who loves and obeys the Lord. You remember this especially as you read verses 18-21: "That your days may be multiplied . . . as the days of heaven upon the earth."

We have thought before what is meant by binding the Lord's words upon the hand, and making them as frontlets between the eyes; and what is meant by writing them upon the door posts and on the gates; and also how the Pharisees kept this charge.

Read on in the chapter, verses 22-25. Do you know the names of any of the nations whom the Lord would drive out before the children of Israel? Can you show me Lebanon, and the Euphrates? These are the farthest limits to the north and east. And what are the limits on the south and west: the wilderness, and the uttermost or "hinder" sea?

The last verses of the chapter speak of putting the blessing upon Mount Gerizim, and the curse upon Mount Ebal. Do you remember these two mountains by Shechem, in the very middle of the land? Gilgal was near by across the Jordan, as the children of Israel looked toward the sunset from their camp. The oaks (not "plains") of Moreh, you remember by Shechem, in the story of Abraham. (Gen. 12:6) We learn in Josh. 8:30-35 how this charge about the blessings and the curses was obeyed. Joshua built an altar in Mount Ebal, and read the law aloud to all the people. And the twelve tribes stood, six tribes on the slope of Mount Ebal, and six on the slope of Mount Gerizim, and answered from one mountain to the blessings and from the other to the curses as they were read. (See Deut. 28 and Deut. 30:19.) The Lord sends blessings, but what are these curses? He does not send them, but they are the unhappy things which the Lord cannot save us from if we will not keep His Commandments.

1. Who is speaking in this chapter? To whom? Where? When?
2. What mercies of the Lord in the past are recalled? Why are they recalled?
3. What difference between the land of Egypt and the promised land is pointed out?
4. Why did the Pharisees wear phylacteries? In what better way can the requirement of the law be kept?
5. What choice is set before each one of us this day?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

What states of mind are set in contrast by the two pictures, of the land where seed is watered with the foot, and the land of hills and valleys that drinketh water of the rain of heaven? What is

the water of the mind? The truth which shows what is right, and so cleanses and refreshes. The land of Egypt, drawing water from the river, and leading it with the foot, represents a wholly natural state which draws its truth from memory and from the opinion of the world, and applies it in an external way. The promised land represents a spiritual life, with a variety of interior and external states, and with an interior perception of the truth from the Lord's Word. Read of the rain and its meaning in Deut. 32:1-2; Isa. 55:10-11. (E. 518, 644; A. 2702, 8278)

What is meant by the promise "that ye may prolong your days" (verse 9), and "that your days may be multiplied" (verse 21)? Compare the promise of the fourth commandment: "that thy days may be long upon the land." Such words remind us first of all, that the same trust in the Lord and obedience to the Lord which are needed to bring us into a heavenly state, are needed to keep us in it. We must not think that we are safe, and grow careless and disobedient, "lest ye perish quickly from off the good land." The long life promised is not necessarily a life of many years in this world, but its years, few or many, are full of all that makes life worth living; "as the days of heaven upon the earth." See Deut. 8, especially verses 17 and 18.

The charge to teach the Lord's commandments to the children shows us the importance of this duty at home and in Sunday-school. Remember too that the most continual and effective teaching is that of influence and example. The children are also the beginnings of new life in ourselves, which need the protection and guidance of the Lord's commandments in the house and by the way, lying down and rising up. (A. 7847, 9936)

Verse 26, like Deut. 30:19, very forcibly sets before us the freedom which the Lord gives us to choose good or evil, to obey or disobey. He tells us of the eternal blessing of obedience; He warns us of the inevitable unhappiness of evil; but He trusts us, He leaves us free. How earnestly He desires that we shall use our freedom well; how tenderly He urges us to choose life and blessing! (T. 475, 483, 484)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Greatest Commandment

The Lord our Savior teaches us in the New Testament that the first of all the commandments is - what? Yes, to love the Lord with all our heart and with all our soul. He had taught the Israelites this in the Old Testament, where the commandment is given repeatedly. (See, for instance, Deut. 6:5; 10:12.) We have it in this chapter, in verse 13; and the consequence of keeping it is told in the beautiful promises about life in the land of Canaan. This means to us, of course, the promise of a lovely life in heaven, if we will keep this commandment.

Following the Lord's statute in verse 18, and elsewhere, the children of Israel copied the commandment on pieces of parchment, which they put in little cases, and by means of straps bound them upon their hands and between their eyes. Such a case with the parchment and the straps was called a "phylactery." They imagined that in this way they obeyed the Lord's statute, but if they had read the Lord's words more carefully, they would have seen that He meant more than this; that He did, indeed, want them to carry the commandment in this way, but, to remind them continually that they should always try to see what is meant by the commandment, and to

do it. For the eyes see, and they correspond to the understanding, which sees spiritually. And the hands correspond to the ability to do what the understanding sees.

But the Jews obeyed only the outside of the statute, so that when the Lord was in the world, He said that they "make broad their phylacteries" "to be seen of men," and that they neglected the inside of the command. They "cleansed the outside of the cup and platter" and left the inside "full of extortion and excess."

The Lord has been very kind and gracious to us of the New Church; for He has taught us the inside meaning, or the internal sense, of the verses which we have just been talking about.

He has taught us that, just as our body has heart and lungs, so our spirit has will and understanding, which are the heart and lungs of the spirit. As the life of the body depends upon the heart and lungs and upon their being sound and well, so the life of our spirit depends upon our will and understanding, and on both being sound and well.

Since our will is to our spirit what our heart is to our body, the will is called "heart" in the Word of the Lord.

And since our understanding is to our spirit what the lungs are to our body, it is called "soul" in the Word. You may think this strange because you do not see any connection between "soul" and "lungs." You are right. It is not clear in English. But the three sacred languages, Hebrew, Greek and Latin, each have a word for "soul" which means also "breath." And as the lungs breathe, you can easily see that "soul" means something relating to the lungs. And indeed when we understand the truth about anything, then we breathe freely with our lungs, just as when we love a thing very much, our heart bounds.

The "heart," then, means our will, or our love; for what we love we will, and what we will we love. And "soul" or "breath" means our understanding, or our belief or faith; for what we understand we believe, or have faith in, and what we rightly believe or have faith in, this enters that part of our spirit called the understanding.

Now we are prepared to understand why the Lord tells us to love Him with all our heart and soul: we must love Him with all our will; and we must also believe in Him, and love to believe in Him, and study all that He teaches us in His Word, and love it because He has given it to us.

And the Lord has also taught us about the internal meaning of the statute to tie the commandment on the forehead and on the hand. It was to go on the forehead, because, when the Lord looks upon angels and people, He always looks upon their foreheads.

I wonder why?

Because the forehead signifies the goodness which comes to them when they love Him, and it is from His great Love that He looks upon them.

And how do the angels look at Him?

Through their eyes. And this means through the intelligence and wisdom which they have received from Him through the Truth He has given in His Holy Word.

It was to represent this, that He told the children of Israel to bind the commandment between the eyes.

Do you remember that the Lord said, that on this commandment "hang all the law and the Prophets"? The "Law" means all the story part of the Word, and the "Prophets" means all the prophecy part. Therefore the commandment was bound on the head, which is the chief or first thing of person's body; and on the hands, which are the most outside, or the last of the body, for the commandment is the first and the last that a person ought to think of, and love, and do.

## **Lesson 60**

### **Deuteronomy 31: The Written Law**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

We shall soon learn about the death of Moses. Joshua (called also Hoshea) would be leader in his place. What have we learned about Joshua? He was Moses' servant; he led the soldiers in the battle with Amalek before they came to Sinai (Exod. 17:9); he was with Moses in the mountain when the first tables of stone were broken (Exod. 32:17); he was one of the spies who went up from Kadesh, one of the two who encouraged the people to trust the Lord and to go into the land. Do you remember to which tribe Joshua belonged, and his father's name? The Lord had said that Joshua should take Moses' place. (Num. 27:12-23) Now the time was near and Moses and Joshua presented themselves before the Lord at the tabernacle. Moses told Joshua and told the people to be strong and of a good courage, for the Lord would not fail them, nor forsake them.

The Ten Commandments had been spoken to all the people at Mount Sinai, and the Lord wrote them on tables of stone. Other things had been written by Moses at the Lord's command in a scroll of parchment or papyrus, which was the kind of book used in those days. Many laws had been written (Exod. 24:4; 34:27) and also the story of the journey. (Exod. 17:14; Num. 33:2) In our chapter (verses 9, 24) we are told that Moses wrote "this law," the law as given in Deuteronomy, and that the book was kept by the priests "in the side of the ark," probably by the ark with the pot of manna and Aaron's rod.

It was commanded that all the people should gather at the tabernacle and temple to hear the law read, every seventh year, which was called "the year of release," because on that year all but foreign debtors were released from payment, and the cultivated land was allowed to rest. (Exod. 23:10-11; Deut. 15:1-2) On the seventh year, when the people gathered for the feast of Tabernacles, the autumn thanksgiving feast (Lev. 23:33-44), they should hear the law read. Joshua read the law to the people at Shechem soon after taking possession of the land. (Josh. 8:30-35) It may have been this same copy of the law written by Moses and entrusted to the keeping of the priests which, after being neglected and forgotten for long years, was found in the temple in the days of king Josiah and read again to the people. (2 Kings 22)

The Lord told Moses that the people would by and by disobey Him and worship idols and would come into trouble; and He gave Moses a song to teach the people (and he wrote it also), which

would remind them of the Lord. Nothing is so long remembered as a song. In that way many old traditions were kept and handed down in times when there were few books. This song is in the thirty-second chapter. It is a song of the Lord's loving care, with a warning not to disobey Him. Read the first fifteen verses.

1. What books of the Bible were written by Moses? Which of them describe events which Moses himself witnessed?
2. From what source did Moses take the first chapters of Genesis?
3. The Lord's Word must always be about heaven and the way to heaven; is that true of the story of Israel's journey? Is it true of the laws that were given them on their way?
4. For what purpose was the song given which we find in Deut. 32?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

A literary study of the Bible shows it to be a book made up of many smaller books which were written by different persons in different languages and at widely different times. And yet these books make one Word of the Lord, for the Lord used all these writers as His instruments, and guided them in their writing, and breathed into their words heavenly and Divine meaning, far more than they themselves knew. "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it." (Ps. 68:11) The first five books of the Bible are the books of Moses. Can you name them? Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are the story of events which Moses himself witnessed, with the laws which the Lord gave him to teach the people. The story of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would have been fresh in the memory of the people. The first seven chapters of Genesis, the story of creation and Eden and the flood, Moses copied from the Ancient Word which the Lord had given long before and which was preserved in Egypt. (S. 103; T. 279) He took from the same source the substance of chapters 8-11 to the beginning of the story of Abram. (A. 66)

What in general is the deeper meaning within the history of the going out of Egypt and the journey to Canaan? The many chapters of laws written by Moses (aside from the Ten Commandments) are not as yet of much practical use to Christians, but they will sometime be, for they contain in their deeper meaning all the principles of Christian life. (Matt. 5:17-18)

The law was to be read in the seventh year, the year of release. The seventh year when debtors were released, and the cultivated land was allowed to rest, was a sort of Sabbath year, and like the Sabbath day, it represents a peaceful, heavenly state when temptation and effort in doing right are ended and it is easy and delightful. (A. 8974-8976) 9272-9274) The connection between the Lord's commandments and this heavenly state must never be forgotten.

The song of Moses is full of the beauty of a Psalm, and in many places the heavenly meaning shines through the letter. Why are doctrine and speech likened to rain and dew? (Verse 2) What does water represent, water falling gently from above? (A. 3579; E. 644) Why is the Lord called the Rock? (Verses 4, 18, 31) What are spiritual stones, useful for foundations and for building? Verse 4 explains itself. (E. 411) The Lord's care is compared to the eagle's. (Verse 11) Wings

represent the power of spiritual thought, and so the Lord's Divine thought and providence. Compare Ps. 91:4; Matt. 23:37. (E. 281, 283)

## Lesson 61

### Deuteronomy 34: Death of Moses

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Moses was now an old man, a hundred and twenty years old. He had been the faithful leader of the children of Israel from the day that the Lord spoke to him at the burning bush and sent him to bring the people out of Egypt. He had prepared them to hear the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai and had taught them many other laws from the Lord, and he had done many signs and wonderful works at the Lord's command with his rod, both in Egypt and in the wilderness. Do you remember some of them? Once when Moses used his rod to do one of the wonderful works, he did not speak humbly and give the Lord the praise; it was when water was given the second time from the rock; and the Lord told Moses that he should not lead the people into the promised land. He should see it with his eyes, but he should not go over thither; he should die in Mount Nebo, a mountain in the land of Moab.

So Moses went up from the plain where the people were camping by the Jordan, to the top of Mount Nebo. Pisgah seems to be another name for Nebo, perhaps for the top of Nebo. It was opposite Jericho, across the meadows and the Jordan. From there the Lord showed Moses the land, to the north and west and south, where the tribes would soon find their homes. It was a wonderful view -the land which the Lord had promised to the people, to which he had been leading them; the good land of hills and valleys watered by the rain of heaven, the land of springs and streams, of wheat and vines and olives. "A land which the Lord thy God careth for. The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." (Dent. 11:12) The land was so blessed because it was a picture of heaven.

So Moses died in the mountain, in the Lord's care, and his grave was not known to anyone. He was old, but clear of sight and strong. The people mourned for Moses thirty days. Who would now be their leader? Joshua, who had been Moses' helper. At the Lord's command also, Joshua had been appointed and was ready to take the lead, and the people were ready to follow and obey him. Moses was remembered as one who knew the Lord and gave the people the Lord's message.

##### Junior

The book of Deuteronomy reviews many events of the story of Israel while Moses was their leader, and gives us a beautiful chance to review the parts of the story that we have learned. Let us take the last chapter of Deuteronomy in this way. "From the plains of Moab," the plains where the people were camping by the Jordan before entering the land. Have your map before you as you read how from Mount Nebo, or Pisgah, as the height is also called, the Lord showed Moses the land which he was not to enter. Why was Moses not to go into the land, but only to see it? You will

connect this with the second smiting of the rock for water. Read Num. 20:2, 7-13; Deut. 32:48-52; Ps. 106:32, 33.

We look with Moses from the mountain. To the north, on the east of Jordan, was the land of Gilead. Dan was far away at the springs of Jordan under Mount Hermon. Notice that the parts of the land are called by the names of the tribes of Israel, to whom they soon were given. Naphtali was on the west of Jordan, reaching toward Mount Hermon. Manasseh (the half tribe which was given a home west of Jordan) lay in the middle of the land, including Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, which were plainly seen from Nebo. Ephraim lay south of Manasseh, and across the Dead Sea Judah stretched away to the west toward the Mediterranean. Still to the left lay the open pastures of the south country. Nearby was the deep plain of Jordan, with Jericho at the foot of the bluffs across the river among its groves of palms. Close under the foot of the mountain was Zoar, one of the cities of the plain, which we learned of in the days of Abraham and Lot. (Gen. 13:10; 14:2)

So Moses died in Mount Nebo, having seen the promised land. Some of you have a picture of the old man looking out over the land, where Abraham had lived and Isaac and Jacob, where the children of Israel would now find a home, and where by and by the Lord would live and walk in the paths over the hills. Moses died, in the Lord's care, and the people mourned thirty days. Do you remember the mourning for Jacob (Gen. 50:3); and for Aaron (Num. 20:29)?

Now Joshua became leader. When did we first hear of Joshua? (Exod. 17:9) We remember him, too, with Moses when he came down from Mount Sinai with the tables of the Commandments in his hands. (Exod. 32:17) Joshua was one of the spies who went through the land of Canaan. (Num. 13:8, 16) He was appointed at the Lord's command and consecrated by Moses to be the leader. (Num. 27:18-23) The people were ready to obey Joshua and to follow him, for they knew that the Lord was with him as He had been with Moses.

1. Why were Moses and Aaron not allowed to enter the promised land?
2. Where did Aaron die? Who took his place as priest?
3. Where did Moses die? Who took his place as leader?
4. Show me on the map where Moses stood, and the land he looked out upon.
5. Who can tell me the story of Moses' life?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Moses and Aaron had spoken the Lord's word and shown the Lord's power to the people. Aaron the priest represented the Lord's love, and Moses the lawgiver the Lord's truth. What is meant by their death? Not that the power of the Lord fails, but the apprehension of the Lord that we have today must give place to a wiser and stronger one tomorrow, as we advance in regeneration. So Aaron gives place to Eleazar, and Moses to Joshua. There seemed to be a note of self-confidence in Moses' bringing water from the rock, which must be left behind before the heavenly life is reached. Moses and Joshua both stand for the Lord's truth with us, Moses for the Divine truth

leading, and Joshua for the Divine truth combating. In that thought it is interesting that Joshua is first introduced to us as leading the soldiers against Amalek, and he led the people in the conquest of Canaan. In general Moses represents a more intellectual grasp of the principles of the heavenly life, and Joshua a more living experience of them. To Moses it was said, "I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither." (Deut. 34:4) And to Joshua, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you." (Josh. 1:3; A. 8595)

"Whom the Lord knew face to face." Compare Deut. 34:10 with Exod. 33:20. No person can see the full divineness of the Lord, but the Lord has appeared to people in ways accommodated to their state. Before His incarnation He came by filling an angel with His presence. (A. 1925, 6831) On His appearance to Moses, see A. 4299.

Moses' view of the promised land from the mountain reminds us of the view of the holy city given to John from "a great and high mountain." (Rev. 21:10) There are high interior states into which our minds may be lifted, to be given visions of what life with the Lord may be in earth and heaven. To see it from a mountain is to see it as angels see it. Was it not another vision from a mountain when the Lord led the disciples and others into the mountain in Galilee and taught them of the Christian life in the Sermon on the Mount? After a vision from the mountain we must come down to live with the Lord's help the life which we have seen, to conquer the enemies which oppose, and to dwell in the promised land and the holy city. (R. 896)

## **Lesson 1**

### **Joshua 1: At the Jordan**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Do you remember Moses, and what he did for the children of Israel? And how he died in the mountain outside the promised land? Who now was to be leader of the people instead of Moses? The Lord had said who he should be, and he had been appointed and blessed by Moses, Joshua. We have learned several things about him while he was Moses' helper. We heard of him first when he led the soldiers against the Amalekites who attacked the people before they came to Mount Sinai. (Exod. 17:9) You remember him again with Moses, coming down from Mount Sinai, when the first tables of the law were broken. (Exod. 32:17) Joshua was one of the spies (of the tribe of Ephraim) who went up to explore the promised land; and he was one of the two who encouraged the people to go in and conquer it. (Num. 13:8, 16) Joshua is not a stranger to us; we already know him as a brave man and a soldier.

Notice especially in our lesson the words spoken to encourage Joshua: "Be strong and of a good courage." When Moses had given a charge to the people and to Joshua, he used the same words. Look back to Deut. 31:6-8. We can connect these words with Joshua. They are a kind of motto which belongs to him.

Verse 4 gives very wide boundaries to the land which should belong to the children of Israel. Mount Lebanon you find in the north. The Euphrates river is far off to the northeast. The great sea toward the sunset is the Mediterranean. Compare the words "toward the sunrising" in verse 15 of our lesson.

One other thing. Some of the people who had many flocks and herds liked the good pasture country on the east of Jordan, and wished to make their homes there. What had Moses told them? That if their armed men would first go with their brethren across Jordan and help them conquer their lands, they might then come back to their families and their flocks in the country east of Jordan and make their homes there. We read about this in Num. 32. Joshua and the people remembered this charge of Moses, and were ready to do as he had said. We learn later that they faithfully did their part, and came back to their homes east of Jordan. (Joshua 22:1-9) Is it too hard to remember what tribes they were who chose these homes east of Jordan? Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh. We find their names on the map.

The chapter ends with the words which we are going to think of when we think of Joshua: "Be strong and of a good courage."

## **Junior**

"Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord." These first words of our lesson bring back many memories. Moses the faithful leader of the people, and his death in Mount Nebo, east of Jordan, having seen the land which he was not to enter. And the new leader Joshua; what do we already know about him? Look up the places where we have heard of Joshua (referred to above). Notice what is told us about Joshua's name in Num. 13:8, 16. In that chapter he is first called Oshea, and it is said that Moses changed his name to Jehoshua. Oshea or Hoshea means "help" or "salvation," and Jehoshua, shortened to Joshua, means "Jehovah is my help." It is the same name which in Greek becomes Jesus, the name given to the Lord as Savior. (Matt. 1:21) It is good to think of Joshua and his victories as a type of the Lord and His far greater victories. Notice the association of the words, "Be strong and of a good courage," with Joshua in our present chapter and in Moses' charge. (Deut. 31:6-8) They should remind us of the courage in which the Lord fought His battles, and they are words to bring us strength. Notice, too, how the courage and strength are joined with the keeping of the law (the Ten Commandments and other laws) which Moses had written in a book. (Deut. 31:22-26) Courage and strength for us are joined with keeping of the law.

Look up the boundaries mentioned in verse 4. The people of Israel did control this extent of country in the days of David and Solomon. The Hittites, called also "children of Heth," were remains of an ancient people. They had been a strong nation with chief cities north of Palestine; and there were some still in Palestine, especially in Hebron. (Gen. 23:3; 25:10) Mentioned in connection with Lebanon and the Euphrates, "the land of the Hittites" seems to mean the country to the north and northeast.

Do you remember that some tribes of Israel wished to live east of Jordan? Which tribes were they? Why did they wish to live in this country? On what condition were they told that they might do so? This country the children of Israel had already conquered, taking the southern part from Sihon, king of the Amorites, and the northern part from Og, king of Bashan. Was the condition

remembered by the tribes? Did they keep their promise? (Num. 32; Joshua 22:1-9) Show me the homes of these tribes on the map.

1. What does the name Joshua mean?
2. What charge was repeated several times to Joshua?
3. What must we do to be sure that the Lord is with us and that we shall make our way prosperous and have good success?
4. On what condition were some tribes given homes east of Jordan? Which tribes?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The book of Joshua gives us the story of the conquest of the promised land. We know that spiritually it tells of conflicts and victories in coming into the experience of a heavenly life. It is beautiful that our courage and strength in these conflicts, and our success, are so directly associated with obedience to the commandments and with trust in our Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ. The book is the story of His victories and of ours in His strength.

I have spoken of this story of conquest as describing our coming into the experience of a heavenly life. We must first learn about the heavenly life, and it is another thing to come into experience of it. Moses was told that he might see with his eyes the promised land but might not enter it. Now to Joshua it is said, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you." Compare Gen. 8:9. Our Moses is the Lord's Word teaching us about the heavenly life, and giving us the laws of it, that we may see it with our eyes. Our Joshua is the Lord's Word going further, giving us courage and strength to fight the battles with evils in ourselves, and to come into experience of the spiritual life. (A.6752, 8581, 8595)

"Then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." There are no exceptions in the promise. It must always be true. Perhaps not if we measure prosperity and success by worldly standards, but if we have in mind the building of heavenly character, the possessing of our inheritance, our promised land.

We are to meditate on the Lord's law day and night: Compare the charge to talk of the commands, "when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." They must pervade and govern all our life. What is the spiritual day in which we need the Lord's law, and the spiritual night in which we need it no less? Are there brighter states and darker states, heavenly states and worldly states? (E. 526, 527)

The chapter tells of certain tribes which wished to make their homes in the country east of Jordan, and of the condition on which they were allowed to do so. The Holy Land itself represents a spiritual, a heavenly life, and the country beyond its borders represents natural states and interests, among them the enjoyment of physical comfort, of food and drink, of natural beauty, of rest and recreation. Are these good? Does the Lord wish us to live in these? Does He give these His blessing? On one condition, that they are enjoyed and used in ways to help the spiritual life. With the permission to certain tribes to make their homes beyond Jordan, we may well associate the Lord's visits to this district. There was His long ministry among the simple people beyond Jordan

in the land of Gad, and His visits across the Sea of Galilee, first to cast out the swine-like devils, and then to bless the loaves and feed the multitude, this in the old land of Bashan, which became the home of the half-tribe of Manasseh. Here was the picture and promise of the Lord's extending of His presence and blessing even to these natural departments of life, to the enjoyment of natural interests and pleasures. The old condition still holds, that they shall be used to help the spiritual life.

## **Lesson 2**

### **Joshua 2: Visit to Jericho**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

From the east bank of the Jordan the children of Israel saw the hills of Canaan some eight miles away across the plain. They were steep bluffs, brown and barren, belonging to the wilderness of Judaea. At the foot of these hills was Jericho the "fragrant place," called also "the city of palm trees," both names no doubt being given from the gardens and orchards about the city.

Jericho in the Old Testament days was a different place from the Jericho mentioned in the Gospels; it stood a mile farther north, close under the hills. Directly behind the city rose a stern weather-beaten cliff; it is now called Mount Karantel, which means "forty," from a tradition that it was here that the Lord spent the forty days in the wilderness when He was tempted; for the same reason hermits have lived in the caves of the mountain, feeling that it was a holy place. There is a mound, formed at least in part of ruins, where the old city stood, from under which a large spring of water, clear but warm, breaks out. It is called "Elisha's Fountain" in memory of the story told in 2 Kings 2:18-22, how the prophet healed the water which was bad.

Standing on the mound of ruins above the spring we look out over the broad sunny meadows to the eastern hills. We remember what the people of Jericho said to Elisha, that "the situation of the city is pleasant." Here with water and careful cultivation, in warm sunshine that made the climate tropical, the gardens flourished and the beautiful date palms. The people who lived here before the children of Israel came had built a strong city with walls and gates.

What were the twelve men called who were sent into the land of Canaan from Kadesh long ago? Now Joshua sent two spies across the Jordan to Jericho, to see the land and the people and to bring back word. The king and people of Jericho learned that they were in the city and would have taken them, but a woman in whose house they were, treated them kindly; she hid them among the bundles of flax which had been brought from the field and were drying on the roof of the house. The roofs you know were flat, covered with earth rolled hard. Have you seen flax growing? What is made from it? When it was safe to do so, the woman let the men down from her window, which was on the city wall, and told them to hide for three days in the mountain (we think of the cliff behind the town with its many caves and hiding-places), for men were searching for them in the plain. So they came back safe to Joshua. They told him that the people of the land were weak with fear of the children of Israel. They told also of the kindness of the woman and of

the promise they had made her, that when Jericho was taken she should be saved and all her family. She would mark her window by a line of scarlet thread so that it would be known. And this was done; the woman was saved and her family, and they lived among the people of Israel. (Joshua 6:22-25.)

1. When were spies sent to view the promised land?
2. What city was called "the city of palm trees"? Where was the city?
3. How were the two spies saved? What report did they bring back to Joshua?
4. Who were Nun, Sihon, Og?
5. What is said in the chapter about a gate, a housetop, a window, flax, a scarlet thread?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

If heaven and a heavenly life are represented by the land of Canaan, what in particular are represented by the high hills of the land, and what by the low plain of Jordan on the border of the country? The high hills represent interior, spiritual states, and the low plain represents states of external usefulness and enjoyment. This was the meaning when Lot chose the plain of Jordan for his home and Abram dwelt upon the hills. Remember also that John's teaching of repentance and of good outward life is associated with this same plain of Jordan. (A. 1585, 1590)

Jericho was a city in the plain, at the entrance of the land. It represents one of the first states of heavenly life of which one has experience; its name "the city of palm trees" suggests that it is a state of safety in the saving power of the Lord. Palms in ancient days were emblems of victory, and in the best sense of victory over evil, and safety in the power of the Lord. Remember how the multitude welcomed the Lord into Jerusalem, waving palms and crying, "Hosanna, save now" (John 12:12-13), and how the multitude in the Revelation with palms in their hands ascribed salvation to the Lord. (Rev. 7:9-10; A. 8369; E. 458; R. 367) Before the children of Israel crossed the Jordan, Jericho was in the hands of the enemies; it then represented a state of evil in outward life, of selfish indulgence and of careless security in evil ways. (A. 1585, 9325 end; E. 700) We shall think again of the meaning of Jericho when we come to the taking of the city.

The woman in Jericho who treated the Israelites kindly and was afterward saved by them represents enjoyment in the things of natural life that can be separated from the influences that have led it astray and made it evil and can be guided truly and made a part of heavenly character. A simple good affection is also represented by the scarlet thread which she hung as a sign in her window: The warm, rich colors suggest affection and love. A deep ruby red (called by Swedenborg purple) stands for the deepest love of the Lord; and scarlet, which is less deep but more conspicuous, for neighborly love and charity. (A. 9468; R. 725)

Does the story of the spies, how they found safety on the housetop and afterward in the mountain, remind you of words in the Gospel? (Matt. 24:16-17) The housetop and the mountain mean good states of love to the Lord and one another. The flax represents simple truth of what is right. (Rev. 19:8; A. 3650-3654, 7601)

## **Lesson 3**

### **Joshua 3: Crossing the Jordan**

#### **THE STORY**

It will be a good introduction to our lesson, to get a little acquainted with the Jordan by maps and pictures. It is the important river of Palestine. It has its beginning chiefly from three sources under Mount Hermon: the Hasbany River which comes from the west side of Hermon, and the two great springs at Banias and at Dan out in the open valley. The stream passes through Lake Merom and enters the deeply sunken valley, down which it flows swiftly. Jordan means "descender." The surface of the Sea of Galilee is about 682 feet below the ocean level, and the surface of the Dead Sea about 1300 feet below the ocean, making the plain at the head of the Dead Sea perhaps the deepest depression on the earth's surface which is not filled by water. It is about another 1300 feet to the bottom of the Dead Sea at its greatest depth. The meadows of the Jordan spread out to a width of some eight miles north of the Dead Sea, and the climate is very hot. The Jordan, as wide as a wide street, runs in a channel cut below the level of the meadow and filled with trees. The course of the river as shown in pictures from airplanes is extremely winding. That Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest, means that in the spring after the winter rains and with the melting snow of Hermon the river is full, running among the trees in its sunken channel but not rising to the level of the broad meadows. This was the condition, near to the Passover time, when at the command of Joshua the people of Israel made ready to pass over.

#### **Primary**

From our pictures and our talk about the river Jordan, we come to our story. Shittim, meaning "the acacia trees," was in the plain where the people had been for a good while camping. They came close to the river. The ark was to go first. Do you remember the ark, the precious chest made of wood and covered with gold, and with the cherubim on the cover, which held the tables of the commandments? It was kept in the most holy chamber of the tabernacle, and on the march it was carried by its poles on the shoulders of priests, covered by the veil which hung before it in the tabernacle, a covering of skins, and a blue cloth over all. (Num. 4:5-6) The ark was to go first, about two thousand cubits (three thousand feet) before them, and the people should reverently follow.

Now came a great sign of the Lord's power, which made the people of Israel sure that the Lord was with them and Joshua, and brought fear to the people of Canaan. Listen to Joshua's words, and to the story of what happened. (Joshua 3:9-17) It was a sign of the Lord's power in His ark, which gave promise to the people that the Lord would be with them and give them power to conquer the land.

#### **Junior**

We also must learn what we can about the Jordan River. Read above. I would like to go with you across the hot meadows and look with you at the interesting river, sweeping the branches of its overhanging trees. Perhaps we could swim in its water. And while there we should no doubt think of John the Baptist's baptizing in the Jordan, and the Lord's coming to be baptized. Then we might

sit on the bank near the river and read the story of how the river was opened like a gate by the Lord's power, to let the people of Israel into the promised land. "Right against Jericho," where was that? As we stop reading someone asks, "Did the Lord use any natural means to stop the Jordan and to make its bed dry, as He used the east wind at the Red Sea?" (Exod. 14:21) We are not told. Adam and Zaretan were some miles to the north, near where the brook Jabbok comes into the Jordan. It might be that at this season of high water the Lord would cause a landslide or some other means to dam the stream. It might be that the Lord's power in the ark worked directly to check the stream and hold it back while the people passed over. We are not told what means the Lord used, but only the important fact that it was done by the Lord's power, as a sign of His presence with the people and a promise of success in conquering the land. Notice the effect of the miracle upon the native people. (Joshua 5:1) It is a grand lesson of the Divine power in the Ten Commandments, a power which we may feel when evil feelings and thoughts come as a flood to bar our way, and we resist them with the Divine words, "Thou shalt not." It was the Lord's way of answering the tempter (Matt. 4:1-11); and that was in the wilderness near the place where the power of the ark was shown. The miracle at the Jordan in the days of Joshua told in its deeper meaning this secret of the Lord's strength in His life in the world, and of our strength to overcome every false and evil thing which would keep us out of heaven; for our Holy Land is heaven. Compare Rev. 22:14: "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

Someone goes back to the long names in the tenth verse. They are the names of native peoples of the land, whom the Lord would give them power to drive out. The Hittites were heard of in our last lesson. These and the Hivites (whom we shall learn more of presently) were remnants of ancient peoples, living in several towns. The Perizzites were villagers of the middle part of Canaan. See Gen. 13:7. Of the Gergashites nothing is surely known. The Amorites were the highlanders of the country, and the Jebusites lived on the hills where Jerusalem afterward stood.

Someone else has a question about verse 12. What were these twelve men for? What have they to do with the story? We are not told in this chapter, but we learn when we look on to chapter 4:1-10. But that takes us into our next lesson.

1. Who led the children of Israel to the border of the promised land? Who led them into the land? In what book of the Bible do we read this part of the story?
2. Where were the children of Israel when Moses died? What was between them and the promised land? Where does the Jordan rise? Where does it empty? At what season of the year did the children of Israel enter the land?
3. How was the way opened for the children of Israel through the Jordan? Why did the ark have power? How can we know the power of the commandments in our own experience?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

You will enjoy no less than the children learning all that you can of the wonderful Jordan River. See airplane pictures of the river and valley if you can; they are very interesting. But you are

already thinking about the spiritual meaning of this river of the Holy Land which opened like a gate to give the people entrance. A river of the Holy Land must in a good sense represent truth of the heavenly life; and the Jordan, which formed the boundary of the land, must in a good sense represent the simple literal truth of the Lord's commandments. How plainly that was its meaning when John the Baptist baptized in Jordan, and taught the duty of repentance in obedience to the literal Divine commandments. That the Jordan represents the Divine commandments which have cleansing power beyond all laws and standards of the world is beautifully shown in the story of Naaman. (2 Kings 5:12-14) The entrance of the people of Israel by the Jordan, at the lowest point of the land, to climb from there into the hills, has much the same meaning as John's preaching of repentance and baptism in the Jordan, as introduction to the Christian life. (A. 1585-1590)

But wait, there seems to be a difficulty from the fact that the Jordan opposed the entrance of the people into the land, and this opposition was overcome by the Lord's power in the ark and the commandments. The land was then occupied by wicked nations, the enemies of Israel, and as the border of their country the Jordan represents the false reasonings and excuses which justify and lead into evil life. The ark stands in the Jordan and divides the stream when such reasonings are met by the power of the commandments: "It is written, Thou shalt not." When the river flowed again it was as the boundary of the home of Israel, and it represented the Lord's commandments introducing to and protecting a heavenly life - the proper meaning of the Jordan. (A. 1585, 4255; E. 700)

See a beautiful lesson in verse 4. The ark must lead, and we must follow reverently, "for ye have not passed this way heretofore." Our life in this world, and every day of our life, is an untried way, in which we need this guidance and protection. "Ye have not passed this way heretofore."

This lesson of the Divine power in the ark and the commandments is followed by others, as before the walls of Jericho. Put these with the wonderful teaching of our doctrines about the power of the Word and the commandments in their letter, before which evil has no power. Put them also with the little experience which we have had of their power when we have remembered them for help in some moment of temptation.

## **Lesson 4**

### **Joshua 4; 5:10-15: Coming into the Land**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Read verse 1. Does it bring back to you the story of the priests carrying the ark of the commandments on their shoulders, standing in the bed of the Jordan, while all the people of Israel went over on dry ground? It was a sign of the Lord's power which was with them in the commandments. While the priests with the ark were still standing, and the river-bed was still dry, something else was done by twelve men whom Joshua had chosen and made ready, one man from every tribe. They took up twelve stones from the river-bed where the priests with the ark were standing, and carried them over on their shoulders, and laid them down in the plain of Jordan

where the people made their first camp in the land. It was at Gilgal in the plain, to the east of Jericho, between Jericho and the river. At the same time they set up twelve stones in the river-bed, which presently were covered by the water when the priests came up with the ark, and the Jordan flowed again with a full stream. What was the meaning of these stones, in the river and on the land? The story tells us. They were for a memorial, a monument to mark a great event, to keep the people reminded of the Lord's power which opened the river for them, and which would be with them in the land.

It was the tenth day of the first month, when the people crossed the Jordan and camped in the promised land. It was spring, and the land was beautiful after the winter rains. And also this was the time for the Passover, the feast that was first kept on the night of leaving Egypt. Each year it should be kept on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month. The people had just time to make ready for the Passover and to keep it. Now they had come to a land of fruits and grains, and the manna came no more after they had eaten of the old corn of the land. Who remembers about the manna; when it was first given; how long the people had been having this food from heaven; what it was like when they found it in the morning on the ground?

One more encouragement was given to Joshua. Read Joshua 5:13-15. Does it remind you of another story about putting off shoes and standing on holy ground? (Exod. 3:5) It was when the Lord at the burning bush called Moses, and sent him to his great task, to bring the people out of Egypt. Much the same promise of the Lord's help comes to Joshua before his great task, the conquering of the promised land.

### **Junior**

We left the priests carrying the ark of the commandments standing in the Jordan, when by the power of the Lord the water was cut off, and the river-bed was dry while the people of Israel passed over. Twelve men were mentioned in Joshua 3:12, out of every tribe a man; but we were not told why these men were appointed, or what they were to do. Who has read chapter 4, and can tell us? Two things: to take twelve stones from the river-bed and set them up at the place of the first camp; and to set up twelve stones in the river. At what place was the camp? Can you show it on the map? What were the name of the place, and the meaning of the name? It is an important place, for it was the camp of Israel and the base of activities for some time. The name Gilgal means a "circle" and "rolling." Possibly the stones were set up in a circle, and it meant to the people of Israel that the Lord had rolled away from them the reproach of Egypt. They were no longer slaves, but a free people in their own land.

What was the reason for setting up the stones at Gilgal and in the river? Why are monuments set up? Think of some monuments that you know, statues of people, monuments recording great events. Yes, they are to record facts of history so that the children of new generations will not forget them; and not only to record the facts, but to keep alive the spirit of the great events. What fact should you say was recorded by the stones set up in the Jordan and at Gilgal, and what spirit should they keep alive with coming generations?

It was on the tenth day of the first month that the people crossed and camped in Gilgal. The first month was in the spring, at the time that they came out of Egypt. "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year to you." (Exod. 12:2)

Do you remember what feast the children of Israel kept on the night that they left Egypt? The Passover; and they were to keep it each year at the same season. So now they kept the Passover at Gilgal, in the plains of Jericho, on the fourteenth day of the month. Compare Exod. 12:6. You remember how the feast was eaten in the evening, with a lamb and unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Now they were in the land of wheat and barley. They had bread made of the old corn, and they roasted green ears of the new harvest at the fire and ate them. Then the manna ceased, and it came no more. Remember when the manna was first given, before the people came to Sinai; and now they had had this bread from heaven forty years. (Exod. 16:4, 35)

The story of Joshua 5 gathers about the first keeping of the Passover in the promised land. Have we learned of another keeping of the Passover since leaving Egypt? (Num. 9:5) The circumcision mentioned in the first part of Joshua 5 connects itself with the Passover. The circumcision was a purifying and preparation for the sacred feast.

A sign was given to Joshua in the plain by Jericho by which he should know that the Lord was with him and the people to give them victory. There appeared to him a man, who was an angel, with his sword drawn in his hand; and the angel said, "As the captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." It was a sign that the power of the angels and of the Lord was with him. The words, "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy," do not sound strange. Where have we heard such words before? (Exod. 3:5) Both Moses and Joshua, in taking up the duty of leading the people, must learn the same lesson, to come near reverently to the Lord, to be taught by Him.

1. What was done that the people might remember how the Lord cut off the Jordan before the ark?
2. What feast did the people keep just after coming into the land? What season of the year was it?
3. How long had the children of Israel been fed with manna? When did it cease?
4. How was it shown to Joshua that the power of the Lord would be with him?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The Jordan, the river of Canaan, and the gate of entrance, represents normally the literal Divine truth as contained in the Ten Commandments, which gives entrance to the heavenly life. Associate the Jordan with John's baptism and preaching of repentance. But when idolatrous nations occupied the land of Canaan the Jordan represented false teaching which leads to and excuses evil life. The cutting off of the Jordan before the ark shows the power of the commandments to dispel such false thoughts, and the Jordan is restored to its proper meaning. (A. 1585-1590, 4255; E. 700)

And now the twelve stones set up in the river, and the twelve stones from the river set up at Gilgal. Stones represent sure facts, and stones as monuments represent facts which need to be remembered. The stones in Jordan stand for the fact that the Divine commandments are stronger

than all falsity and stand forever as the only gate of entrance into heaven. "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Rev. 22:14) The words look forward to blessings unfolding in the life of heaven. And there is this thought also in the stones taken from the river and set up in the land. The same power of the commandments which gives entrance remains forever to give the victories of heaven and its blessings. The twelve tribes are represented in these stones, and the names of the tribes were on the gates of the Holy City, for the tribes represent all the blessed developments of the Christian and the heavenly life. When the Scripture says of a monument, as of these stones, "There are they unto this day," it means spiritually that the truth recorded is vitally and forever true. (E. 430; A. 3858)

If the manna was bread from heaven and represented the strengthening of the spirit from the Lord, why should it cease when the people came into the promised land? The manna represents the strength from the Lord in times of trial. It does not represent the full satisfaction of a life that has become altogether heavenly. That satisfaction is represented by the Passover in Canaan, and by the old corn of the land, and when the people had eaten of this the manna ceased. For a similar reason in the desert no manna fell on the Sabbath day, because the Sabbath represents heaven and its full life. (A. 8505, 8506)

Joshua would be strong and victorious and so may we all be, but we must obey the Lord's truth as leader and not ourselves. This truth is the angel with drawn sword. (A. 8595) What lesson do you see in Joshua's putting off his shoes in the presence of the angel? Reverence for the Lord's truth, and willingness to set aside mere worldly appearances and let the Lord teach us what is really good and true. (A. 1748)

## **Lesson 5**

### **Joshua 6: Jericho Taken**

#### **THE STORY**

Jericho has several times been mentioned. It stood at the foot of the bluffs at the western edge of the plain of Jordan, opposite where the people crossed the river. While finding it on the map we may learn that Jericho in Gospel days was where the brook Kelt and the road from Jerusalem came out upon the valley. In Old Testament days, at the time of our story, it was a mile farther north, at Elisha's fountain, below a very weather-beaten cliff. The modern Jericho is in still another place farther out in the plain. In our little picture we are looking out upon the plain from the ruins of old Jericho and we see the stream from the fountain running out to water the fields. Why is the spring called Elisha's fountain? (2 Kings 2:19-22) The hot climate of the Jordan valley and the water made Jericho a place of gardens. The name means "fragrant place." It was also called the "city of palm trees." (Deut. 34:3) It was the first city taken by the children of Israel after entering the land.

## **Primary**

We have today another story about the children of Israel, soon after they crossed the Jordan into the Holy Land. Who remembers about the crossing of the river Jordan? Ask the children to tell as much of the story as they can. The ark, you say? What was the ark? Describe again in a simple way the little chest of wood and gold, and the golden cover with the cherubim and the staves. How could the ark have power to divide the river? It was the Lord's power in the Ten Commandments written on the stone tablets in the ark.

This power was shown again at Jericho, a city near the Jordan, where enemies of the children of Israel lived. (If possible show pictures of the weather-beaten cliff behind Jericho, of Elisha's fountain, and the plain.)

Jericho had strong walls and gates. Describe the walls and gates of an ancient Middle-Eastern town, the gates being heavy doors often closed at night, and in times of danger. But the walls of Jericho fell, and the city was taken. It was the ark that did it, by the same power which divided the Jordan.

Tell the story of the march around the city six days, and seven times on the seventh day. First the armed men, then seven priests with trumpets made of rams' horns, then the priests carrying the ark (How did they carry it?), and after the ark another guard of soldiers. As they marched, the priests blew with the trumpets. On the seventh day they went about the city seven times and the people shouted, and the walls of Jericho fell. Listen while we read the story. (Verses 1-20) Now we know two stories about the ark and its great power: at the Jordan; at Jericho.

## **Junior**

Can you show me Jericho on the map? What was the meaning of the name? What sort of place was it, a village or a strong city? The people of Jericho were among the people of the land whom the children of Israel must destroy. This was because they were evil people with an evil worship, and because they represented evil things in everyone which must with the Lord's help be destroyed. The children of Israel were earnestly and repeatedly commanded to destroy them and to have nothing to do with their idols. When you read such commands, you must remember also that all these people of the land stand for evil things in ourselves, which must be thoroughly put out, and all that belongs to them; no compromise, no half-way work. Jericho was the first city of the land to be taken. In taking it they would learn what strength they had to depend on in the conquest they were beginning. Would it be their spear men, their archers, the great number of their soldiers?

We have learned how the Lord helped the people at the Jordan; read now Joshua 6:1-20 and learn how He helped them at Jericho. The same power helped them in both cases, the Lord's power in the ark. The words translated "trumpets of rams' horns" are said to mean "trumpets of jubilee," "trumpets of loud sound." We have here another proof of the Lord's power with the people, to give them success in conquering the land. The people of the land saw it also and were the more afraid.

Does this mean something to us in conquering wrong things in ourselves? Is our strength in learning, in arguing? No, but in remembering the Lord's commandments and saying promptly and courageously, "Thou shalt not." And the seven days of going about the city, and seven times on the

seventh day, does it mean that we should try only for one week, or seven times? Remember the Lord's answer to Peter: "Not seven times, but seventy times seven"; that is, Try perfectly; try patiently until you succeed, till Sabbath peace is gained.

The people and the things of Jericho are called "accursed." They were to be absolutely devoted to the Lord, the silver and gold and vessels of brass and iron, to come into the Lord's treasury, and the rest to be destroyed. The children of Israel must take nothing of the spoil for themselves.

But wait; there was one family in Jericho which was to be saved, the family of Rahab. To know the reason for this, we look back to Joshua 2. Two spies whom Joshua had sent across the Jordan to learn conditions in Jericho had been kindly received by Rahab and hidden from harm on the roof of her house, so that they got away safely. They promised Rahab that when Jericho was taken she and her family should be saved because of her kindness, and she was to mark her window, which was on the city wall, with a line of scarlet. She did this, and the promise was remembered and kept.

The chapter closes with a terrible prediction in regard to anyone who should rebuild Jericho. His oldest son would die when he began the work and his youngest son when the work was finished. Many years afterward the prophecy came true. (1 Kings 16:34)

We keep in our minds from this lesson the picture of the ark being carried around the city of Jericho, and of its power in throwing down the walls.

Today let each scholar cut out a picture of the country near Jericho and paste it at the top of a page. Write under it in a few lines the story of how Jericho was taken.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

We must make a little study of Jericho and its spiritual meaning. The Holy Land as the home of Israel is a type of a spiritual life and heaven. Interior heavenly states are represented by the central highlands of the land, and the holiness centers at Jerusalem. The lowlands at the borders of Canaan east and west represent lower, more external states. We had this in mind when Lot chose for his home the plain of Jordan, and Abram kept to the hills. It is again in mind as the children of Israel enter the land at its lowest point, to climb up into the hills. Jericho in a good sense represents not an interior spiritual state, but one of simple instruction and good life. The name "city of palm trees" tells us that the state described has knowledge of the saving power of the Lord, for this is the meaning of palms. But before the children of Israel took the city, while it was the home of their enemies, Jericho represented an evil state of life, with a sense of security in these evil ways. The walls of the city about which so much is said are the arguments and excuses by which the evil ways are justified. They are walls to be thrown down not by our own strength, or by our learning, or by our powers of argument, but by the power of the Divine commandments as they are faced with their simple, "Thou shalt not." (E. 700; A. 1585) It is of some interest to note that the stern cliff behind Jericho is associated by tradition with our Lord's temptations in the wilderness, and His answers to the tempter.

The number seven is prominent in the story of the taking of Jericho. Does it say something about the thoroughness and patience with which the commandments must be used in overcoming an evil in ourselves? After the week of effort come victory and the Sabbath peace. (A. 716; E. 257)

The blowing of the trumpets and the shouting are expressions of the power in the Divine laws. Remember the trumpet voice at Sinai when the commandments were given. (Exod. 19:16, 19) Horns, the strength of the animals that have them, are also emblems of power. Sheep and lambs are types of innocence and gentle affection. Rams' horns represent the strength of the Divine innocence and love, speaking in the commandments and felt in our lives as we keep them. (A. 2830, 2832)

We must consider at the beginning of this story of conquest the apparent cruelty in the commands to destroy enemies and their possessions, sometimes in part and sometimes wholly. It is a help to know that such commands express our duty to overcome wholly evils in ourselves, without compromise. In the old days it was the evil in the world that the Lord hated, but people then could not separate the wrong from the wrong doer; they were not ready for the Christian law of hating the wrong but loving the wrong doers. To them hating the evil meant hating and destroying the one who did the wrong. In the case of Jericho the gold and silver, copper and brass were to be saved and brought into the treasury of the Lord. There are habits of natural kindness and treasures of knowledge which are made evil by association with evil motives but are good when separated from evil motives and devoted to the service of the Lord. Rahab also and the scarlet thread in her window represent a simple charity capable of being turned to good. There is a touching interest in finding the name of Rahab and the name of Ruth the Moabitess also, of whom we shall learn a little later, in the genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. 1:5) They represent simple, natural affections which could have a place in our Lord's human nature, to be corrected and glorified.

The prediction concerning one who should rebuild Jericho shows that our spiritual life will die if we willfully go back and practice and excuse an evil which the Lord has helped us to overcome. (Luke 9:62; Matt. 12:43-45)

## **Lesson 6**

### **Joshua 7: The Sin of Achan**

#### **THE STORY**

We must take advantage of these lessons to study our maps, and to get acquainted with the country which the children of Israel were conquering. We have come first to the plain of Jordan, and Gilgal, and Jericho in the edge of the plain. From this low land they must climb up into the hills, and their first thought was of Ai on the high hills near Bethel. We remember the place in the story of Abram and Lot, spelled there with an H. (Gen. 12:8; 13:3) Notice in our story that it was a steep, rough way up to Ai (Joshua 7:3, 5) Shebarim is said to mean the "quarries" or the "break." Taking Ai would give an entrance into the heart of the land.

## **Primary**

The people of Israel had taken Jericho down in the plain, and they must think next of climbing up into the hills. A steep valley would lead them up to Ai, on the high hills near Bethel. Joshua sent men to see the place and how it was defended. They said there were few defenders and that a small army would be able to take it, but they were disappointed. The men of Ai came out and drove them away, and chased them down the rough, steep valley. The people were greatly discouraged, and Joshua especially felt that the Lord and His power were not with them, as they had been at the Jordan and at Jericho.

What was the reason? It was because someone in Israel had taken things from Jericho, to keep for himself. Remember that the people were very strictly commanded that the things from Jericho should be devoted to the Lord, the gold and silver, brass and iron to be for the Lord's treasury and the rest to be destroyed. Someone had taken precious things for himself. Read how the Lord helped them to search out who had done the wrong. We can think how the guilty man felt as the tribes came one at a time, and his tribe was taken; then the families one by one, and his family was taken; then his household, and at last himself. He knew now that nothing was hidden from the Lord, and he told what he had done. They ran to Achan's tent and found the stolen things, a goodly Babylonish garment, and silver and gold under it, hidden in the earth in the midst of his tent. They brought them to Joshua and to all the people, and laid them out before the Lord. This disobedience and wickedness must be wholly put away from among the people, and it was done in the only way that people in that day knew how to do it, by destroying Achan and his family and all that he had.

## **Junior**

Some member of the class should be the map keeper and show us the new places that come into each new story. We shall feel acquainted with the land when it is conquered, and shall be interested in its division among the tribes. We begin with the Jordan and Gilgal and Jericho. The new place that comes with today's lesson is Ai.

As you turn from the old Jericho at Elisha's Fountain, to the cliff behind, you find that you can climb around this mountain at either the northern or the southern end and so into a rough valley that leads you up among the hills which make the body of the land of Canaan. A journey of some fifteen miles climbing all the way would bring you to Bethel. But before this you would pass two miles east of Bethel, ruins and cisterns called Haiyan, where probably Ai stood.

Remember Abram's camp with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. (Gen. 12:8) Remember how Abram and Lot looked from these hills over the land. (Gen. 13:3, 10, 14) And remember how Jacob as he journeyed slept one night at Bethel. (Gen. 28:10-22)

After Jericho was taken, Joshua sent men up into the hills to spy out Ai, and when they said there were but few to defend the place, he sent three thousand men to take it and made not the whole people "to labor thither." But the men of Ai drove them back, and chased them even into Shebarim (the "quarries" or the "break"), and smote them in the going down. This was a place where the way was especially rough and steep.

Now Joshua and the people were discouraged. The Lord seemed not to be with them. It was because someone had taken for himself something from the city of Jericho, which they were commanded to destroy or consecrate to the Lord. Read how the Lord helped them to search out who had done the wrong. We can think how the guilty man felt as the tribes came one by one and his tribe was taken, then the families came one by one and his family was taken, then his household, and at last himself. He knew now that nothing was hidden from the Lord, and he told what he had done. They ran to Achan's tent and found the goodly Babylonish garment, and the silver and gold under it, hidden in the earth in the midst of his tent. They brought them to Joshua and to all the people, and laid them out before the Lord.

This disobedience and wickedness must be wholly put away from among the people, and it was done in the only way that people in that day knew how to do it, by destroying Achan and all his family and all that he had. They brought them to the valley of Achor, to the Kelt where it runs out from the rocky hills. There they stoned them with stones and burned them with fire and raised over them a great heap of stones. It meant that they had put away all disobedience from among the people. Now the Lord could give them victory again.

Does the punishment of Achan seem severe? It was severe, and belongs to a time when people had not learned to separate in their thought a wrong doing from the person who did the wrong. See Psalm 139:19-24. The Lord in the Sermon on the Mount and in all His teaching showed the Christian way, which is to hate and fight against the wrong, but to love the wrong doer and try to help him or her. Laying out the stolen things before the Lord is a picture of a complete repentance, which confesses all to the Lord and holds nothing back. Compare 2 Kings 19:14. Joshua told Achan to give glory to the Lord, and we all ought to be glad to have an evil in ourselves overcome by the Lord's help. You will guess that Achan means "troubling" (verse 25).

1. What was the first city taken by the children of Israel in the land of Canaan? What did they try next to take? Where was Ai?
2. Why did they fail when they tried to take Ai? How was it found who had done the wrong? What had he taken?
3. What was done to Achan?
4. When we have done wrong can we hide it from the Lord, or should we try to hide it from Him or from our parents? What should we do?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

We have read several times of sending spies. Spies went before the people to Jericho, and now they are sent to Ai. In what way must we spy out the heavenly land before we take possession of it?

When we are in trouble is it not right to pray to the Lord? Why did the Lord say to Joshua, "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou upon thy face? . . . Up, sanctify the people." Compare the words to Moses in Exod. 14:15. We must ask the Lord's help and then we must as of ourselves search out

what is wrong and make it right. The story of Achan tells us how the Lord knows us through and through. He sees just what is wrong and He helps us to find just where the fault is. We cannot hide anything from the Lord. We should not wish to hide anything from Him but should want Him to help us to see clearly and confess what is wrong. We should give glory to the Lord, and make confession unto Him, and lay the wrong out before Him.

We see in general what wrong is meant by Achan's taking the forbidden things from Jericho. It means the secret indulgence of the external evils of life represented by Jericho. A garment represents outward things of life – the thoughts and actions which clothe our inner affections. Babylon is always a type of self-love. (Gen. 11:4-9; Dan. 4:29, 30; A. 1307, 1326; R. 717) The goodly Babylonish garment therefore suggests habits of outward life that are pleasant but selfish and evil. The silver and gold under it are the principles of truth and love which are perverted by being made subservient to such a life. (E. 700) While we cherish outward evil habits which we know are wrong, the Lord cannot give us strength to go on to higher states of heavenly life. While something stolen from Jericho is hidden in our tent, we try to take Ai and fail. (A. 5135)

The destruction of all that Achan had, with even his sons and his daughters and his oxen and his asses and his sheep, seems to us very cruel, and so it was. It was according to the cruel customs of those days, and the Lord permitted them to do it so because it represented the total putting away of the wrong and all that belonged to it. Compare the destruction of the Amalekites required of Saul. (1 Sam. 15; A. 8593)

Can you see the meaning of stoning with stones and burning with fire? Punishments with the Israelites were representative. They were pictures of the inevitable consequences of wrong doing. Stones represent fixed, sure truths, or in an opposite sense falsities which are regarded as truths. Spiritual fire is the burning of love good or bad. Evil passion is the fire which destroys life. The stoning and the burning represent the destruction of both understanding and will by the indulgence of falsity and evil. We may also think of the stoning and burning as representing the complete putting out from the mind of what is false and evil by the power of truth and goodness. (A. 5071, 7456)

We know that "the Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." How shall we understand it when it is said that the Lord is angry? (Mark 3:5; A. 6997)

Where else do we read of rending the garments or of putting dust upon the head? (Gen. 37:29, 34; Num. 14:6; 1 Sam. 4:12; Matt. 26:65) They were signs of grief. In the old time, signs were never arbitrary but were outward expressions of inward states. Garments represent outward things, especially truth and thoughts which clothe affection. The head represents the affection itself, and the inmost affection. Rending the garments expresses grief because of falsity; putting dust upon the head, grief because of evil. (A. 4763)

We see significance in the fact that Israel entered Canaan at its lowest point, and afterward climbed up into the hills. We remember the association of Ai with Bethel in the story of Abram and Lot. (Gen. 12:8, 13:3) In the explanation of that story in the Arcana, the camp of Abram on the mountain near Bethel is shown to represent celestial things of love in our Lord's development as a child. A distinction in meaning between Bethel and Ai is pointed out. Bethel represents knowledge of things celestial, which at first were more obscure, and Ai knowledge of more worldly things, which at first were more plain; later Ai is not prominent in the story, for advance

had been made to the more celestial state of life. (A. 1453, 1557) The hills of Bethel and the plain of Jordan are contrasted in the story of the separation of Lot from Abram, Lot choosing the plain of Jordan, and Abram keeping to the hills. (A. 1583-1598)

The story of Achan presents very strongly the truth that the Lord cannot be with us to give us power when we are disobedient, and secretly keep and cherish for our own pleasure things that the Lord has told us to destroy; also that the Lord reads the heart, and that nothing is concealed from Him. Joshua's distress on realizing that the Lord's power was not with them, reminds us of Moses' crying to the Lord at the Red Sea; and in both stories we are shown that we have our part to do, the Lord helping us. (Exod. 14:13-16) In our present story we are shown the duty - the Lord helping us - of self-examination, of complete confession, and of fearless and vigorous putting away of the evil. What in our condemnation of evil is represented by the stoning with stones? what by the burning with fire?

## Lesson 7

### **Joshua 8:1-29: Ai Taken**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Now that Achan and his family had been destroyed, the children of Israel could try again to take Ai. Some soldiers went up quietly and hid themselves behind Ai. Then Joshua moved with more soldiers as if to attack the city. The men of Ai went out against them, and Joshua and his men ran from them, as the soldiers of Israel did the first time that they tried to take Ai. But this was to draw the men of Ai out of the city. At the right moment Joshua stretched out his spear, and the men that were behind Ai came out of their hiding and took the city. Joshua and his men also helped, and the city and people of Ai were destroyed.

##### **Junior**

What town did the children of Israel try to take after destroying Jericho? Why did they fail? Who can tell us now about the second attempt to take Ai? Now the disobedience had been put away from among them, they should go again against Ai and succeed. You remember the way up the rough valley among the hills, and Ai is reached about two miles before one comes to Bethel. Now read the story of the taking of Ai. Notice that from this city the people were allowed to take spoils for themselves, unlike Jericho. Joshua's stretching forth his spear until all the inhabitants were destroyed, reminds us of the battle with the Amalekites when Moses went to the hilltop with the rod of God in his hand, and while he held up his hands Israel prevailed. (Exod. 17:8-16) Ai was now taken, and the children of Israel had planted their power both in the plain of Jordan and high on the central hills of Canaan.

1. What was the next city of Canaan after Jericho which the children of Israel took? Did they take it when they first tried to do so? Why not?

- When they did take Ai, how was it done? What unseen army do we have to help us?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

What does the taking of Ai represent? The fall of Jericho in the plain near Jordan meant the overcoming of external evils and the entrance upon external heavenly states. Ai on the high hills represents an interior state in which evil must be overcome and goodness established. Bethel, the house of God, the place of Jacob's dream and the place from which Abram and Lot looked out over the land, represents a state of perception and knowledge of heavenly things. Ai represents a state of knowledge not so interior. When Abram camped with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east, it is said to describe a state in which as yet knowledge of heavenly things is obscure (the west) and knowledge of worldly things is clear (the east). This suggests why at this time the people took Ai, but there is no mention as yet of taking Bethel. (A. 1453, 1557)

Why did the people fail when they first tried to take Ai; when they took it, why was it done by an ambush? At first the people failed because Achan had stolen something from Jericho and hidden it in his tent. It represents a secret indulgence of evil. Till this is repented of, the power of the Lord is not with us to enable us to enter into states of inner perception and life. When we do repent we can enter into these states. Why? Because we ourselves are stronger than before? No, but because the unseen powers of heaven and the Lord are with us. Of ourselves we are still weak and should flee before the enemy just as we did before. But the powers of heaven fight for us, represented at another time to Elisha's servant by horses and chariots of fire, and represented here by the ambush on the side of Bethel, the house of God and gate of heaven. Notice that the ambush arose as Joshua stretched forth his spear. This like Moses' rod was an emblem of the Divine omnipotence - further evidence that the ambush represents the unseen power of heaven and the Lord. (A. 7673)

Why were the people to keep the spoil of Ai, while they must destroy that of Jericho? The gold, silver, brass, and iron saved from Jericho represent principles in themselves true which are useful when disassociated from evil. This is the case with all intellectual treasures, and the spoil of Ai seems to represent such treasures, for Ai and Bethel represent states of perception and knowledge.

The requirement to build the altar of stones over which no one hath lifted up any iron (Exod. 20:25) reminds us of what is said about the building of the temple. (1 Kings 6:7) We must take the Lord's truth as He gives it to us, and not fashion it to suit ourselves. (R. 457; A. 10406)

## **Lesson 8**

### **Joshua 8:30-35: The Law Read at Schechem**

#### **THE STORY**

As soon as possible after entering the land Joshua called the tribes to Shechem, to read to them there the blessings and curses of the law, and to write them on great stones set up and plastered over. We must picture the solemn event as vividly as we can. Remember that it was near Shechem that Abram first camped on coming into the land and Jacob also when he came back from Haran. These earlier incidents, as well as our present story, associate Shechem with early instruction in the truths of heaven. Here also the Lord taught the Samaritans at Jacob's well. Every visitor to Shechem notices two amphitheaters, one on each side of the narrow valley in which Shechem lies; one in the side of Mount Ebal on the north side of the valley, and one directly opposite in the side of Mount Gerizim on the south side of the valley. It was a perfect place for the tribes to gather, half on one side and half on the other. And every traveler notices with what wonderful plainness sounds from the valley below are heard on the mountain sides above. Now to our story, getting particulars from Joshua 8:30-35 and from Deut. 27. See also Deut. 11:26-32.

#### **Primary**

As soon as he could, Joshua brought the people of Israel to this place between the mountains, half of them standing on the side of Mount Ebal and half on the side of Mount Gerizim. Moses had told Joshua and the people to come to this place, to build here an altar; also to set up great stones and plaster them with plaster, and on the plastered stones to write words of the law.

Now something very interesting: standing by the altar, Joshua or the Levites read the law with a loud voice, and the people answered from the mountain sides. "Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of his way," and from the people on Mount Ebal came, "Amen." And so with other curses. And after each blessing, came "Amen" from the people on Mount Gerizim. It was very solemn and sacred, for the people were promising the Lord that they would keep His laws in the land that He was giving them.

#### **Junior**

While Moses was still with the people, before they crossed the Jordan, it had been commanded that they should meet at Ebal and Gerizim when they came into the land. (Deut. 11:29-32) It had also been commanded by Moses (Deut. 27) how great stones should be set up in Mount Ebal and plastered with plaster and on them should be written all the words of the law - the Ten Commandments (R. 662) -very plainly. These very stones or others set up near by should form an altar on which sacrifices should be offered. Six tribes had been named which should stand on either mountain, and curses had been given which the Levites should recite to the people with a loud voice. To each curse the tribes on Mount Ebal should answer, Amen; and as blessings were recited, the tribes on Mount Gerizim should say, Amen.

The place appointed for this meeting is most remarkable. Ebal on the north and Gerizim on the south stand facing each other. Shechem lies in the valley between as it slopes westward. At the

highest point in the pass, east of Shechem, there is a hollow like an amphitheater in the face of each mountain. They seem made by nature for the tribes, six on either side. Joshua, with the elders, officers, and judges, stood by the ark, probably in the valley between. There he read the law, and the tribes from one side of the valley and the other responded to the blessings and the curses.

You may wonder that the thousands of people could hear Joshua as he read and the Levites as they recited the blessings and the curses. But when you go to the place you find that it is indeed so. The shape of the hills is such that little sounds from the valley are carried up in a wonderful way, and voices are distinctly heard. Compare Judges 9:7. Read the story.

1. Where did the people gather to hear the law?
2. When the Levites recited the curses which should come upon wrong doers, who answered, Amen?
3. When they recited the blessings of the obedient, who answered?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

In connection with this gathering of the tribes at Shechem to pledge themselves to the Lord's laws, remember that Abram's first camp was near Shechem when he came into the land and Jacob's when he came back from Haran. "And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem, unto the oak of Moreh." (Gen. 12:6, Revised Version) This suggests that Shechem stands spiritually for an introductory state of heavenly life; and our present story suggests that it has to do with first instruction in the laws of heaven and a definite acceptance of those laws. The Arcana explaining Abram's sojourn at Shechem says that "by Shechem is signified the first appearing of celestial things," and that the oak or oak grove of Moreh represents first perceptions of a simple childlike kind. (A. 1439-1443) Note in the charge in Deut. 11:30 the mention of the oaks of Moreh with Shechem. It brings still closer the spiritual meaning of Abram's sojourn and this gathering of the tribes. It is beautiful also to remember in connection with Shechem our Lord's teaching at Jacob's well, and the ready acceptance of His teaching by the simple-hearted people.

The building of an altar represents a state of conjunction with the Lord, both in love and service of the Lord (burnt offerings), and in love and service of one another (peace offerings). (A. 8680) Altars might be built either of earth or of stone, picturing approach to the Lord in a more tender celestial way, or in a more intellectual spiritual way. Either was acceptable; but if built of stones the altar must be of whole stones, not cut by any tool of iron. (Exod. 20:25) The truths by which we may approach the Lord must be genuine truths as the Lord gives them to us, and not fashioned to suit ourselves. You will see a similar lesson in the building of the temple "of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building." (1 Kings 6:7; R. 457; A. 10406)

The dividing of the tribes upon the two mountains to answer to the blessings and the curses has the same reason as the recital of blessings and curses in Deut. 27 and 28. We need the commandments in their negative form forbidding evil, as well as in the positive form of blessings.

The response to the curses was from the northern mountain, and the north is associated with obscure perception, and the response to the blessings was from the southern mountain, the quarter associated with interior perception. (H. 148-150; A. 1458)

It would be interesting to make some study of the spiritual meaning of the tribes which stood on the mountains north and south, and answered "Amen" to the curses and the blessings. A careful reading of the names as given in Deut. 27:12, 13, is enough to show in general that the tribes of more external meaning stood on Mount Ebal, responding to the curses, and that the tribes of more internal and heavenly meaning stood on Mount Gerizim, responding to the blessings. On which side do you find the tribes descended from Joseph and Benjamin? We shall make further study of the tribes when we learn of the dividing of the land among them. Again remembering the Lord at Jacob's well, it is interesting to note that Gerizim became and still is the sacred mountain of the Samaritans. Looking up to Gerizim just above them the woman said, "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain." Tradition surrounded Gerizim with greater sacredness than Ebal.

## **Lesson 9**

### **Joshua 9: League with the Gibeonites**

#### **THE STORY**

For this lesson and the next, we need the map of the southern part of the land. The league with Gibeon led the children of Israel directly into the heart of the country. Then one battle and the campaign following gave them possession of the south; and one battle at Hazor near Lake Merom gave them possession of the north; and they were ready for the division of the land among the tribes. If you can, show a skin bottle, such as was used in Bible days, and still is used in Palestine.

#### **Primary**

While the children of Israel were camping at Gilgal in the plain of Jordan, there came travelers, who asked the children of Israel to be their friends and not fight against them. They said that they lived very far away and had come a very long journey. As they said this they showed old sacks upon their asses, and skins which were used for carrying wine, old and torn and bound up. They showed, too, their old shoes with patches, and their other old clothes. Their bread was dry and moldy, and they said that they took it hot from the oven when they left home.

The people of Israel were afraid at first that all this might not be true, and that the visitors really lived near by in the country which they were to conquer. But they were persuaded and Joshua and the leaders made a league with them; they promised to be their friends, and not to fight with them.

After the visitors had gone, they learned that they did live near by, in Gibeon and other towns near Gibeon, only a day's journey away. Joshua and the people went up and saw their cities. They had deceived the children of Israel, but Joshua and the leaders had made a league with them, had promised to be their friends. See Joshua 11:19. They would not fight with them; but they would make them servants, to cut wood and carry water.

## **Junior**

In my sketch book is a little drawing to which I like to turn once in a while. It is of a graceful double-topped hill with a green meadow about it, and this shut in by higher hills. The little town on the hill is el-Jib, the old Gibeon, lying a little to the northwest of Jerusalem. The people of Gibeon and some neighboring towns were Hivites, remnants of a very ancient people, keeping some goodness from the old days, which made them, like the Hittites, among the better people of Canaan.

What did these Gibeonites do after the children of Israel had gained victories east of Jordan and had now taken Jericho and Ai, and it was known that they had come to conquer the whole land? What did the Gibeonites ask the children of Israel to do? Why did they say that they had come on a long journey, when really their home was only 25 or 30 miles away, a journey that they might make in a single day? Compare Joshua 10:9. What did they show to make the children of Israel believe that they had come a long way? Verse 14 seems to mean that they ate together, which with the Eastern people is a firm pledge of friendship. What did Joshua and the leaders of Israel do? But three days later they learned who these Gibeonites were, and went and saw where they lived. Would they now destroy them and their cities? No, for they had made a league with them, and promised to be their friends; but they made them servants, hewers of wood and drawers of water; and they should do this service for the Lord's temple by and by when the temple was built. Look on the map, and see how this league with Gibeon led the children of Israel up into the heart of the land. Remember a beautiful association with Gibeon in 1 Kings 3:5.

1. What is meant by "the great sea"?
2. Who came to Joshua and the children of Israel at Gilgal asking a league of friendship? Why did the children of Israel make a league with them?
3. When the Israelites found out who the Gibeonites were, did they destroy them?
4. What service was required of them?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

Was it right for the Gibeonites to tell the children of Israel that they came from a far country when they did not? No, it was wrong; but there was still something good about these people, handed down from long ago, and for that reason the Lord permitted them to be saved and to live as neighbors to the children of Israel. In Joshua 9:7 the Gibeonites are called Hivites. This was an ancient race; in fact they were remnants of the Most Ancient Church. The Hittites also, who were friendly to Abraham in Hebron, were remnants of an early and more innocent time, as were the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem until the time of David. Because these people preserved some elements of truth and goodness, they were allowed to live for a good while among the children of Israel. (A. 6860, 4431, 4447)

The humble use, which the remnants of truth and goodness preserved from ancient days might serve, is represented by the position of servants given to the Hivites, making them hewers of

wood and drawers of water for the children of Israel and for the house of the Lord. What spiritual services are represented by these natural services, hewing of wood and drawing of water?

Do you see a certain truth contained within the falsehood which the Gibeonites told the children of Israel? They had come on a long journey in the sense that they were remnants of an ancient church. They had preserved and brought with them from distant days some little amount of goodness and truth, but much perverted, represented by their worn, patched garments and their dry and moldy food. These remnants of an earlier church should be saved and should strengthen the Jewish Church in its service of the Lord's altar. There is this deeper and beautiful meaning in the league made by Joshua with Gibeon.

In ourselves, we may think of the Gibeonites as representing something of external and natural goodness which has been preserved from the days of childhood and youth. It is not so fresh as it once was; it is moldy and torn. It is lacking much of the freshness and beauty of heaven, but the Lord in His tenderness will not reject even this poor kind of goodness, but makes it a servant in our spiritual life. (A. 1097, 1110)

## **Lesson 10**

### **Joshua 10: Victory in the South**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

You remember the people who said that they came from far away and made an agreement of friendship with the children of Israel at Gilgal. Where did they really live? At Gibeon. And where was Gibeon? When other kings of the southern cities (verse 3) heard that the Gibeonites were friends of Israel, they came together to attack Gibeon. Then the Gibeonites sent for Joshua, and he came by a hurried march by night with soldiers of Israel. There was a battle near Gibeon. The Lord's power was with Joshua and he chased the armies of the southern kings down from the hills and off into the level country.

You find the name Beth-horon in verse 11, and you find on the map Upper Beth-horon and Lower Beth-horon. These places were at the top and the foot of a rough pass leading from the hills down into the low country. It has been famous in history, for many armies have found their way up or down this pass. The enemies of Gibeon fled by this way, and the soldiers of Israel attacked them, going down the rough road. Great hailstones also fell and killed many of them. Still the children of Israel chased them till they came to a place with caves and in one of these the five kings hid themselves.

One very interesting thing in connection with this battle: It was perhaps as Joshua stood at the Upper Beth-horon at the top of the rough pass, looking across the broad meadows to the sea, that he said, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon." And the story says, "And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies." A light was given them from heaven like the sun, and another light like the moon, which made the day longer for them.

Afterward the five kings were brought from the cave and killed, and Joshua and his soldiers made a raid through the south country and took and destroyed the strong cities. This gave the children of Israel victory over the southern part of the country. "And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal."

Have some of you a picture of the ruins of Lachish, with a part of the mound dug away to find the ruined buildings and other relics of the old times? Among the things found at Lachish is a little thing like a cracker. It is made of clay baked hard. The queer marks covering both sides of it are writing. It is a letter written in the time of Joshua. It is from towns not far away, begging for help from Lachish to protect them from enemies who were spoiling their country.

### **Junior**

Gilgal, Jericho, Ai, Gibeon. The children of Israel had come into the very heart of the land. Next they conquered the country to the south and then the country to the north. We learned today of the victory over the southern country. Keep your map before you for this lesson. You must think of this country as a highland, on the east breaking down steeply to the deep Jordan valley and the Dead Sea, on the west falling more gently and still quite suddenly to the broad, green Philistine meadows which stretch away to the Mediterranean. When the people went from Gilgal to Ai, were they going up or down? (Joshua 7:3-5; Luke 10:30)

Joshua and the children of Israel were in the camp at Gilgal, and the people of Gibeon had made the league of friendship with them. The king of Jerusalem called four other kings of the southern country to join him, and the five kings with their armies went against Gibeon and camped in the plain in which the hill of Gibeon stands. We know Jerusalem and Hebron. Lachish and Eglon we find near together in the Philistine country in the line between Hebron and Askelon. Jarmuth (el-Yermuk) was about half way between Lachish and Jerusalem.

When the Gibeonites saw this army camped against their city they sent for help to Joshua, in the camp at Gilgal. "Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, and went up from Gilgal all night," and the Lord gave the children of Israel the victory at Gibeon. From Gibeon the enemy fled toward the Philistine country. The two Beth-horons are on the way. The first to which they came is Upper Beth-horon. Here you are on the edge of the highland and look out over the lower hills and the plain to the sea. Two miles farther on is Lower Beth-horon. Between the two it is a narrow rocky path going steeply down. Here the children of Israel overtook the fleeing enemies. Great hailstones also fell and killed many of them. Still the children of Israel chased them far out into the Philistine country to Makkedah near Ekron. Here there were caves and in one of them the five kings hid themselves.

Perhaps it was at Beth-horon that Joshua cried, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon." Gibeon was in the southeast, and Ajalon the same distance away to the southwest. A light was given to the children of Israel by the Lord, so that it seemed to them that the sun and moon stood still to help them, for a whole day. The words which Joshua spoke to the sun and moon were written in the book of Jasher, which was a book of sacred prophecy, a part of the Ancient Word, which was the Bible before our Bible was written.

Someone may ask, Could the sun and moon stand still without upsetting the order of the universe? Swedenborg answers, "This miracle, if it had been literally accomplished, would have

inverted the whole order of nature, which is not the case with the rest of the miracles recorded in the Word. . . . But nevertheless that a light was given to them out of heaven as the light of the sun in Gibeon and a light as that of the moon in the valley of Ajalon is not to be doubted." (E. 401)

Then Joshua and his army made a wide circuit through the southern country and destroyed many cities. Libnah is unknown. The kings of Lachish and Eglon were among the five who had made war. The king of Gezer, a town of the foot-hills not many miles from the caves where the kings had hid, came to help Lachish, but he and his army were destroyed. From Eglon, Joshua turned up the valley into the hills to Hebron, another of the cities whose king made war. He then turned south to Debir, half way to Beer-sheba.

So the power of the children of Israel was felt through all the southern country, even to Kadeshbarnea, where the people camped when the spies were sent through the land, and to Gaza near the seashore. Goshen: not Goshen in Egypt, but a district perhaps between Gaza and Gibeon. All this they were able to do "because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel. And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal."

1. Who fought with the children of Israel at Gibeon? The king of Jerusalem and four other kings.
2. What helped the Israelites in the battle? Hail fell upon their enemies, and a light was given them out of heaven as if the sun and moon stood still.
3. After the battle which way did the conquerors go before returning to the camp at Gilgal? They made a circuit through Philistia and the South Country.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

We must learn more about the saying, "Sun, stand thou still," etc. What was the book of Jasher, or of the Upright, from which the words are taken? See S. 103, which tells you about the book of the Wars of Jehovah and the Enunciations and the book of Jasher, which were books of the Ancient Word, before our Word was written. We have short quotations from the Ancient Word in Num. 21:14, 15; 27-30, and another quotation from the book of Jasher in 2 Sam. 1:17, 18. And do not forget that the early chapters of Genesis are from the Ancient Word, the first seven chapters precisely (S. 103 end), and the first eleven chapters in substance (A. 66).

But what does the saying mean spiritually, about the sun and moon standing still? The sun with its fire and heat is a type of love, the Lord's love and love from Him in our hearts; and the moon with its cooler light is a type of the Divine truth and the light of faith in our minds. The standing still of sun and moon here means that the love represented by the sun and the faith represented by the moon were utterly perverted with those with whom Israel was fighting. Their judgment was at hand. (E. 401; R. 53)

What is represented by the destruction of many of the enemies by great hailstones from heaven? Gentle rain from heaven is a picture of refreshing truth from the Lord, showing us how to live and to find life beautiful and fruitful. Hard hail may sometimes picture stern truth condemning what

is false and evil. But here, and usually in Scripture, it represents falsities into which truth is perverted in evil minds. Then instead of gentle and encouraging truth from the Lord, people may believe and teach hard cruel thoughts which are destructive of a real heavenly life. Hail was one of the plagues of Egypt. (Exod. 9:22-26) The kings in our story were smitten by hailstones, "by which were signified dire falsities of evil." (E. 401)

The land of Canaan represents heaven and a heavenly life, but the people occupying the land when the children of Israel came represented the evils which must be overcome before a heavenly life can be enjoyed. We shall find when we study the division of the land among the tribes that the southern part of Canaan represents especially childlike states of heavenly affection. Here were Bethlehem and other towns of very holy associations. The southern kings of our story represent evils which are the opposites of childlike heavenly affections - hatred, revenge and cruelty, springing from self-love. (A. 2904, 4750) The king of Jerusalem, who ought to represent a very interior state, was the leader of these enemies.

The conflict was brought on by the southern kings attacking the Gibeonites. The Gibeonites, who made the league with Israel, represent something of simple good preserved by the Lord and given a place in the spiritual life. The evil in us attacks the good things which remain from childhood. The spiritual nature hastens with the Lord's help to the defense.

## **Lesson 11**

### **Joshua 11: Victory in the North**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

What country is this (looking together at a map or a picture of a raised map of Canaan)? Show me on the map where the children of Israel came into the land. What cities and what part of the land have they already taken? The southern part, which is the lower part of the map. And how about the northern part of the country, the upper part of the map? That is still to be conquered. It is a rough, hilly country, and in the far north are high mountains, Mount Hermon and Mount Lebanon. There is a sea shore on the west. The river Jordan rises from great springs under Mount Hermon and runs toward the south. It runs through this meadow and this little lake known in the old time as the waters of Merom. It then runs on to this larger lake, the Sea of Galilee. The kings of this northern country and kings from far away, on every side, united to fight with Joshua and the army of Israel. The leader of them all was Jabin, and his city Hazor was on the hills northwest of the waters of Merom. Here the armies gathered. Have you found the place? The enemies had horses and chariots which were useful in the plains. We remember the horses and chariots of Egypt in Pharaoh's army at the Red Sea. The battle was at Hazor. The Lord made Joshua and the army of Israel strong and gave them the victory. They took Hazor and burnt it, and afterward took many other cities. Our story tells us that the war was long: "Joshua made war a long time with all those kings." At last the whole country was taken by the children of Israel. "And the land rested from war."

## **Junior**

I ask you, as I asked the younger children, to look at a map or the picture of a raised map of the land of Canaan, and to begin by showing me what part of the land the children of Israel have already conquered. Jericho, Ai and the southern country after the battle at Gibeon and Beth-horon. Another campaign gave them the northern country. Some of this country you know in its later history. Here are the mountains and hills of Samaria near Shechem. Here is Mount Carmel and the great plain of Esdraelon. Here are the hills of Galilee where Nazareth is, where the Lord lived as a boy, and the Sea of Galilee (called in our chapter Chinneroth), where the Lord did so many miracles and spoke so many parables and lessons. Farther up on the Jordan is this smaller lake, the waters of Merom, and broad open meadows with marshes near the lake where much plumpy papyrus grows. Here in the far north are the large mountains, Hermon and Lebanon, their ridges much of the year white with snow. Over on the Mediterranean shore are Tyre and Sidon (spelled in our chapter Zidon), important cities in the old days. The kings of many cities in this northern country came together at Hazor on the hills northwest of the waters of Merom, under Jabin, king of Hazor, who was their leader. Among the people who came together are mentioned Canaanites from the east and west. The Canaanites were the lowlanders living in the plains, especially by the Jordan and by the sea. There were also Amorites, highlanders, the people of the hills. The enemies were very many, like the sand upon the seashore. They also had many horses and chariots. Would these be useful in the hills or on the plains? We shall later have a story in which the children of Israel fight against horses and chariots in the plain of Esdraelon by the Kishon. (Judges 4) If you turn to the chapter, note that those horses and chariots belonged to Jabin who lived at Hazor. It was long afterward and was another Jabin, but they were of the same line of kings and both lived in Hazor and both had horses and chariots in their army. In fighting the horses and chariots, it speaks of houghing the horses. It means cutting the tendon of the hind leg above the projecting joint. It was a cruel custom of those days but quickly put the horses out of action. The Lord made the children of Israel strong, and they made a sudden attack. The enemies fled in several directions, to the west and north. Zidon you know on the Mediterranean shore.

Many cities were taken by Joshua and the children of Israel after the battle. Only Hazor was destroyed. The high land and the low land, "the mountain of Israel and the valley of the same," were conquered. If we were to look up the cities named, we should find them widely scattered. And we are told that Joshua destroyed the Anakim (Num. 13:33) from Hebron and the mountains of Judaea as well as from the mountains of Israel. The giants remained only in a few cities (Remember that Goliath was from Gath). The wide sweep of Joshua's victories was from Halak in the country of Edom, south of the Dead Sea, to the mountains of Lebanon and Hermon in the north.

How long did this warfare last? "Joshua made war a long time with all those kings." From Joshua 14:6-15, it would seem that the warfare lasted seven years before the land was at peace. Joshua was a brave leader in conquering the land, but his victories are faint pictures of the victories which Jesus gained in His years in Judea and Galilee. No doubt the warfare often to Him seemed long.

1. Where did the kings of all the northern country gather to fight with Israel? Show me the waters on the map. Who was their leader? What did these enemies have of which the children of Israel were afraid?
2. Who gained the victory? What city did they burn?
3. Some enemies in Hebron are mentioned last of all; who were they?
4. Tell me in order how the land had come into the power of Israel.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The conquest of Canaan was accomplished in two campaigns, the first giving control of the southern part of the land and the second of the northern part. This suggests a division of the land, which becomes more pronounced in the separation of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel in the days after Solomon, and in the districts of Judaea and Galilee in the New Testament. The land of Canaan represents a heavenly life which we may enjoy when many selfish and evil things in ourselves are with the Lord's help overcome. This is our conquest of Canaan. The two sections of the land represent two departments of our life. The southern part of the land represents especially childlike feelings and affections, and the northern part things of understanding and maturer life. We shall think again of this in connection with the assignment of homes to the several tribes. Do not forget the association of Bethlehem in the land of Judah with the Lord's birth and infancy, and of Galilee with His youth and maturer labors. (A. 4292, 4750; E. 4331; R. 96)

The intellectual character of the conflicts represented by the campaign of the north is emphasized by the presence of horses and chariots of war in the army of these enemies. Who can explain to us what horses and chariots represent? Animals represent affections. Animals of labor and travel, and especially horses, represent affections for the mental labor of thinking and reasoning. Chariots are artificial things that help to make the strength of the horse effective. They represent formulas of thought or principles of doctrine which help us in our reasoning. Horses and chariots fighting against Israel are the power of false reasoning defending and justifying evil. Such was the meaning of the horses and chariots in the army of Pharaoh. (Exod. 14) Horses and chariots appear again with the enemies of Israel, not with the enemies in the south, which represent affections, but with the enemies in the north, which represent false reasonings and justifications of evil. We shall think again of horses and chariots and their meaning when we learn in Judges 4 of the victory of Deborah and Barak over the horses and chariots of Sisera. (A. 5321, 8146; E. 355)

We read in verse 20 that the Lord hardened the hearts of the enemies. Of what other enemy has this been said? (Exod. 14:4, 17) See also John 12:40. Really the Lord hardens no one's heart, but His presence arouses evil people and evil spirits to oppose Him, and this results in their being cast out, that they may not hurt the good. (A. 7032)

The cutting off of the giants is the last thing mentioned in the conquest of the land. Giants in an evil sense represent pride and self-importance which considers itself strong. Probably the last lesson that we learn in conquering the heavenly Canaan is to give up the thought that we are

strong and good, and to be trustful as a little child. Have you noticed that the Lord's ministry in Galilee culminates in the 18th chapter of Matthew, in the lesson of the little child and of forgiveness? Such a spiritual victory is represented by the cutting off of the giants by Joshua in completing his conquest of the land. (A. 580-583, 2909)

## Lesson 12

### **Joshua 18:1-20; 22:1-9: The Land Divided**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Now that the land was conquered, the tabernacle must be set up. Who remembers the tabernacle, the sacred tent which the children of Israel made in the wilderness? Do you remember how it was built, its rooms and court, how its walls and roof were made? What shut in the court? What was the tabernacle for? What was kept in its inmost chamber? What in its outer chamber? What in the open court? It was the Lord's house and the place of worship. The tabernacle had stood in the middle of the camp, and its place now should be near the middle of the land at Shiloh. Shiloh means "rest" or "peace." It was a quiet place, a little off the main line of travel. Our little picture shows a farmer plowing in a field near Shiloh. The people would now come to the tabernacle at Shiloh with their offerings to worship the Lord.

The first meeting of the people at Shiloh was for those tribes which did not already know their homes to learn where their homes should be. They drew lots, using perhaps small tablets of wood or stone.

The Lord guided the lots and in this way showed what part of the country each tribe should have. There were twelve tribes. Do you remember the names of any of them? Tell me the name of a tribe and I will show you on the map where it found its home. Does someone ask for the tribe of Levi? The members of this tribe were priests. They were needed everywhere, so they were given no part of the country for their own but were given certain towns in all the tribes.

Now let me ask you a few things. Two tribes and a half had asked to make their homes east of Jordan and had been told that they might do so if they would first help their brethren of the other tribes to fight their battles. They had done this and now they might have the homes they wanted east of Jordan. Which tribes were these? Have you a map that shows you Bethlehem? What tribe was it in? "Bethlehem in the land of Judah." That helps you to remember where the tribe of Judah lived. Now you know the homes of several tribes. When all the tribes had learned their places, they went from Shiloh to their homes, some to the south and some to the north and some to the east of Jordan.

##### **Junior**

Two things are asked of us in this lesson. First, to remember about the tabernacle which was made in the wilderness; for now the land was at rest and the tabernacle was set up at Shiloh. Can you find Shiloh (meaning "rest" or "peace"), near the middle of the land, a little southeast of Shechem? Who can draw us a plan of the tabernacle, showing the most holy chamber, the holy chamber and the court? Can someone else tell us how the tabernacle was made, its walls and roof,

and the fence about the court? Can someone else take the chalk and put the furniture into our picture, into each chamber and the court? The tabernacle was the center of worship for the people, in a small way what the temple at Jerusalem was at a later time. We read of Samuel's father, that he "went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh," and we shall always remember the little Samuel helping Eli at the tabernacle in Shiloh.

We learn today of a gathering of the tribes in Shiloh, that seven tribes who had not yet found their homes might learn where their homes should be. Lots were drawn before the Lord "at the door of the tabernacle." (Joshua 19:51) Perhaps tablets of wood or stone were used, such as could be thrown into the lap of one's robe. (Prov. 16:33) It is worth while for us to learn the positions of the tribes; they are so often referred to in the story. It is not hard to do; there are only twelve of them, and some of these you know already; for example, the two tribes and a half given homes east of Jordan.

Suppose I draw a rude map of the land on the blackboard, putting in a few landmarks like the Jordan River, with the sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, Mount Carmel, Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, with Shechem at the center of the map, Jerusalem opposite the head of the Dead Sea - that may be enough. Now from a map that shows the tribes I rudely draw their boundaries, talking a little about them to note where they fall. Judah in the south, including Bethlehem; Benjamin, including Jerusalem (Did you know that Jerusalem was in Benjamin?); Shiloh was in Ephraim, and Shechem in Manasseh. Note that Issachar falls in the beautiful plain of Esdraelon, north of Mount Carmel; and Zebulun where Nazareth was in the hills of Galilee just north of the plain. Put the initial letter of each tribe within its boundary, and now let the children name them as we skip about over the map. What is the use of having these letters? Rub them out carefully, leaving the boundaries, and we find that as I point we can name the tribes just as well. Do we really need these boundaries? We rub them out and try it without, them.

It grows quite exciting, and the names of the tribes come quickly as I point to Bethlehem, to the hills of Galilee above Esdraelon, to Shechem, to Shiloh, with now and then a jump beyond Jordan, and to Jerusalem. Who says it is hard to learn the tribes and their places in the land? Try it in another way. Take a map of the Holy Land, with crosses marking the central point of each tribe. Notice the crosses and tell the tribe in which each cross is. But wait, where is the tribe of Levi? Have we left it out? Where were the Levites to live? And another question: If Levi had no allotment, how is it that there are still twelve tribes having allotments in the land? In fact, I count thirteen crosses on the map. Who can account for that?

When all the people had learned their allotments, they went from Shiloh to their homes. Which tribes went across the Jordan? Something happened in connection with the going of these tribes to their homes, which almost made serious trouble. It was a misunderstanding and was brought out happily. Sometime at home read the whole of Joshua 22 and get the story.

The tabernacle is at Shiloh; the land is at peace.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Keep the thought that we have had about the meaning of Canaan and what the conquest of the land is for us under our Joshua, our Savior Jesus. When conflicts are over, every faculty and every power of life finds its place and use and blessing. This is like the finding of their places by the tribes. Also there is a picture here of the leading of each of us by the Lord to our place and use in heaven, a place known only to the Lord. Remember that the names of the tribes are written on the gates of the holy city. (Rev. 21:12; E. 431)

Canaan represents a spiritual life and heaven. We have had a few thoughts about the meaning of certain parts of the land. The central hills and Jerusalem represent the most interior and holy states, and the low-lying plains by the sea and by the Jordan represent more external worldly states. The country beyond Jordan represents natural interests and pleasures, physical rest and recreation, which are good and blessed as they are made helpful to the heavenly life. (E. 700; A. 1585, 4539)

We find help in study of the tribes when we remember that Jacob's sons in the order of their birth represent successive developments of heavenly life, from childlike states through states of mature life to those which are more spiritual. The first sons were Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; and these represent childlike states. Glancing at the map, we see these tribes together in the southern part of the land. Here was Bethlehem, where the Lord was born.

After the first group of sons come others which represent maturer states of rational development, of conflict, of victory, of joyful usefulness. These are Dan, Naphtali and Gad; Asher, Issachar and Zebulun. And we find this group of tribes together in the north. (Dan seems more in place after it moved to a home in the far north, Judges 18.) Here was Galilee, where the Lord lived as a youth and man and did most of His life's work.

Two other sons remain: Joseph and Benjamin. And they represent the last developed and most heavenly states. The homes of these tribes (Joseph represented by Manasseh and Ephraim) bring us back to the border of Judah, as spiritual life brings us again near to the states of childhood. Here is Jerusalem, the crown of all, where the Lord's work was finished.

The study here suggested is carried out with more detail, and with many references to Swedenborg, in *The Language of Parable*, the chapter on Palestine.

## **Lesson 13**

### **Joshua 20; 21:1-8: Cities of Refuge**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

When the land of Canaan was divided among the tribes and each tribe found its home, no part of the land was given to the tribe of Levi. Why was this? Because the priests were of this tribe and they were needed in all the tribes, to care for the things of worship. Moses had said that this should be so; and now we learn that forty-eight cities scattered through the tribes were given to the Levites with the land about the cities.

And another thing was done, which had been commanded by Moses. Six of the Levite cities were appointed and called cities of refuge. It had been a custom, if anyone killed another, that the nearest relative of the person killed should kill the one who did the wrong. This person was called the avenger of blood, and this hasty punishment might be very unjust, for the first killing might have been an accident which might happen in many ways, as by the slipping of an ax head from the handle when people were cutting wood together. (Deut. 19:4-6) The person who killed another might have had no evil purpose and no intention of doing harm. If so, that person was not to blame. It was to protect such people that the cities of refuge were appointed. One who had killed another might flee to one of these cities and be safe until it was decided whether the killing was intentional or accidental. If it was intentional, the killer was punished, but if not, he or she could stay in the city of refuge and be safe. Three cities of refuge were appointed in the land of Canaan: Hebron in the south, Shechem in the middle of the land, and Kedesh in the north near Hazor and Lake Merom. And there were three more cities of refuge in the country beyond Jordan, in the south, the middle and the north. There were six in all, so situated that some one of them could be easily reached from any part of the land by one needing protection.

Do not be angry with a person who has done some wrong to you. Think that perhaps he or she did not mean to do it, perhaps not realizing that it would do harm. Perhaps he or she was not to blame. We must think such things and not let ourselves feel unkindly and do something hasty in revenge.

##### **Junior**

We learn of two things in this lesson, both of them the carrying out of instructions which Moses had given to the people before his death. First, where should the tribe of Levi live? We saw that the Levites had no allotment like the other tribes. Read in Num. 35:1-88 the instruction about the cities to be given to the Levites in all the tribes. Why were they placed in this way in all the tribes? Notice that the suburbs of each city were the fields about it, extending two thousand cubits in every direction from the city. In all there were forty-eight Levite cities, tribes which had many cities giving many, and tribes which had few giving few. Now the charge is carried out by Joshua, and the cities given to the Levites in the several tribes are mentioned. The chapter speaks of the Kohathites, the Gershonites, and the Merarites. Do you recognize these names? They were the families of the Levites who camped at the south, the west and the north of the tabernacle, each

with special duties in caring for the tabernacle and the sacred furniture. See Num. 3 and 4. Now each family is given cities in which to live.

Cities of refuge: Six of the Levite cities were appointed as cities of refuge and had a special use. This was also a carrying out of instructions given by the Lord through Moses. Moses himself appointed three cities of refuge in the country east of Jordan which was conquered before his death, one in the south, one in the middle country, and one in the north. (Deut. 4:41-43) What needed further to be done was faithfully carried out by Joshua. Three other cities of refuge were appointed in the land of Canaan: Hebron in the south, Shechem in the middle country, and Kedesh in the tribe of Naphtali a little north and west of Lake Merom. Read the instructions in Num. 35 and Deut. 19. You will find it interesting. Do you quite understand the purpose of the cities of refuge? Who was the avenger of blood from whom the fleeing person sought protection? Was the city of refuge to save from punishment everyone escaping to the city? It gave temporary protection until the case could be examined and it could be learned whether the killing was with deliberate purpose and evil intent or whether it was an accident and the person was not to blame. What was done if the person was found guilty? What if the person was found innocent? Be sure of your answers.

Do you see a lesson in the fact that the priests were given homes in all the tribes? Ought we to have cities of refuge? What do they mean to us?

1. Where did the tribe of Levi live in the land of Canaan? How many of these cities were there?
2. Why were some of the Levite cities called "cities of refuge"? How many cities of refuge were there?
3. What were the three "cities of refuge" on the west side of Jordan? Where were the other three cities?

#### SPIRITUAL STUDY

##### Intermediate

The tribe of Levi was the priestly tribe. It represents love to the Lord and to the neighbor which unites us to the Lord and inspires worship. Should such love to the Lord and worship have a place all by itself in Christian life, or should it be present in every department of life, consecrating all and keeping all in touch with the Lord? Is not this suggested by the assignment of Levi not to one part of the land of Canaan but to cities in all the tribes? (E. 444, a beautiful number)

Six of the Levite cities were appointed as cities of refuge. This seems to say that one effect and use of love to the Lord and to the neighbor should be to make us kind in judgment of one who does us wrong. The old custom of the avenging of blood by the nearest of relatives was softened and made more just by this appointment of cities of refuge. They provided temporary protection for one who had killed another and sought their shelter. There must be no hasty revenge. A wrong doer must be given the benefit of the doubt and presumed innocent until it is proved whether the killing was done by accident or with premeditated and evil purpose. The possible injury by a stone or by the slipping of an ax head represents harm which may be done through

misinformation or reason gone astray but with no intention of evil. A. 9011 is a full and interesting number. See also E. 1145; R. 774.

A natural reason for the appointment of the six cities was evidently that there might be a refuge accessible from every part of the land. Can we also see in general what spiritual states are meant by the different cities? We have learned that Judaea represents a state of childlike affection for the Lord. Many wrongs may be done innocently by children and others of childlike heart. This is Hebron. Shechem we have found represented a state of inquiry and first learning about heavenly life. People have safety in this city when they are faithful to such understanding as they have. The third city in the land was Kedesh, in Mount Naphtali. This was in the north in the tribe associated with the Lord's labors and temptations. It seems to represent a state in which people are innocent because they do right according to their strength. The cities east of Jordan represent more external states of knowledge (Reuben), strength (Gad), and love (Manasseh), in which people are innocent because faithful according to their ability. (A. 1441, 1616)

One who was found innocent of evil purpose must remain in the city of refuge to be safe. People are innocent so long as the ignorance or other cause which made them blameless in the first place continues. At the death of the high priest one might return safely home. The high priest represents the quality and degree of love to the Lord and the neighbor present and ruling in the life. The death of the high priest, like the death of Aaron of which we learned, does not represent the loss of all love to the Lord but rather advance to a fuller and higher quality of love, a radical change in our relation to the Lord, the end of the state in which wrong was innocent merely because it was ignorant, and the beginning of a new and stronger life.

## **Lesson 14**

### **Joshua 24: Joshua's Farewell**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Moses before his death had talked to the people very earnestly in the plain by the Jordan before they crossed the river. (Deut. 11, and later chapters) He recalled with them the Lord's mercies in the trials through which they had come together, and charged them to be faithful to the Lord. Joshua also before his death talked in the same way to the people. They came together at Shechem to hear his last words.

Joshua in his talk went far back in the history to the Lord's call of Abraham from his first home at Ur in the land of Babylon, and then from Haran, to come into the promised land. Do you remember Abraham? Who was Abraham's wife? Do you remember Isaac? Who was Isaac's wife? Do you remember Esau and Jacob, their two sons? How was it that Jacob and his sons and their families came into Egypt? And you all remember how the Lord helped Moses to lead the people out of Egypt and to bring them to the promised land. They must worship and obey the Lord who had done so much for them, and never worship idols.

Read now the last verses of the chapter, 29 to 33. Joshua died, and was buried in his home in the tribe of Ephraim, a little south of Shechem. (Joshua 19:49, 50; Judges 2:9)

Does everyone remember Joseph? I am sure you do remember how his brothers were unkind to him and sold him to be taken into Egypt, but how he became ruler of Egypt and stored up food which kept the Egyptians and his own brethren alive in years of famine. Joseph died in Egypt, and he made his brethren promise that when the Lord should lead them out of Egypt and to the land of Canaan they would take his bones with them to be buried in that land. So his bones were buried in the parcel of ground near Shechem where Abraham lived and Jacob, where Jacob dug his well, where Joseph once came looking for his brethren, a place of many precious memories. Jacob before his death in Egypt had given this piece of ground to Joseph. The Lord once rested there. You can go there today, and looking across the green field you see a little building which marks the place of Joseph's tomb.

### **Junior**

When Moses was old and about to die, he spoke words of farewell to the people in the plain on the east side of Jordan, reminding them of all the Lord's goodness and telling them to be faithful and obey the Lord. (Deut. 11, and on) Now Joshua grew old and he too spoke farewell words to the people, very like the words of Moses.

They gathered together at Shechem in the valley between two mountains near the middle of the land. The mountain on the north is Mount Ebal and that on the south is Mount Gerizim. It was the same place where the tribes had gathered soon after their coming into the land, to answer to the blessings and the curses.

Now Joshua went back to the Lord's first call of Abraham and reminded the people of the Lord's care through all the years. The few words that he spoke recalled the story which all the people knew, and as we read them each verse brings to mind much that we have learned.

Have the last chapter of Joshua before you. Verse 2, which mentions Terah and Nachor, takes us back to Gen. 11:27 and the beginning of the journey from Ur of the Chaldees toward the land of Canaan. Verse 3 reminds us how Abraham was called again from Haran, and of his several camping-places in the land of Canaan, at Shechem, at Bethel, at Hebron and Beer-sheba. Verse 4 brings back the story of the two sons of Isaac, Jacob and Esau, and how they parted from each other, how Esau lived in Edom southward of the Dead Sea; and how Joseph and afterward his brethren and his old father went down into Egypt. A long story and a beautiful one is recalled by this verse.

Verse 5 brings to mind the bondage, and how Moses was sent as a deliverer, how he was saved in the ark of rushes and how the Lord spoke to him at the burning bush, and how Moses and Aaron did signs in Egypt. Verse 6 reminds us of the first Passover and the crossing of the Red Sea; and the last line of verse 7, which speaks of dwelling in the wilderness a long time, reminds us of the journey to Mount Sinai, and afterward to Kadesh, and of the forty years. As we read verse 8 we think of the coming toward the Jordan and the victories over the kings Sihon and Og. Verses 9 and 10 bring back the story of Balaam and how the king of Moab sent for him to curse the people, but the Lord gave only blessings.

In verse 11 Moses has died and Joshua has become leader. We recall the crossing of the Jordan, the taking of Jericho and Ai, and the victory over the southern kings gathered at Gibeon and over other kings in the north. It was important that the people should remember that their successes had been from the Lord and not from their own strength. The Lord had sent the hornet, it is said, against their enemies, and we remember hail at Gibeon. The people were enjoying a land for which they had not labored, cities which they had not built, vineyards and olive yards which they had not planted. They were the Lord's gifts. Were the people ready to put away all idols and to serve only the Lord?

The family of Abraham in the land beyond the Euphrates had worshiped idols. We even remember that when Jacob came from Haran, Rachel was bringing idols which she had stolen from her father. (Gen. 31:34) Again they had been among people in Egypt who worshiped idols, and now the native people of Canaan were the idolators. The children of Israel too easily and too often forgot the Lord and fell into this evil worship. You remember the golden calf at Sinai. Joshua put the question squarely before them, whether they would serve idols or the Lord who had done so much for them. Joshua promised for himself and his family, and all the people promised that they would serve the Lord. Joshua set up a great stone "under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord," as a witness to help the people to remember their promise. The sanctuary does not mean the tabernacle - that was at Shiloh -but Shechem had long been a sacred place, and altars had been built here by Abraham and Jacob and by Joshua. Years afterward "the oak of the pillar that was in Shechem"" is mentioned. (Judges 9:6)

So Joshua died and was buried in his own piece of ground. Eleazar also died. Do you remember him? (Num. 20:25-29)

The chapter also tells of the burial of the bones of Joseph. You remember how he died in Egypt, but the people promised that they would carry his bones with them to the land of Canaan. (Gen. 50:25-26) And they did so. (Exod. 13:19) Now we learn where they were buried, in the beautiful meadow of so many holy associations, which opens to the eastward from the mountains Ebal and Gerizim.

1. Who were Terah, Nachor, Esau, Balaam, Eleazar?
2. What two things does our lesson tell us happened at Shechem? Where is Shechem?
3. What must the people remember in regard to the victories they had gained? What must they remember in regard to the blessings of the land which they enjoyed?
4. Who can tell me the story of Joshua's life?
5. Upon what would the happiness of the people in their good land depend?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

It is often interesting in a journey to look back over the way which we have traveled, and it is interesting to remember events and experiences through which the years have brought us. Sometimes in old age people enjoy the memory of past years, especially recognizing the Lord's

mercy which has led them. They see it now in events which at the time seemed hard. Such memory of the Lord's goodness in the past should make us grateful and should lead to stronger resolutions to be faithful to the Lord.

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve." This appeal of Joshua reminds us of Elijah's appeal on Mount Carmel: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him." (1 Kings 18:21) Both tell us that we make life weak and ineffective by indecision and delay, by attempting to compromise with evil. We should decide promptly and entirely and once for all to serve the Lord. Such decision makes life strong and effective. The lesson is powerfully put in A. 6138.

The children of Israel must remember that they had not gained their victories in their own strength. In fact, the native people of the land were never wholly destroyed; they constantly needed the Lord's help against them. The land and the good things which they enjoyed they had not labored for; they were the Lord's gift. It is very important in spiritual life to remember that all power to resist evil is the Lord's and that if we forget dependence upon Him we immediately are weak. For all good things, on the other hand, we must remember to be grateful. Find this same lesson in Deut. 6:10-11; Isa. 55:1; P. 79; A. 5488.

Joseph among his brethren in the Holy Land represents a living sense of the Lord's presence, such as was very real and very precious with the early Christians. Joseph is in Egypt and finally dies in Egypt when such a sense of the Lord's presence is lost in the church and religion becomes a matter of memory and then of mere form and ceremony. Such a condition is pictured by the body of Joseph embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt. But Joseph looked forward to burial in the Holy Land, and charged his brethren to take his bones with them when they were released from Egypt. The burial of Joseph in that land, and especially in the plot of ground associated with Abraham and with Joseph's own shepherd life, contains a beautiful promise that the consciousness of the Lord's nearness which was with the early Christians is not something forever lost; it will live again and renew the life of the church. (A. 1854, 6499, 6516, 6592)

## **Lesson 15**

### **Judges 2: Forgetting the Lord**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

Why was there danger that the children of Israel would forget to worship and obey the Lord? There were still parts of Canaan and many cities which had not been conquered, and many of the native people were living among them. These people did not worship the Lord, but many worshiped Baal the sun-god, and Ashtoreth whom they called, "the queen of heaven," and connected her with the planet Venus. (Ashtaroth, a plural word, means images of Ashtoreth.) The worship of these idols let the people do many evil things, and the children of Israel were often tempted to join in this worship and forget the Lord. When they served the Lord they were safe,

and the native people who remained in the land paid them tribute, but when they worshiped idols and forgot the Lord and His commandments, some enemy was stronger than they.

After Joshua's death there was no settled leader of the people for nearly four hundred years, not till the days of Samuel. During this time, the people were often disobedient to the Lord, and when they were, some enemy would trouble them. At one time it was a king of Mesopotamia. (Where was Mesopotamia?) Then it was the king of Moab; then the Canaanites, the Midianites, the Ammonites, the Philistines. And when the people were in distress the Lord sent them a judge who was their leader for a time. He reminded them of their duty to the Lord and overcame their enemy. We are going to learn about some of these judges who lived between Joshua and Samuel, and led the people each for a short time. Their stories are told in the Book of Judges. Read Judges 2.

1. What did the children of Israel do while Moses was their leader? What did they do with Joshua as their leader?
2. Why did the people succeed against their enemies in the days of Joshua, but afterward they were often defeated?
3. Was there another great leader after Joshua, as Joshua came after Moses?
4. What were the leaders after Joshua called?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

What enemies must we fight with and overcome with the Lord's help before we can live in the heavenly land? When these enemies are once overcome, are they entirely destroyed? Do they ever come up to trouble us again? They do come up again and again, for they are not really destroyed, but are removed to one side and are kept in control by the Lord's power. We are never safe except by remembering our need of the Lord's help. If we begin to think we are safe and to trust ourselves, the old enemy comes back again and is stronger than we. This experience that we all know so well and so sadly is exactly pictured in the story of the children of Israel and the nations of the land. (P. 279) How earnestly this lesson was taught in the farewell words of Moses and of Joshua!

Are we in any danger of worshiping idols? We really worship what we care most for, that to which we make everything else yield. If we follow what we want and what seems pleasant, we are worshiping an idol. If we choose what is right because the Lord commands it, we are worshiping Him. (A. 8869; E. 950)

It is said in the chapter that the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel. It is only in appearance that the Lord is ever angry, as a kind father seems angry to a disobedient child. The word expresses the intensity of the Lord's desire that we shall live in the ways that He knows are good; but it means that we close ourselves to Him by disobedience, so that His love seems to us like anger. (A. 6997, 8875, 10431)

Who is our judge who, even when we have been unfaithful, will have pity on us and strengthen us once more against our enemies? As Moses and Aaron and Joshua all represent the Lord, so too do Samson and Gideon and all the judges about whom we are to learn. (A. 1409)

It seems very strange that the children of Israel could again and again disobey and forget the Lord, especially when they always prospered when they obeyed Him, and always were in trouble when they disobeyed. But is it not even stranger that we forget Him again and again, and come into the power of some old enemy? How can we be so ungrateful and unfaithful?

## Lesson 16

### Judges 4: Deborah and Barak

#### THE STORY

After the death of Joshua there was an unsettled time for Israel. "There was no king in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judges 17:6 and 21:3) This lasted about four hundred and fifty years. (Acts 13:20) The people in one part of the country or another would often neglect the worship of the Lord, and then some enemy would oppress them. The Lord then raised up a deliverer, called a judge, who led them to victory and ruled for a time. These disconnected stories fill the book of judges.

#### Primary

Today we find on our map the beautiful plain of Esdraelon, just above Mount Carmel and the Samaria hills. A stream, the Kishon, winds through the meadow and out to the Mediterranean Sea. At the northeast corner of the plain we find Mount Tabor.

This is Mount Tabor. (Show a photograph of the mountain.) Would you like to go up the mountain? You would find some ruins on the top and a beautiful view. But I would rather go with you today to the top of another mountain, Mount Carmel. From here we can see Mount Tabor and the great green plain that stretches away from its foot, and a stream, the Kishon, winding through the plain. (Pictures of Esdraelon) If you look sharply from Mount Carmel you can see farmers at work in the meadow, and perhaps some carts loaded with hay or grain moving along the road to a town not far away.

Our story is about this meadow and the Kishon and Mount Tabor. If we had been looking then from Mount Carmel, we should have seen an army gathering on Mount Tabor, and in the plain instead of peaceful hay-wagons we should have seen another army with chariots of iron. Chariots were low carts in which soldiers rode, and strong horses drew them and went galloping over the plain. These chariots were the terror of the children of Israel who lived in this part of the land. They belonged to Jabin, king of Hazor, who was the enemy of Israel, and Sisera was the captain. The army on Mount Tabor were children of Israel who had come together to fight with Sisera. Deborah, who was a prophetess, and Barak were calling them together.

Now look! The army is coming down from Mount Tabor, over these very slopes that we see in the picture, and is moving out into the plain. They are meeting with the chariots by the Kishon. The

Lord is helping them. The rain has swelled the stream and softened the ground. The chariot wheels sink deep, the horses fall. Sisera jumps from his chariot and runs away to the hills. The enemies are beaten. The children of Israel chase them, and sing a song of rejoicing to the Lord.

Shall we follow Sisera as he ran to save his life? He came to a tent; it belonged to Jael, who he hoped was his friend. She seemed friendly and asked him in. He was thirsty and she gave him milk. But when he fell asleep she took one of the wooden pins that held the tent-cords, and drove it through his temples, and he died. For she was a friend of Israel.

Look at the pictures of Mount Tabor and the Kishon, while we read the story.

### **Junior**

After the death of Joshua the children of Israel again and again were unfaithful to the Lord, and now one enemy and now another oppressed them. In our story today the enemy is "Jabin, king of Canaan that reigned at Hazor." The Canaanites were the lowlanders of the Jordan valley and the seashore and the other plains. Hazor was near Lake Merom, above the Sea of Galilee. Jabin's army in command of Sisera was in the great plain of Esdraelon, near Mount Carmel, with nine hundred chariots of iron. There had been a Jabin, king of Hazor, who had chariots and fought with Joshua. (Joshua 11:1-14) But this was another and later Jabin.

To find the plain of Esdraelon on your map, you look along the coast of Palestine and see where Mount Carmel juts out into the sea. Then you follow the ridge of Carmel inland till a great meadow opens to the eastward. This is Esdraelon. The plain is a triangle in shape. The long side is against the hills of Samaria. The north side of the triangle is against the hills of Galilee about Nazareth. The east side is guarded by three mountains: Tabor, Little Hermon, and Gilboa. Right here under Mount Carmel is the narrow valley through which the Kishon finds its way toward the sea. Here was Harosheth, where Sisera and his chariots were stationed to guard the gate and to command the plains to the east and west. This plain of Esdraelon was a rich garden spot in the land. Can you tell by looking at your map, to which tribe of Israel it had been given? You will need to notice also what other tribes were near the plain, when you read of the army that gathered to fight with Sisera, to recover this beautiful garden land. See Judges 4:6; 5:15.

As you read the story of the battle you must look forward into chapter 5 and read what Deborah and Barak sang in their song of victory. See verses 19-22. There was a storm that helped them, making the meadow land soft and raising the river to a flood. They felt that the Lord and heaven were with them. Compare the hail that helped Joshua to gain a victory. (Joshua 10:11)

Who were the Kenites, and where did they live? If you read Num. 10:29-32 and Judges 1:16, you can answer the first question. They made their home in Judah, in the southern part of the land. They still were living there at a later time than our story. (1 Sam. 15:6) But our chapter explains how Heber the Kenite had separated from the rest of his people and had pitched his tent on the high land west of the Sea of Galilee. These Kenites were near neighbors of Jabin in his home at Hazor, and of Barak in his home at Kedesh. They were at peace with Jabin, but wished well to their old friends the children of Israel.

Was Jael's action right or wrong? Perhaps we cannot say, without knowing more than we do of her and of the times in which she lived. It is important to us, because the Lord has made it a part of this grand parable of victory over evil.

Please draw for me today a map of the plain of Esdraelon. Also write this list of names, and tell in a few words what part each has in the story: Jabin, Sisera, Harosheth, Deborah, Barak, Tabor, Kishon, Jael.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The period of the judges, from Joshua to Samuel, represents an unsettled state like that which comes between the days when we obey as children and the days when a strong, mature kingdom is established. To this time belong some grand experiences of the Lord's saving power, as now one noble impulse and now another is awakened to keep us faithful. It is because these stories of the judges in their inner meaning describe our own experiences and the experiences of the Lord in His life on earth that they interest and stir us so deeply.

What particular kind of conflict and victory is represented by this battle with Sisera and his horses and chariots? The Canaanites represent evil which we have indeed contended with before, but which has again gained power over us when we have grown careless and forgotten the Lord. The horses and chariots of Jabin's army are especially mentioned, as they were also in the army of the earlier Jabin. (Joshua 11:1-4) What do they represent? Horses, the noblest animals of travel and labor, represent in a good sense the love and power for the noblest mental labor, which is spiritual thought and understanding. Chariots or wagons, things constructed by people to make the power of horses more effective, represent formulas of thought or doctrines which help the mind in its reasoning. Find examples of the use of horses and chariots in a good sense in the Word, for instance, the horses and chariots of fire with Elijah and Elisha. (2 Kings 3:11 and 6:17) The horses and chariots of Pharaoh and the iron chariots of the Canaanites fighting against Israel are the natural reasonings which evil uses to crush the conscience and spiritual life. (R. 298; E. 355; W. H. 1-5) The falsity that sweeps away, as with a flood, those who admit it to their minds, is also represented by the swollen Kishon. (E. 518; R. 409) Read the song of Deborah and Barak in Judges 5 in connection with the story.

Think now of the forces which are summoned to oppose this evil and its reasonings. Deborah's palm means trust in the saving power of the Lord. Remember the palms and hosannas in John 12:12-13 and Rev. 7:9-10. Naphtali, Barak's tribe, means strife, truth fighting in the soul. (E. 439, 445, 447) Is there a meaning in the gathering of the army in the mountain, descending upon the enemy in the plain? Does heaven fight for us in our battle?

The meaning of Jael and her help. Her people the Kenites were the shepherd people with whom Moses found a home when he fled from Egypt. (Exod. 2:15-22) Apparently they helped the children of Israel on their journey to Canaan and shared their fortunes. (Num. 10:29-32) They represent a simple love of truth which welcomes teaching from the Lord, and is helpful to a spiritual life. In its simplicity it may live at peace with falsity, but at heart it is on the side of the spiritual life. (A. 6773, 6827, 7015)

## **Lesson 17**

### **Judges 6: Gideon Called**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The meadow in our picture is a part of the plain of Esdraelon, where the army of Deborah and Barak fought with Sisera and his chariots. Now other enemies are there, wandering people, Midianites and Amalekites and children of the East, who have come across the Jordan at harvest time with their tents, and their cattle and their camels are eating up all the green things in the fields and gardens. There are tents and camels in our picture, but the strange people in the story had camels more than could be counted. They were like a great swarm of grasshoppers or locusts, which in that country come sometimes in clouds and settle down upon the land and eat up every green thing. The farmers were afraid to work in the fields. People hid themselves in dens and caves of the mountains. Then they remembered the Lord and cried to Him for help, and the Lord sent them a leader to save them from the Midianites.

Gideon was to be the leader and the Lord's angel came and called him. He was afraid, like all the people, and was "beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites." A winepress was a hole like a shallow bath-tub cut in the rock, where grapes were crushed for making wine. It would be a good place to hide the grain. The angel came and told Gideon that the Lord was with him. Gideon brought food for the heavenly visitor, but instead of eating it the angel touched it with the end of his staff and it was burnt like an offering on the altar. The Lord gave two other signs to make Gideon sure that He was with him and to give him courage. First, Gideon put a fleece of wool on the ground and in the night dew came only on the fleece, so that he wrung out a bowl-full of water, while all the ground was dry. Again, he put the fleece of wool on the ground and this time, as a sign, there was dew on the ground and the fleece was dry. The Lord was with Gideon, and we shall learn how the Lord helped him to drive out the strange people who had come with their cattle and their camels and were spoiling the land.

##### **Junior**

The Canaanites with their chariots of iron had troubled the people of Israel. And who were raised up as deliverers by the Lord? Now there are other enemies, the Midianites and Amalekites and children of the East, and the Lord called Gideon to be the deliverer. The Midianites had a home not far from Mount Sinai, but they were wandering people and spread through the country east of Jordan. The Amalekites were with them, another wandering people. Do you remember how they attacked the children of Israel when they came near to Mount Sinai on their journey? (Exod. 17:8-16) The Midianites and Amalekites came across the Jordan and with them other tribes from the eastern country. At what time of the year did they come? What had they with them that ate up the grain and other things in the fields? What do you know about grasshoppers or locusts in that country?

There are several valleys leading up from the Jordan into the heart of the land of Canaan. One of them is a broad valley between Mount Gilboa and Little Hermon, a branch of the great plain of

Esdraelon. This was an easy way for the Midianites to come, and they came with their black tents and their camels. They spoiled the meadows at harvest time, and crossed even to the seashore plain and went as far as Gaza. You need to look again at the little map that you drew of the great triangular plain of Esdraelon. The broad valley reaching eastward is at the middle of the eastern side of the triangle. Little Hermon is on the north side of this valley, a graceful ridge running east and west. Mount Gilboa is to the south of the valley, a group of mountains rather than a single peak, and called by David, "Ye mountains of Gilboa." You must extend your map to the eastward, showing these three mountains, and the valley reaching to the Jordan. You must draw the brook running down this valley to the Jordan, and mark carefully its beginning in a great spring on the north side of Mount Gilboa. Now we think of the Midianites swarming up this valley with their countless camels and laying waste the beautiful plain. The children of Israel were in hiding. They were afraid and they "cried unto the Lord."

We will come back next week to this plain which is being destroyed by the people with their cattle and camels. But today we must visit Gideon's home, Ophrah in the tribe of Manasseh, not far from Shechem. What was Gideon doing, and why? One often finds in Palestine today, on neglected hillsides and overgrown by bushes, shallow vats cut in the rock where once grapes were trodden to make wine, the juice running off into another vat. Who came to Gideon while he was busy threshing? Notice the several things that the angel said to give Gideon courage. (Verses 12-16) Read also of the food which Gideon brought and how the angel received it. (Verses 17-24) The Lord also gave Gideon two signs to make him sure that He would be with him. (Verses 36-40) If you read verses 25-35, do they show you at all why an enemy was troubling Israel? Do they show you what evil the children of Israel were doing, mentioned in the first verse of our chapter? They were worshiping the idol Baal instead of the Lord. The grove by the altar of Baal means rude wooden images.

Gideon began to gather soldiers, and we shall learn how the Lord gave him a wonderful victory.

1. What do we learn about the Midianites in the story of Joseph? What in the story of Moses?
2. What animals of the Midianites are particularly mentioned? To what are the destroying hordes compared?
3. Who was raised up to deliver Israel from the Midianites? To what tribe did he belong?
4. Tell about the coming of the angel to Gideon. What did he say and do to encourage him?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

In assigning the work of preparation to different members of the class, notice these points for spiritual study: the meaning of the Midianites, their camels, the comparison to grasshoppers and locusts; Gideon as a type of ourselves and of the Lord; the meaning of the signs.

"And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord." What evil?

This is another grand story of deliverance, a picture of some experience in which the Lord makes us strong to drive out some evil things which are spoiling our life. The Midianites often have a

good meaning, as when they gave Moses a home, and when they saved Joseph from his brethren. At the best they represent a love of truth with those who are in simple goodness. But persons in simple external states are easily deceived; they may think things are good because they are pleasant and indulge them and love false appearances which excuse them. Such Midianites are enemies of the spiritual life. (A. 3242) For the exact meaning of the Midianites, the Amalekites and the children of the East, see A. 3762 (end).

The camels are mentioned in our story, and also the camels of the Midianites and Amalekites who carried Joseph into Egypt. Read also in Isa. 60:6 of the camels and dromedaries of Midian. They are often associated in Scripture with gentile people, as with the queen of Sheba. You have learned enough of the correspondence of animals and of animals of travel to know that camels represent a power of thinking and reasoning of a natural unenlightened kind. Such understanding, literal and faithful, is meant by the camels of Midian in a good sense, and by the camel's-hair clothing of John the Baptist. In our story the camels of Midian stand for the obstinate, persistent excusing of the mind that is bent on evil. (A. 3048)

Insects, and among them locusts, represent superficial powers of thought, led hither and thither by what seems pleasant. Such simple thought directed to a good purpose is represented by the locusts which were the food of John the Baptist. Superficial thoughts which cling to appearances for the sake of perverting the real truth and excusing evil are locusts destroying the land. This is just what the Midianites in our story represent and so they are compared to locusts. (E. 543; A. 7643; R. 424)

In the story of Gideon's call we notice his sense of his own littleness and inadequacy, like that felt by Moses when the Lord called him at the bush, and we realize that we must feel our own littleness and distrust our own powers before we can receive real strength from the Lord. Strength comes (again compare the story of Moses, Exod. 3:11-12) from knowing that the Lord is surely with us. (H. 230)

Gideon before he was called was "beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites." It pictures a timid effort to find and preserve goodness of life. Goodness of life from a heavenly motive is also represented by Manasseh, Gideon's tribe. (E. 440) We begin to see why the Lord chose this man from this tribe and strengthened him to be the deliverer from the Midianites.

The signs given to Gideon represent the presence and power of the Lord with him. The staff of the angel with which he touched Gideon's offering represents the Divine power which would be with him. (E. 727) The dew is a type of the gentle influence of peace and refreshment from the Lord. (A. 3579) Perhaps the fleece on which the dew fell may stand for goodness such as Gideon represented, on which the Lord's blessing could rest; and the fleece on which there was no dew may stand for life which seems pleasant and attractive which was represented by the Midianites, on which no blessing could rest.

## **Lesson 18**

### **Judges 7: Gideon's Victory**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We left the Midianites with their camels in the beautiful meadow spoiling the fields and gardens, but the angel of the Lord had come and called a man who would lead the children of Israel against these enemies. Do you know his name? It was Gideon. Here were the Midianites over across the green valley, and here were Gideon and his men on the mountainside near the beautiful great spring which we see in our picture.

The Lord would give Gideon the victory, but he must not have too many men lest they should think that they gained the victory themselves and say, "Mine own hand hath saved me." First, all who were afraid were sent home. Still there were too many. Those who stayed were taken down to the spring to see how they would drink. Some kneeled down lazily to the water; these were not chosen. Some only stooped and lifted the water in their hand. There were three hundred who did so, and they were the ones chosen by the Lord to go with Gideon.

How few the little army was, compared with the host of the Midianites swarming like locusts in the valley. It was night, and the Lord let Gideon and his servant go alone across the fields in the darkness to the edge of the Midianites' camp. There Gideon heard a dream which gave him courage. A man was telling his fellow how he dreamed that a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian and rolled along and overturned a tent. It meant that the whole army would be overthrown before Gideon.

Now Gideon came with his men in three companies. They were so few, only a hundred in each company. And what did they have in their hands? Only trumpets and earthen jars or pitchers with burning torches in them. They came from three sides to the Midianite camp. They watched the hundred men with Gideon and did what they saw them do; they blew the trumpets; they broke the jars and held the torches and cried, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." The Midianites ran and cried and fled, fighting against each other, down the valley to the Jordan, the valley in which the stream runs from Gideon's spring. So the Lord gave Gideon power to drive out the strange people who were spoiling the land.

##### **Junior**

We are with the men whom Gideon called together by the beautiful great spring on the north side of Mount Gilboa, and the Midianites with their cattle and their camels are camped across the valley toward the hill Moreh, called also Little Hermon. The name Mount Gilead (verse 3) seems to mean a part of Mount Gilboa, where we are with Gideon and his men.

You will not need much more help to understand the story. When tested at the water, those were chosen who "lapped, putting their hand to their mouth." They stooped and snatched the water as if eager to be going. Those who were not chosen "bowed down upon their knees to drink water."

How did Gideon arm the three hundred men who were to go with him to the fight? The "pitchers" were probably the common earthen water jars of the country. "Lamps" seem rather to mean firebrands or torches. Read of the visit of Gideon and his servant to the Midianite camp and of the dream which Gideon heard which gave him courage. How did Gideon divide his men? What instructions did he give them? At what hour was the attack? The Midianites and Amalekites and others who had swarmed into the land fled down the valley and across the Jordan.

You may like to look forward into the next chapter and read how, after this victory, the people would have made Gideon king. He refused, but he asked a rich present, which they gave him. (Judges 8:22-27)

As you read this grand story you will also remember that it describes the strength and courage with which the Lord as a child and a young man met and overcame false and evil things and drove them out of His life; and at the same time it describes the strength and courage that we may have from Him. What does the story tell us about our battles? If we are to be strong and successful in driving out the enemies, should we go against them timidly, afraid, expecting defeat? We must begin by sending away all such fears. (Verse 3)

And what are our water jar and torch and trumpet? What did the trumpet blast at Jericho mean? It was the voice of the commandments. Gideon's trumpets are the same. Can you show me how the commandments and all of the Lord's Word are like a water jar and a torch within it? You ought all to be learning every day the power that is in the commandments and in other Divine words from the Bible to send flying the hosts of evil thoughts and feelings that invade your minds, however many and however strong they seem.

1. Against what enemy did Gideon lead the children of Israel? From what way did this enemy come? Into what part of the land? At what season of the year?
2. How many were there of the enemy? How many in the army which put them to flight? Why were there not more men with Gideon?
3. Who were first sent home from the camp of Israel? How was the choice made at the water?
4. How were Gideon's men armed? Why was there power in the jars and torches and trumpets?
5. What water jar and torch and trumpet must I take to be one of Gideon's men?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

This story of deliverance has a power and charm because in its deeper meaning it tells of spiritual victories gained by the Lord in His life on earth and of victories which we may gain with His help.

What spiritual enemies are especially represented by the Midianites? Recall our study of last week, the false thoughts and reasonings which excuse seemingly pleasant but evil ways of life. (A. 3242, 5955) Gideon and his men represent something of goodness and right which has been aroused and strengthened by the Lord to resist these evil things and false excuses. Gideon and his

men "rose up early" for their task. There is a beautiful thought in this rising early, here and in other Bible stories. It means going about a duty which we know is right while our perception of duty is clear, before it becomes obscured by contact with evil and selfish things. What spiritual thought is there in camping by the spring of water? What further thought in the fact that they were upon the mountain Gilboa, while the Midianites were beneath them in the valley? Remember how the army with Deborah and Barak gathered upon Mount Tabor and came from the mountain to fight with Sisera in the plain. (A. 2673, 5221)

You see the spiritual thought in reducing the number of men with Gideon to three hundred, lest they should feel that they gained the victory in their own strength. Self-confidence is weak; real strength is found by trusting in the Lord.

What lesson do you see in the choice of soldiers by the way in which they drank? Not all who pitch by the water become strong and victorious; it depends upon the way they drink. Some people may receive the Lord's truth lazily, with intellectual enjoyment. Some may take it in their hand, eager to be up and doing. The drinking of these is also compared to the lapping of a dog, for a dog in a good sense represents an affection which is simple but very devoted and earnest. Compare Matt. 15:27; E. 455.

Make a little study of the things with which Gideon armed his men. The water jars, like the water itself, represent the Lord's plain truth as it comes to us in the commandments and in all the letter of the Word. And what is the light which shines out when the jars of parable and history and prophecy are broken open? And the trumpets are the Lord's voice in the commandments and the Word, in which is power against all that is false and evil. Remember the trumpet voice at Sinai when the Ten Commandments were spoken (Exod. 19:13; 20:18), and also the blowing of trumpets at Jericho when the commandments were carried around the city. (Joshua 6:20; E. 502; A. 8815)

Will someone make a little study of the barley bread and show how the dream of the barley cake represented the victory which was near? Bread represents the satisfaction which we find in life. Barley bread, like that with which the Lord fed the five thousand, represents the more external satisfaction of loving service to the neighbor. The cake of barley bread in our lesson may in a good sense represent the simple goodness of Gideon and of those for whom he stands, with whom there is blessing and power from the Lord. In a bad sense it represents the evil pleasures of the Midianites which invert the true order of life, as the barley cake overturned the tent. Read the interesting interpretation in A. 7602.

## **Lesson 19**

### **Judges 9:1-21: Parable of the Trees**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

Take your map of the land of Canaan and put your finger down as near the middle of the map as you can. You are very close to the town of Shechem. It is not round like the dot on the map but, is

stretched out long from east to west in a narrow valley between two mountains, Mount Ebal on the north and Mount Gerizim on the south. We already have many associations with Shechem and its neighborhood.

But what has Shechem to do with our present story? We were learning about Gideon. Who was he? Where was his home? What was he called by the Lord to do? After the victory the people would have made him king, but he refused and said that the Lord should rule over them, and he went back to his home. (Judges 8:22-23, 29) But Gideon had many sons, and after his death one of them, Abimelech, wished to be king. He persuaded the men of Shechem to take his part, for his mother was from that city. By their help he killed all his brethren except Jotham the youngest who hid himself. Then the men of Shechem made Abimelech king "by the oak of the pillar that was in Shechem." We think of the memorial stone set up by Joshua under an oak. (Joshua 26) Then Jotham, the youngest son of Gideon and the only one left living besides Abimelech, spoke a parable. He stood "in the top of Mount Gerizim," perhaps at the brow of a cliff of the mountain that overlooked the town, and spoke to the people in the valley. Let us read the parable. (Judges 9:7-15) It is not sure whether Millo is the name of a place by Shechem or of a family.

The olives are among the most beautiful trees that grow in the Holy Land. Planted in orchards they look not unlike apple trees, but the leaves are slender like willow leaves and silvery as they are turned up by the wind. The trees live to be very old and the trunk divides, so that an old tree looks like a group of trees. The rich yellow wood was used in the temple. The trees bear little white flowers and olive berries which are full of oil. They were crushed in presses, and the oil was used for food and for lights and for the sacred anointing of kings and priests. The fig tree is low and spreading, irregular in shape, with large dark-green leaves, and the sweet fruit which we all know dried. The vine is the grapevine. It was much planted upon the hillsides, the ground often being terraced in steep places, and the vines were trained on the low stone walls or were propped up with poles. The bramble brings to mind some thorny bush. Perhaps no particular kind is meant, but there are very many growing on the hillsides in the Holy Land, some of them with bright flowers but full of sharp thorns. They were often used to make a quick, hot fire. (Ps. 118:12; Eccles. 7:6) The cedar of Lebanon is a grand evergreen tree growing on the mountains in the far north; its fragrant wood was the chief wood used in building the temple. What did the parable mean in regard to the king whom the Shechemites had chosen? Did it mean that he was a good king and that the people would be happy under his rule?

1. By what other name was Jerubbaal called? What did he do for Israel? Who was Jotham?
2. Where was Shechem? What have we learned about the place in the stories of Abraham, Joseph and Joshua?
3. What trees are mentioned in Jotham's parable? Tell me of other places in the Bible where people are compared to trees.

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

The trees in the parable stand for different kinds of people. The good fruits are symbols of good works. The olive is the type of a person who loves the Lord and does good works full of the oil of love. (Ps. 52:8; A. 10261; E. 375, 638)

Sweet, nourishing figs represent good works, not of an interior, spiritual quality, but full of natural kindness. The fig tree, reaching out its branches widely on every hand, is the type of one who does such uses. (A. 4231; E. 403)

Grapes and wine, which are the fruit of the vine, also represent good works; not works done for the love of the Lord, such as olives represent, nor works done from natural kindness, which are represented by the figs, but rather good works done from a spiritual intelligence, because one sees the wisdom and the happiness of doing them. (A. 1069, 5113; E. 376)

The bramble is the type of someone who does not do good uses or only does them for show and for selfish gain. Those who do good of the three heavenly kinds are modest and wish only to serve, but selfishness loves to rule and to be served. Fire coming out of the bramble means the burning of selfish desires. The cedar which the fire destroys stands for rational understanding. Someone who is proud or angry cannot be wise. For information about the parable in general, see E. 638; A. 9277.

## **Lesson 20**

### **Judges 11: Jephthah's Daughter**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Our story is of a girl who lived in the land of Gilead beyond the Jordan. We must call her Jephthah's daughter, for we do not know her name. Jephthah, her father, was leading the soldiers to a battle with the Ammonites, who also lived beyond the Jordan and were making war with the people of Israel who lived in Gilead. They said that the children of Israel had taken away land that belonged to them. The people of Gilead made Jephthah leader, and the Spirit of the Lord was with him.

As Jephthah went out to the battle with Ammon, he made a vow to the Lord, that if the Lord would give him victory, "Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering." So Jephthah went to the battle and the Lord gave him the victory. The Ammonites were conquered, and Jephthah came home in peace. As he came to his house, his daughter, his only daughter, his only child, came to meet him with tambourines and dances. The father remembered his vow, his promise to the Lord. He rent his clothes in grief. "Alas, my daughter," he said, and told her of his vow. She knew that what he had promised to the

Lord must be, but asked that she might go into the mountains for two months with her maidens and bewail her lot. So she went into the mountains for two months with her maidens, and afterward she came back to her father. How sad that people should think that the Lord could wish for such a sacrifice. But they knew no better. "And it was a custom in Israel that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite, four days in a year."

### **Junior**

Read the story of Jephthah's daughter as I have told it to the younger children. It is a touching story. You feel the sense of duty in Jephthah and in his daughter in keeping the vow which had been made to the Lord. But did the Lord desire that children should be sacrificed to Him, as they were sacrificed by many heathen people to their gods? Read again the account of Abraham's offering of Isaac, in Gen. 22, and see what answer that story gives you.

You will be interested to learn more that is told in the first part of our chapter about the reason for this war between the children of Israel living in Gilead and the people of Ammon. Have before you your map of the country east of Jordan. Gilead is the beautiful district with streams and groves along the Jordan beyond the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. Mizpeh and Tob, where Jephthah lived, were probably in the northern part of Gilead. Ammon you find farther to the south and east. Notice in verse 13 the charge of the Ammonites that the children of Israel on their journey with Moses had taken away their land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, the Arnon flowing into the Dead Sea at the middle of its eastern shore, and the Jabbok flowing into the Jordan near the middle of the land of Gilead. Jephthah denied this charge and said that the children of Israel on their journey had been very careful not to disturb the land belonging to Edom or to Moab or to Ammon. They asked to go through the land of Edom, but were refused, and went around it. They left Moab and Ammon undisturbed and had no war till they met the Amorites under their king Sihon, north of the river Arnon. They took the country between the Arnon and the Jabbok, but they took it from the Amorites, not from Ammon. Jephthah accused the Ammonites of being no better than the Moabites who had tried to do Israel harm, sending for Balaam to curse them. Now Ammon was trying to rob them. Was Jephthah right, or was Ammon right, as to what Israel had done on their journey with Moses? You can learn in the book of Numbers, chapter 21. The Edomites and Moabites and Ammonites were related to the children of Israel, the Edomites being descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother, and the Moabites and Ammonites being descendants of Lot, the nephew of Abraham. For this reason the Lord commanded the children of Israel to leave them undisturbed, and they took land only from the Amorites, who were native people, not related to them. Moses solemnly reminds the people of these things in Deut. 2:1-9, 19. Was Jephthah right, or were the Ammonites right in their dispute about the land?

### **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

#### **Intermediate**

Reading this story of the people living beyond Jordan, we remember that this country outside the strict limits of the land of Canaan represents external states of life, natural not spiritual. We have learned this in connection with the settlement of two and a half tribes beyond Jordan, and in connection with our Lord's ministry in this comparatively gentile country. We see in Jephthah a

spirit of duty to the Lord, but very unenlightened. In particular the land of Gilead and the tribes of Gad and Manasseh, which occupied that district, represent an external goodness in which is much of self-confidence. We associate this land with the rich young man who met the Lord there and claimed confidently to have kept the commandments. (E. 434, 435, 514)

Moab and Ammon lived in this same country beyond Jordan. They were descendants of Lot, the nephew of Abraham, who chose the low plain of Jordan as his home. Lot represents the enjoyment of pleasant things of the senses and the world. The two nations descended from Lot represent the two elements of good and truth in such enjoyment, Moab the good and Ammon the truth. Both may be useful to the spiritual life, to which they are related, and the children of Israel on their journey from Egypt were not allowed to fight with Moab or Ammon, or to disturb their land. (Deut. 2:9, 19) But more often Moab and Ammon appear as enemies of Israel, representing evil and falsity in the enjoyment of external pleasure, Moab the evil and Ammon the falsity. This is the meaning of Ammon in our story. We can see how such false thinking may be a dangerous enemy of an external goodness such as is represented by the land of Gilead. But the Lord is present even with such external goodness, as He was with Jephthah, giving him victory over the Ammonites. We find a similar story with a similar spiritual lesson in the attack of Ammon upon Jabesh-gilead, when Saul was first made king, and its deliverance by Saul strengthened by the Spirit of God. (1 Sam. 11; A. 2468)

The sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter brings to us in a personal and touching way the custom of sacrificing children which was common among heathen people. The origin of this custom is explained in the passages of the Arcana referred to below. One reason for the Lord's permitting the sacrifice of animals was to prevent the sacrifice of children. This lesson is taught in the story of Abraham's offering of Isaac. (Gen. 22) The Lord accepted Abraham's faithfulness, but forbade the sacrifice of his son, showing him the ram to be offered in his stead. We join the daughters of Israel in their lament for Jephthah's daughter. Yet in her sacrifice we may see a more lovely meaning. A maiden represents spiritually an affection for truth for the sake of good life. May the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter, in connection with the victory over Ammon, mean a new consecration of the affection for truth to the Lord, raising it to a state of fuller enlightenment? Compare this statement in relation to the sacrifice of Isaac: "By these words, that Abraham took a knife to slay his son, is signified even to the death of all the merely human." Read two interesting numbers in A. 2818 and 8080.

## **Lesson 21**

### **Judges 13: Samson Promised**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Beth-shemesh, which means "house of the sun," was the name of a town in a beautiful sunny valley leading from the hills of Israel out into the Philistine plain. The Philistines were enemies of Israel. There was a little town called Zorah on a high hill above the valley. From their hill the people of Zorah looked down into the valley of Beth-shemesh and out over the Philistine plain.

Samson was very strong. The Lord made him strong, and he used his strength against the Philistines, who were enemies of Israel. Zorah, the little town which was his home, was near the edge of the Philistine country. But first an angel came and told the mother and father that Samson would be born. He told what kind of child he would be and what they must do for him. The first time that the angel came, only the mother was there, but he came again and both the mother and the father saw him. The father's name was Manoah.

The child should be a Nazarite to God all his life. The thing which you would have noticed first about a Nazarite was his long hair, for his hair must not be cut or shaved. There were other rules which the Nazarite must keep. He must drink neither wine nor strong drink, nor eat grapes or anything from the vine. He must not come near to things which were considered unclean. Samson should be a Nazarite. The angel said that no razor must come on his head, and he told his mother also that she must drink neither wine nor strong drink and eat nothing from the vine and no unclean thing.

What could Manoah do for the one who had brought them this good news? He wished to get ready a meal for him, but the angel told him instead to make an offering to the Lord. He did so, kindling the fire upon the rock and putting upon it his offering of a kid and meal or flour, and the angel ascended in the flame. Then Manoah knew that it was an angel of the Lord who had come to them. The angel's words came true, and Samson was born.

## **Junior**

The scene of the story of Samson is in the hills bordering on the Philistine country, a little to the northwest of Jerusalem. The land assigned to Dan, Samson's tribe, reached to the sea, but the Philistines were strong and were never driven out. Samson's troubles were with the Philistine neighbors. Dan was so pressed for room that the tribe a little later moved and took a city for itself, at the springs of Jordan under Mount Hermon. (Joshua 19:47; Judges 18)

Find on your maps where the tribe of Dan was living when Samson was born. Find Zorah on a hilltop by the valley of Beth-shemesh, which runs up into the hills from the Philistine plain. Samson's parents were living in Zorah when the angels came to tell them that the child would be born.

Note the instructions which the angel gave them. The name Nazarite means "consecrated," "set apart." The Nazarites were said to be "separated unto the Lord," either for a certain time or for life. Samson was to be a Nazarite for life. There were strict rules which he must keep. You can read the law of the Nazarites in Num. 6, and you find nearly the same requirements in the angel's charge to Samson's mother for herself and for the child.

When Manoah asked the angel's name, he said that it was "secret," too wonderful for him to understand. Both Manoah and Gideon wished to prepare food for the angels who came to them, and both were told to present it as an offering to the Lord. (Judges 6:18-21) The "meat offering" or "food offering" which Manoah offered with the kid was an offering of meal and flour. The Revised Version translates it "meal offering."

Why were Manoah and his wife afraid when they knew that it was an angel of the Lord? Remember that it was the same with Gideon. You may think, also, of Moses when the Lord came

to him at the burning bush, and of the shepherds when the angel came to tell them that the Lord was born. Moses feared to look upon God. The shepherds were sore afraid. No person can see the Lord in all the brightness of His Divine glory. As the Lord once said to Moses, "Thou canst not see My face, for there shall no man see Me and live." (Exod. 33:20) But the Lord veils His glory and comes to people in gentle ways. How wonderfully true this was in His coming into the world!

Samson was born in the tribe of Dan. "And the child grew, and the Lord blessed him." And Samson's strength began to be seen, for "the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan." Eshtaol, mentioned in the last verse in the chapter, was a little east of Zorah.

1. Where did the Philistines live? Where was the tribe of Dan given its home? What towns of Dan are mentioned in our lesson?
2. How was Samson's birth foretold? What other child do you remember whose birth was promised by an angel?
3. What was told by the angel about Samson? What must he do or not do? Of what other child does this remind you?
4. Why did Manoah think that he and his wife should die?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Many times in the Bible the birth of a child is foretold by an angel, and often to parents who had lost hope of having children. Recall the promise of the birth of Isaac, of Samuel, and of John the Baptist. In the light of the Lord's words to Nicodemus, in John 3:1-8, what do you think is represented by the birth of a child? It represents the birth of a new and heavenly life in us, or of some new development of heavenly life. Every such birth is from the Lord when we feel and confess our helplessness to gain the new life of ourselves. Angels are near and are loving helpers at every such birth. (E. 721)

What new and heavenly development of character is represented by the birth of Samson? You will all say that he stands for strength. Yes, especially for the strength that comes from the Lord's Word when it is received by a simple heart as a rule of life. This was represented by the fact that Samson's strength depended on his hair, for the hair represents the letter of the Word, its most external part which covers and protects the Divine truth and love within it. Samson also was of the tribe of Dan, the "judge," and this tribe represents a simple, literal knowledge of the Lord's Word. (A. 3923, 6396) See the last page of S. 49, where after speaking of Samson and his hair, it is said, "In brief, the power of Divine truth, or of the Word, is in the sense of the letter, for the reason that the Word is there in its fullness, and the angels of both of the Lord's kingdoms and men are together in that sense."

But strength is not found in the Word merely by intellectual understanding of it. This was represented by the law of the Nazarites, that they must drink no wine nor eat anything that comes from the vine, for the wine and the vine represent a spiritual intelligence which is a thing entirely apart from this strength of the Lord's Word, as it is received in its simple literal form and

lived. This was a strength which the Lord had in Divine fullness in His life, and which we all may have in a wonderful degree. (A 3301, 5113, 5247, 6437, especially 3301)

Can we see why Samson was strong against the Philistines? Like their neighbors, the Phoenicians, the Philistines represent an intellectual power of knowing and understanding. The faculty may be helpful to spiritual life, as the king of Tyre helped Solomon, and as the Philistines were friendly to Abraham. (A. 2504, 9340) But as enemies of Israel the Philistines represent an understanding of truth which cares nothing for good life - faith alone. It is the opposite of the simple love for the Lord's Word and confidence in the Lord's Word which Samson represents. In this there is a strength which the other cannot resist nor understand. Do not argue with the tempter. He is probably better at argument than you. Answer him simply, "It is written, Thou shalt not." (A. 3412; E. 700)

## Lesson 22

### Judges 14: Samson's Strength

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Do you remember Samson? He was the child that the angel promised when he came to Manoah and his wife in Zorah. And what did the angel tell them about the child? He was to be a Nazarite all his life, one set apart to the Lord. And how did a Nazarite look different from other men? The child was born and grew, and the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times.

Who were the people living near to Samson's home who were enemies to the children of Israel? The Philistines. They lived in the great meadows toward the sea. Many times Samson's great strength was seen in their country and they were afraid of him.

Once, Samson met a lion. You have seen pictures of lions, perhaps you have seen a lion, and you know how strong they are. But Samson caught and killed the lion with his hands. It happened in this way. Samson was going with his father and mother to Timnath, a town near Zorah in the edge of the Philistine country. He loved a woman of Timnath, one of the Philistines, and wished to marry her, and his father and mother were going with him to arrange the marriage. It was in the vineyards as they came near the town, that the lion roared against him, and Samson caught and killed the lion; but he told not his father or mother.

After their visit, they went home, but they came again to Timnath when it was time for the wedding and the wedding feast. Then Samson found honey in the body of the lion, for bees had made their comb there. Have you seen honey in a comb? Usually, bees make it in a hive or wild bees in a hollow tree or among the rocks. This comb was in the body of the lion, and Samson took some, and ate it himself and gave some to his father and mother, but he did not tell them that it was from the lion.

Now, can you think what Samson meant at the wedding feast when he said as a riddle for the people to guess, "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness"?

You know what he meant the lion and the honey; but no one of the company knew or could guess. At last on the seventh and last day of the feast Samson's wife learned from him and told them. There were other times when Samson's strength was seen, but today let us read about the lion and the honey.

## **Junior**

The story is about Samson and a lion. Notice a few things as you read the story. First, find Zorah and Timnath on your map. Timnath was three or four miles to the southwest of Zorah. The town was in the inheritance of Dan, but Philistines were living there. (Joshua 19:43)

Second, the marriage customs in that country. A marriage was arranged by the parents for the young people. This was the errand when Samson's father and mother went with him the first time to Timnath. The wedding and the wedding feast came later, and on their second visit they were going for the wedding. You will remember marriage feasts mentioned in other places in the Bible; the marriage feast at Cana (John 2:1-11); the parable about the marriage feast made by a king for his son (Matt. 22:1-14); and another parable about virgins waiting with their lamps to go in to the marriage feast (Matt. 25:1-13). The festivities at Samson's marriage lasted seven days. Perhaps the "riddle" was a part of the entertainment. The Eastern people were fond of riddles and "hard questions." (1 Kings 10:1)

Third, notice Samson's riddle. What did the riddle refer to that had happened in the vineyards? How was the riddle guessed? What grew out of the riddle and the guessing of it? How did Samson get the thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes to give to those who guessed it? Ashkelon was a Philistine city. You will see also that this riddle of Samson's is one that people are always asking: how to get sweetness out of trial. Many persons never guess the riddle, but those who are strong from the Lord know that as often as they put down a lion of anger or selfishness or pride, they find sweetness in its place.

There were other times when the Philistines saw Samson's strength. At one time he was bound with two new cords, but strength from the Lord came to him and he broke the cords "as flax that was burned with fire." (Judges 15:12-14) At another time, he "took the doors of the gate of the city [Gaza, one of the great Philistine cities], and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of the hill that is before Hebron." (Judges 16:2-3) How far was it from Gaza to Hebron?

1. Who were Samson's special enemies? In what ways did he use his strength against them?
2. Who lived at Timnath? What happened on the first visit of Samson and his parents to that town? What happened on the second visit?
3. What riddle did Samson give? How did they find out the answer?
4. May we ever find honey in a lion that we overcome?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

We must recall what we learned about the strength which Samson represents. The fact that his strength depended on his hair reminds us that the strength for which he stands is the strength of the letter of the Lord's Word, which is its least living part. The law requiring the Nazarites to keep from wine and all fruit of the vine shows that the strength of Samson is not from much learning and intelligence, for such intelligence is represented by the vine. The Nazarites and Samson represent rather a celestial character in its love for the letter of the Lord's Word. It meets reasonings of the tempter not with reasonings, but with simple trust in the teaching of the Lord's Word: "It is written"-- so and so. "Thus saith the Lord." It is a strength which a child should have, a strength which the Lord had Divinely in His overcoming of evil. Samson was given strength that he might represent the Lord in combats on the natural plane, in which He fought with the hells and subdued them, "and this before He put on Divine good and truth also in the natural man." Read this and much more of interest about the Nazarites and Samson, in A. 3301. See also A. 5113, 5247, 6437; S. 49.

"The power in the Word in the sense of the letter is the power of opening heaven, by virtue whereof communication and conjunction is effected; and also the power of fighting against falsities, thus against the hells. A man who is in genuine truths from the literal sense of the Word, can cast down and dissipate all the diabolical crew and their arts, in which they place their power, which are innumerable, and this in a moment, by only a look, and an effort of the will. In fine, in the spiritual world nothing can resist the power of genuine truth, confirmed from the literal sense of the Word." (E. 1086)

Samson's relations with the Philistines. The Philistines represent an intellectual power, usually without any care for good life. The Philistine vineyard represents such intellectual power, and the lion which roared against Samson in the vineyard is the pride of such self-confident intelligence. Much the same is represented by the Philistine giant Goliath, who trusted in his size and in his armor and defied the Lord and the army of Israel. The victory of Samson over the lion represents the greater strength of simple trust in what the Lord's Word teaches.

We have spoken of the honey in the body of the lion as representing the sweetness found when any selfish evil passion arising in the mind has been bravely met and overcome. We see now that this honey represents in particular the sweetness of charity which fills the soul when the pride of knowing without doing is cast aside. (E. 619)

Samson found no right marriage with the Philistines. This is implied by the remonstrance of his parents, who said, "Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?" We remember the charge to Isaac and to Jacob, not to take wives of the daughters of Canaan, and the repeated command to the people of Israel, not to marry with the native people of the land. Such marriage would represent a union of a true spiritual life with elements of evil. Marriage of Samson with a woman of the Philistines would mean a weakening of simple trust in the Lord's Word by mixing with it a self-confident intelligence. The right course to follow and the only course which can lead to a union of spiritual life with Philistine intelligence is pictured in Samson's killing of the lion (the

pride of self-intelligence) and finding the honey (the sweetness of a life of charity). The Philistine mind knows nothing of this and cannot guess the riddle, and as a consequence the marriage comes to nothing.

## **Lesson 23**

### **Judges 16: Samson's Death**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

What was wonderful about Samson? Who were his enemies? The Philistines. For he lived at the edge of their country, and many times used his strength against them.

Now the lords of the Philistines were determined to find out the secret of Samson's strength so that they could take him captive and torment him. They came to Delilah, a Philistine woman whom Samson loved, and offered her much money if she would learn from him what made him strong. Do you know what the secret was, and what they might do to make Samson lose his strength? Three times Samson deceived Delilah and told her things with which he might be bound. First, seven green withs, which seems to mean tough bowstrings. Read verses 6-12, how they bound Samson with such strings, and then with new ropes, but he was as strong as ever. Read verses 13 and 14, how they did as Samson told them and wove his long hair into the cloth that was being woven on the loom. The loom was a heavy frame, probably with posts set in the ground and a beam on which the cloth was wound as it was woven and a wooden pin to fasten the beam and hold the web tight. But Samson was as strong as ever, and went away with the cloth and the loom attached to his hair.

Now at last, as Delilah kept asking, Samson told the truth, that if his hair were shaved off (his hair which ought never to be cut) he would be weak like another man. While he was asleep they shaved off his hair, and he was weak. They took him and put out his eyes and brought him to their city Gaza and bound him with brass fetters and made him grind in the prison. He turned the stone of a hand-mill, grinding meal. It was tedious work and was also considered a disgraceful job for a man.

Now the Philistines kept a festival of thanksgiving to their god Dagon for delivering Samson into their hands. Dagon was an idol with the body of a fish and the head and hands of a man. They called for Samson and he came out to make them sport. But the festival had a sudden end, for Samson pulled down the house upon them and upon himself. Read the story in verses 25-31.

##### **Junior**

Samson: what does the name bring to your mind? On the map show me Samson's home, Zorah in the tribe of Dan. Show me Timnath (what happened there?); Gaza, far away across the Philistine country near the sea. Does your map show the valley of Sorek, running out from the hills near Zorah and across the Philistine meadows toward the northwest?

It was from Gaza that Samson carried away the city gate, posts and all, to the top of a hill near Hebron some forty miles away. And now we learn of his last feat of strength in Gaza and of his death. The lords of the Philistines were ready to pay much money to learn the secret of Samson's strength. "The lords" mean rulers of the country. In another chapter they seem to be the rulers of the five chief cities of the Philistines. Do you know what these five cities were? (1 Sam. 6:4, 17-18) Before, when the Philistines could not guess Samson's riddle, they got the woman of Timnath whom he was to marry to coax him and learn the answer. Now they promised money to Delilah, another woman whom Samson loved, to coax him to tell her the secret of his strength and how he could be bound.

What did Samson first tell her, and was it the truth? (Verses 8, 9) The "green withs" seem to mean new bowstrings made from the intestines of animals. What next did Samson tell her, and was it true? (Verses 10-12) And now the third time, what did he tell her, and was this true? (Verses 13, 14) Three times Samson had deceived her, but the third time he came a little near the truth, mentioning his hair. Can someone tell us a little about the loom - not very different from looms that you may have seen in old farmhouses in the country? Once more Delilah urged him, and what did he say? (Verses 15-17) She felt that he had now told her the truth. And was it the truth? Remember that Samson was a Nazarite. His hair must not be cut, and with his hair his strength would go. And so it was. Poor Samson's strength went from him. He was weak, like any other man. What happened now to Samson? (Verse 21) You will remember millstones which they turned by hand for grinding grain. It was considered a woman's job. The Philistines now held a feast and sacrificed to Dagon for the capture of their enemy. What can you learn about this idol Dagon in 1 Sam. 5:1-4? The idol had the body of a fish, with the head and hands of a man. A great multitude of people had come together and Samson was brought out to make them sport. The gallery, or raised place of some sort, from which the people looked, was supported upon pillars. Read what happened when Samson's hands felt the two main pillars and he prayed to the Lord. His hair had begun again to grow and his strength came back to him once more. The body of Samson was laid in the burial-place of his father near to his old home and to the scene of his first deeds of strength. (Judges 13:25)

1. For what was Samson famous? In what ways was his strength shown?
2. What was the secret of Samson's strength? How was it found out by the Philistines?
3. In what ways did they try to bind Samson and failed?
4. What was done with Samson when he was taken?
5. Tell me about his death and burial.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Samson is a type of strength; a spiritual strength which we all may have, and a Divine strength which the Lord had in His human life; a strength which comes from the letter of the Divine Word, not when it is simply known and understood but when it is loved and obeyed. (A. 3301)

Samson's strength depended upon his hair, for his hair represented the letter of the Word, which is its most external and least living part, and still the whole power of the Word is there. It is useful to see something of the spiritual meaning within the letter of the Word, but we can never give up the letter, not even if we keep what we have seen of the spiritual meaning, for in the letter and only there is the Divine power present in all its fullness. No power of evil can resist the letter of the Word when we keep a commandment or other passage in our thoughts or repeat it with our lips; no argument or persuasion can resist it.

Does the Bible give us examples of the power of the Lord's Word? Remember the ark at the Jordan and at Jericho. We shall learn, too, of the power of the ark in the Philistine country. (1 Sam. 5) Remember the Lord's temptation in the wilderness, when He met the tempter with the letter of the Word, saying, "It is written, Thou shalt not." (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10) If we forget to use the Lord's commandments and His Word in meeting a temptation, we are like Samson when his hair was gone. We are weak and are only human, for the Lord's strength is not with us. (S. 49; T. 223)

Do you see a reason for the number seven, in verses 7 and 13? What deeper meaning is there in the number seven? (A. 728, 5265, 5268; R. 10)

The ropes and the web by which the Philistines tried to hold Samson represent the reasonings and persuasions of evil which have no power before a simple, "Thus saith the Lord," "It is written, Thou shalt not." The Philistines in their third attempt wove Samson's own locks into their web, and so in one of the Lord's temptations in the wilderness the tempter brought words of Scripture into his false argument, but without effect, for he gave them a false meaning. (Matt. 4:6; L. 14; A. 9854) The enticing of Samson and robbing him of his hair is said, in D. Min. 4747, to represent the work of spirits skilled in sorcery who are very persuasive, and almost take away one's power of thought.

Other sad things happened to Samson when his hair was cut off. His eyes were put out; he was bound with fetters of brass, and he was made to grind in a Philistine prison. What do these afflictions mean? Grinding in a good sense represents an effort by reasoning to get at the real inwardness of a matter. It here represents the blind reasoning of one who is without the guidance of the Lord's Word.

Does anyone see why Dagon the fish-god was in keeping with the character of the Philistines? A fish represents an affection and power of knowing of a low external kind. To praise Dagon for delivering Samson into their hands is like congratulating oneself that one's own wit and knowledge have proved superior to the Lord's Word. But it was a false rejoicing. We shall learn more of this idol and of its weakness before the ark of the Lord, in 1 Sam. 5.

Burial in the Scriptures suggests resurrection. The burial of Samson near his old home and the scene of his first deeds of strength suggests the return of spiritual power, when people after experience of their own weakness again put their trust in the Lord and in His Word. (A. 2916, 2955)

## **Lesson 24**

### **Judges 17, 18: Micah and His Idols**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The people of Israel in those days knew very little about the Lord and worship of the Lord, and some simple good people were making and worshiping idols. They had forgotten the first of the Ten Commandments, which told them not to make idols. There was a man named Micah living in the hills of Ephraim, whose mother had saved up silver, and they made of it images to worship. Micah made a chapel in his house where the idols were kept and were worshiped. At first one of his sons served as priest, and afterward there came a man who was a Levite who had been trained as a priest and was looking for a home, and Micah hired him to stay and be his priest.

There came one day to Micah's house five men. They were from the tribe of Dan, Samson's tribe, who had been sent to spy out the land, to find a place to which the tribe of Dan might move and make a new home, for the land which had been given to them they never wholly got from the Philistines and they did not have room. The five spies went up through the country and far up in the north in the beautiful sunny valley under Mount Hermon they found a place called Laish, settled by people from Zidon, the city on the seashore. It was a lovely place by one of the great springs of the Jordan. They liked the place and went back and told their tribe to come and take the city and live there. So the five men led the way, and many of the Danites came with their little ones and their cattle and six hundred armed men. They took the city Laish and made their home there and called it Dan. That is why we find the name Dan near the top of our map.

But one thing the Danites did on their way. They stopped at Micah's house. The armed men stood at the gate of the village and the five men that had been spies went into the house and stole Micah's images. They also asked his priest to go with them, and he went. Poor Micah went after them with a few of his neighbors, but the Danites were too strong for him; they only laughed at him and carried away his idols. We feel sorry for Micah. It was not right to have and to worship idols, but Micah knew no better.

##### **Junior**

"In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Two things in our story show what a lawless time it was: first, that Micah, a man of Ephraim, living only a little way from Shiloh where the Lord's tabernacle was, should make and worship idols and not realize that he was doing wrong; and second, that the tribe of Dan should take a city in another part of the land and make it their home, and that they should steal and take with them another man's treasures.

Read about Micah in chapter 17. The eleven hundred shekels of silver is the same amount that was mentioned in chapter 16:5, worth about seven hundred and fifty dollars. The "ephod" was properly a sacred vest made for the priest (Exod. 28:6-14; 1 Sam. 2:18), but it seems sometimes to mean an image (Judges 8:27). "Teraphim" also means idols. (Gen. 31:19) Micah was pleased

when he could engage a Levite to be his priest. You remember that the Levites were the priestly tribe and were scattered as priests through all the tribes. Looking forward to Judges 18:30, you will learn that his name was Jonathan. We feel sorry for Micah when the Danites took away his images and laughed at his grief. Perhaps someone can find and read to you number 324 in Heaven and Hell. Swedenborg there is speaking of the innocence of many gentile people, and tells of one who listened while this story of Micah was read, and says that he was so much grieved that he scarcely knew what to think by reason of interior grief. This grief was perceived and with it the innocence in all his affections. It was afterward explained to him that graven images ought not to be worshiped, but only the Lord. After he was instructed, the interior affection of his adoration could be perceived, which was much more holy than with Christians. Read the whole number.

Read now the story of the Danites, who were too crowded in their old home, how they found a new home and took possession of it. Find the new home on your map, by one of the great springs of the Jordan in the beautiful valley under Mount Hermon. What was the name of the city before? What name did the Danites give to it? Why do we so often meet the phrase "From Dan to Beer-sheba" and what does it mean? The last verse of our chapter tells us that they set up the idols which they had taken and that they were worshiped in Dan all the time that the house of God, the tabernacle, was in Shiloh.

1. Where was the lot which was first given to the tribe of Dan? Why did they want another home?
2. Where did they find a home? What was the town called before they took it? What name did they give it?
3. What were stolen from the house of Micah by the Danites?
4. Was it right for Micah to have idols? Was it right for the Danites to take them?
5. Where was the tabernacle in those days?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

In the story of Samson we have learned something about the meaning of the tribe of Dan. The name Dan means "Judge," and the tribe represents an acknowledgment of the literal Divine Word. Samson was of the tribe of Dan, and he represents the power of the letter of the Word. There is a time when the literal knowledge represented by Dan is prominent in the religious life, but if one goes on in regeneration and grows in spiritual love and understanding, it is recognized that this knowledge was only on the very border of a heavenly life. The Lord said of John the Baptist and his literal teaching, "He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (Matt. 11:11) That is why Dan was with the rear guard on the march (Num. 10:25); why the lot of Dan was the last drawn (Joshua 19:40); why the tribe moved to the extreme limit of the land; and why in the list of those sealed from the tribes in the Revelation, Dan is not named at all (Rev. 7:4-8); all these things because the tribe represents a very literal external knowledge of the Lord and His Word. (A. 3923; E. 450)

Dan and Beer-sheba were at the northern and southern limits of the Holy Land. Direction east and west is associated in the Bible and in heaven with nearness to the Lord and remoteness from Him in love. Angels look to the Lord in the east. Direction north and south relates especially to the quality of intelligence, the south representing brightness of intelligence, and the north obscure intelligence. (W. 121; E. 422; A. 3708) We see why the place of Dan in the encampment in the desert was on the north of the tabernacle, and why Dan now finds a home at the northern limit of the land. (Num. 2:25) Beer-sheba, with the sunny pastures and wells of the south country, represents states of spiritual intelligence. From Dan to Beer-sheba therefore suggests the whole range of heavenly intelligence from the most external and obscure to the most interior and brightest. (A. 1458, 2723; E. 417)

If people care only for a very external knowledge of the Lord and His Word and care only for external forms of worship, they are making an idol of these external things, not knowing or loving the living things of spiritual life. This is represented by the Danites' stealing idols and keeping them for worship instead of worshiping the Lord in Shiloh. Read an interesting explanation of this stealing of the idols in A. 6396.

Be sure to read the whole of H. 324, which describes the sympathy of an innocent gentile with Micah in the loss of his images and at the same time intimates that this story of Micah was the means of helping at least one innocent gentile, and probably very many, to turn from worship of an idol to worship of the Lord.

## Lesson 25

### 1 Samuel 1: Samuel Promised

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

In the days after Joshua and before there was a king in Israel the Lord sent judges to deliver the people from one enemy and another. You know the names of some of them and the service that they did. Samuel was the last and greatest of the judges. He was "a prophet of the Lord."

Samuel's father and mother had come to the tabernacle to worship. What was the tabernacle? Tell me about the sacred building, its rooms, its walls, its roof, its furniture, which were described to Moses at Sinai, and the pattern was shown him in the mount. When Joshua and the people came into the land of Canaan the tabernacle was set up at Shiloh, the place of rest. It was near the middle of the land where it could be reached from every part, a quiet place, a little off the main line of travel. The story of Micah and the Danites shows us how sadly the tabernacle and the Lord's commandments were forgotten in those days. Some of the priests in charge of the tabernacle were not good men - the sons of the old priest Eli.

There were still some faithful people who remembered the Lord and went each year to the tabernacle at Shiloh, perhaps especially at the time of the Passover in the spring. Among these was Samuel's family. His mother's name was Hannah. They lived not far from Shiloh and went each year to the tabernacle "to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts." They were at the

tabernacle on one of their yearly visits, and Hannah prayed in bitterness of soul and wept sore. Her prayer was that she might have a son, and she promised that she would give him unto the Lord all the days of his life. He should be a Nazarite like Samson, set apart as holy to the Lord. Hannah did not speak her prayer aloud. The old priest Eli who sat upon a seat by a post of the tabernacle and saw her lips move did not know what she asked, but the Lord knew. He hears all prayers. She went back to her home and her prayer was answered. Samuel was born, whose name means "asked of God." He lived at home with his mother until he was weaned, perhaps until he was six or seven years old. Then she took him to the tabernacle "that he may," as she said, "appear before the Lord and there abide forever." He would live at the tabernacle and help the old priest Eli and would be the Lord's child. Samuel himself was dressed like a little priest, and his mother made him a little coat and brought it to him from year to year when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

## **Junior**

We are to learn about Samuel, the last and greatest of the series of judges which had included Barak, Gideon, Jephthah and Samson, and others. You will know that Samuel was the last of the judges when you remember that he anointed the first two kings, Saul and David. Samuel's home was Ramah (1 Sam. 7:17), or as it is called in our chapter Ramathaim. But there were many Ramahs, for "Ramah" means a "hill," and "Ramathaim" a "double hill." That it was in the hills of Ephraim and in the land Zuph (1 Sam. 9:5), shows at least that it was not very far from Shiloh, which also was in Ephraim, making easy for Samuel's parents a yearly visit for worship at the tabernacle.

What was the tabernacle? When was it built and where? How did Moses learn the pattern of the building and its furniture? How were the walls made? How was the roof made? What were the three parts of the building? What was the inmost chamber called and what was in it? What was the outer chamber called and what was there? What was in the court?

The tabernacle was carried by the children of Israel in their journey from Sinai to the Holy Land, and after the land was conquered under Joshua, it was set up at Shiloh, the "place of rest." (Joshua 18:1) Can you find Shiloh on the map? It was southeast of Shechem, near the middle of the land, where it could be reached from every part, but was quieter because a little way off the main line of travel. You can still see the little hill where Shiloh stood, with a meadow about it, shut in by higher hills. The tabernacle stayed in Shiloh many years, during all the unsettled time of the judges, when "there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judges 18:31)

Hannah was sad that she had no child and was praying to the Lord at the tabernacle. Does the Lord hear a prayer which is not spoken out loud? Notice what Hannah promised if she should have a child. He should be a Nazarite like Samson, given to the Lord all the days of his life, and his hair uncut. (Verses 11, 12) The prayer was answered and Samuel was born. His mother kept him at home until he was weaned, which may mean until he was six or seven years old; and then she took him to live at the tabernacle in Shiloh and to help the old priest Eli. Hannah prayed again, and this time it was a prayer of thanksgiving. (1 Sam. 2:1-10) Her prayer reminds us of the words of Mary, "My soul doth magnify the Lord." (Luke 1:46-55)

We can think of Samuel as a little boy helping the old priest Eli at the tabernacle. There was need for a new helper and priest and prophet, for Eli's sons were bad priests. Offerings were burned on the Lord's altar, but a part of some offerings was eaten as a sacred feast. We are reminded of this in chapter 1:4-9. A part also of some offerings was for the priest who made the offering. (Lev. 7:28-34) But Eli's sons took much more than belonged to them. They did worse wrong also in other ways. Their old father rebuked them, but did not prevent it. "Sons of Belial" mean wicked men. Samuel would grow up at the tabernacle and be a good and faithful priest. (1 Sam. 2:35) By and by when he was an old man, Samuel asked the people if he had ever done wrong to any of them, and they said that he had not. (1 Sam. 12:1-5) We think of him now as a little boy helping at the tabernacle. Read 1 Sam. 2:18-19. The linen ephod was a garment worn by priests. Among the garments made for Aaron the ephod was a beautiful vest fastened on the shoulders and around the waist, and on the front of it was fastened the breastplate of precious stones. (Exod. 28:6-14) It is beautiful to think of Samuel's mother making him a little coat each year at home and bringing it to him when they came to offer the yearly sacrifice.

1. Where in the Bible do we find the story of Samuel? What does the name Samuel mean? Why was he called by that name?
2. Where was the tabernacle? Why do we think of the tabernacle when we think of the child Samuel?
3. What did Hannah ask in her prayer? What did she promise?
4. Does Samuel's serving at the tabernacle remind you of something in the life of the Lord? Does it suggest a duty of all children?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Several things which are said of the child Samuel remind us of things said in the Gospel of the Child Jesus. We read that His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover, and at twelve years old, in the temple, the Child Jesus asked, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" The saying, "The child Samuel grew on, and was in favor both with the Lord and also with men," is strikingly like the saying in the Gospel that Jesus "increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." Looking a little more deeply we recognize that the Lord was weaned by His mother as from the first she began to realize that though He was in the world He was not of the world, and that He had Divine power and was doing a Divine work in which she had no part. "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" He said. Even as a Child the Lord began His service at the tabernacle, began indeed to make Himself the perfect tabernacle of God with humanity. It is beautiful to think that this story which all children love the Lord also loved as a Child, and that it was in part from this story that He learned His own duty.

The story is also given to teach every child his or her duty, and every mother hers. As Samuel's mother weaned him and brought him to the Lord, so every mother must learn that her child is the Lord's child more than hers, and must teach her child to know and serve our heavenly Father. She must remember that heaven is the child's real home and must try so to lead the child "that he may

appear before the Lord and there abide forever." It is of heaven that we read in the Psalm, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord. . . . I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." (Ps. 84) In a beautiful sense angels live in the Lord's tabernacle, and so do all those in this world who live a heavenly life and keep near to heaven. (A. 9481)

The birth of a child is also a type of regeneration, of the birth of a heavenly spirit from the Lord or of some element or quality of heavenly life. Remember the Lord's words to Nicodemus in John 3:1-13. The great inward struggle and profound humility before the Lord through which the most heavenly qualities are gained is represented by the tears and bitterness in which Hannah prayed. Her promise that her son should be given to the Lord and the fulfillment of the promise mean that the Lord's best gifts can be received and retained only as they are acknowledged to be His and are kept sacred to His service.

Another thought in regard to Samuel's garments. Garments in the Bible represent thoughts and outward expressions which clothe the living affections of the heart. A priest's garments represent the outward expressions of a life touched by the Lord's love and seeking in all things to give expression to that love. The linen ephod represents especially the truthfulness and rightness of such a life. (Rev. 19:8) In the highest sense such garments represent the expressions of Divine goodness in the Lord's own life. Read in the Psalm of the anointing oil upon the head of Aaron running down to the skirts of his garments. So the Divine love from within flowed down and out into all the words and acts of the Lord's life. The little coat made by Samuel's mother year by year, like the swaddling clothes which Mary wrapped about the Lord, suggests the instruction which a child needs in regard to useful and becoming ways of life, and the instruction must be more advanced as the child grows from year to year. Even the Child Jesus needed such help from His mother and from the Scriptures. (A. 5433; E. 204)

## Lesson 26

### 1 Samuel 2: The Child Samuel

#### THE STORY

##### Primary and Junior

We learned how Hannah prayed at the tabernacle, how she cried and was very sad. Now she prayed again, and this time it was a glad prayer of thanksgiving. Samuel had been born; and she thanked the Lord with all her heart. We read her words in the first ten verses of the chapter. At the same time the mother had brought the little Samuel, now perhaps six or seven years old, to lend him to the Lord for all his life. His home would be at the tabernacle. He would live with the priests and help them in their work, and by and by be himself the Lord's faithful priest and prophet.

What was the work of the priests, in which the little Samuel helped? There was the care of the holy building itself with its walls and curtains. Then there was the golden lamp, whose cups must be filled each day with olive-oil and the wicks trimmed; and the lamps must be lighted every

evening. Opposite to the lamp was the golden table on which thin cakes of bread must be carefully arranged in piles before the Lord, and the old bread must be changed for new each Sabbath. Incense must be burned morning and evening on the little altar, which would send up a sweet fragrance with the people's prayers. Out in the court, near the door of the tabernacle, was the laver to hold water; and the priests must wash their hands and feet there before doing sacrifice or going into the tabernacle. There was also in the court the altar of burnt offering with its fire that must never go out, and there was much work for the priests at this altar.

We must learn a little about the offerings that were made on the altar. They were of animals, calves and lambs and doves, and of the fruits of the field, flour and oil. Some offerings were made at regular times, as the offering of a lamb every morning and evening; others were made whenever the people brought them to the tabernacle.

There were also different ways of making the offerings, which are described in the Book of Leviticus. Some were wholly burnt upon the altar; of others only a small part was burnt, and the greater part was returned to those who brought it, and was eaten by them as a sacred feast. Read again 1 Sam. 1:4-9. A part of some offerings was also given to the priests to eat, and it was told in the law just what their part should be of meat and of flour. In the case of "peace offerings," which were offerings of thanksgiving, the fat should be burned upon the altar, the breast should be waved before the Lord and should then be given to Aaron and his sons, and the right shoulder should be given to the priest who did the service and burned the fat upon the altar. (Lev. 7:28-34)

Eli's sons did wrong in taking for themselves from the offerings much more than their rightful part, and also in taking their part first before the fat had been burned upon the altar; sometimes they did not burn the fat at all. The sons of Eli did worse wrong in other ways, and their old father rebuked them but did not prevent it. They could not be priests much longer. "Sons of Belial" mean wicked men.

Very beautiful garments were made for Aaron when he was made high priest. One of them was the ephod. It was a beautiful vest fastened on the shoulders and around the waist and on the front of it was fastened the breastplate of precious stones. (Exod. 28:6-14) The little Samuel was girded with a linen ephod; he wore a priestly vest of plain white linen. And Samuel's mother made him a little coat and brought it to him from year to year. The coat is called by the same name as Aaron's outer robe. (Exod. 28:31-35) It did not have all the beauty of Aaron's robe, but the loving mother made it with her own hands.

1. Tell me about the two prayers that Hannah prayed at the tabernacle. Why was the first one sad and the second grateful?
2. What was some of the work of the priests at the tabernacle, in which Samuel helped?
3. How was Samuel dressed?
4. Who was the old priest in Shiloh? What wrong did his sons do in regard to the offerings which the people brought?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

How nearly the words spoken of the child Samuel are like words spoken of the Lord when He was a child in Nazareth! (1 Sam. 2:26 and Luke 2:52) Other things in the chapter remind us that Samuel was a type of the Lord. Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving is much more than a thanksgiving for Samuel's birth. Like Zacharias, and like Simeon and Anna, she was inspired to speak words which are a thanksgiving for the Lord's coming and for His saving work. Hannah's prayer especially reminds us of the words of the mother Mary at the house of Elizabeth. (Luke 1:46-55) What is said also in verse 35 about the "faithful priest" looks beyond Samuel to the Lord.

The offering of animals and of fruits of the earth, which was a large part of the Jewish worship, represents the acknowledgment that every good thing natural and spiritual is the Lord's, and the devoting of them to His service. But when some good thing is acknowledged to be the Lord's we do not lose it. We still enjoy it and share it with others, but in a holier way. And this was represented by the returning of the offering, when it had been consecrated, to the one who brought it, to be eaten as a sacred feast. We take the fat to the altar when we acknowledge that all delight in good is the Lord's. The breast and right shoulder given to the priest are the happy sense of the love and power of the Lord, as we do our work, enjoy our pleasures, live our life, as a feast sacred to Him. The sin of Eli's sons in claiming their own part first and neglecting to offer the fat is the sin of everyone who forgets that good is only from the Lord. Like them, we demand more than the appointed portion when we are not content with the sense of the Lord's love and power in our life, but look for selfish excitement and indulgence. (A. 10075, 10093)

Any outer thing which clothes a more interior thing is as a garment. In the Bible, garments especially represent the thoughts and expressions which clothe the living affections of the heart. The Lord's garments in the Gospels represent the thoughts and words which clothe His love. Samuel was a type of the Lord, and the ephod and little coat which the child Samuel wore represent the expressions of His love, even as a child. The linen ephod suggests the truthfulness and rightness of His life. (Rev. 19:8) The little coat made by his mother year by year, like the swaddling clothes which Mary wrapped about the Lord, suggests the instruction which a child needs in regard to useful and becoming ways of life, and the instruction which even the Lord as a child received from the Scriptures. (A. 5433; E. 240)

## **Lesson 27**

### **1 Samuel 3: Samuel Called**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Samuel was the little boy who was brought by his mother to the tabernacle at Shiloh to live there, to be the Lord's child and to help the old priest Eli in taking care of the tabernacle. Perhaps sometimes he would light the lamps in the evening in the tabernacle so that it would not be dark

at night, and in the morning he would open the doors to the east so that the sunshine could come in. Samuel and Eli had their beds near the tabernacle where they slept at night. One night they were in bed and Samuel heard someone call him: "Samuel, Samuel!" He jumped up and ran to Eli, for he thought Eli called him. But Eli said, "I called not; lie down again." So he went and lay down. But soon he heard someone call again, and he jumped up and ran to Eli. He heard the call three times and ran to Eli. Then Eli knew that the Lord had called the child, and he said, "Go, lie down, and it shall be if He call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth" So Samuel went and lay down, and soon he heard the Lord call again, "Samuel, Samuel!" And he said, "Speak, for Thy servant heareth." Then the Lord spoke to Samuel and told him sad things that were coming to Eli's family because they were not good.

So Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him. And every year Samuel's mother came to the tabernacle and brought him each year a coat which she had made for him to wear. When Samuel was a man, he took care of the tabernacle instead of Eli, and the people came to Samuel to learn what the Lord would have them do. By and by we find Samuel going about the country to three or four different places, where he taught the people and settled their disputes, and he came home to Ramah to his house, the place where he had been born.

## Junior

"And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli." Who was Eli, and where was he living? In what ways may we think of Samuel helping at the tabernacle? Read 1 Sam. 2:18; 3:15. Verse 3 speaks of the lamp of God in the temple of the Lord. What do you know about the golden lamp with seven branches made for the tabernacle? The same verse speaks of the ark of God. What do you remember about the ark? Verse 15 speaks of Samuel opening the doors of the house in the morning. At first the tabernacle was closed by curtains, but perhaps it had doors now that it had a more permanent resting place. It opened to the east. Read carefully the story of the Lord's calling Samuel (verses 2-10). Then close your book and tell the story.

It was a long time since the Lord had spoken to His people in this way, but He now spoke again to Samuel in Shiloh. See verses 1 and 21. What does it mean, "All Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba"? Where were these places? We must remember that people from all parts of the land were to come to the tabernacle to worship, as Samuel's parents did. Also, as we look on in the story, we find that Samuel went each year to several places to judge the people, coming back to his home in Ramah. Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpeh were places to which Samuel went. You know Bethel, on the hills north of Jerusalem, and Gilgal in the Jordan valley near the river. Mizpeh, which means a watch tower, was perhaps the high pointed hill north of Jerusalem, which is still called Neby Samwil, "the prophet Samuel." Some of the judges of whom we have learned gave help only in one part or another of the land, but Samuel was known through all the land. It was known that he was established to be a prophet of the Lord.

1. What was the work of Eli at the tabernacle in which Samuel helped?
2. What can you tell about the lamp mentioned in verse 3?
3. How many times did Samuel run to Eli? What obedience must we learn before we can obey the Lord?

4. What did Eli tell Samuel to answer? When we are spoken to, when can we truly answer that we hear?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

We have seen in the ministry of the little Samuel at the tabernacle a suggestion of the Lord's ministry, beginning even as a child. The dim light of the Jewish Church at the Lord's coming is suggested by the words, "Ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was." And the bringing to the church the light of a new day, by Samuel's opening the doors of the Lord's house in the morning. (A. 2405, 9782-9787)

Note again things said of Samuel in these chapters very like things said of the Child Jesus in chapters 2 and 3 of Luke's Gospel.

If I am spoken to, what does it mean if I say, "I see"? What does it mean if I say, "I hear"? Which answer does the Lord want when He speaks to us commandments or other lessons? "Hear, O Israel," introduces the first of all commandments; "Hear, O Israel, and observe to do." (Deut. 6:3-4; A. 396) When the Lord gives us commandments, we must say, "All that the Lord our God shall speak . . . we will hear and do." (Deut. 5:27)

Often when the Lord had been teaching, He said, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Matt. 13:43) And in the Revelation the charge to each of the seven churches includes the words, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches." (Rev. 2:7) It means that so far as we are able it is our duty to understand the Lord's message and obey it. We must learn to say with Samuel, "Speak, for Thy servant heareth." (A. 2542; E. 108; R. 87)

What stage of development, what element of character does Samuel represent? He stands in the Bible story at the close of the period of the judges, and he anointed the first kings. The patriarchal section of Israel's history which Samuel closes has special relation to childhood with its lessons of obedience and its trials and victories, and the kings to a more mature and rational control of life. Samuel seems to stand as a type of the best traits of childhood, especially of childhood's obedience. Samuel said, "Speak; for Thy servant heareth"; and again, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Sam. 15:22) It is beautiful that Samuel is introduced to us as a child, answering the Lord with a promise of obedience. (A. 2542, 4653)

## **Lesson 28**

### **1 Samuel 4:1-11; 5: The Ark with Philistia**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Do you remember the ark which the children of Israel made at Mount Sinai, to keep safe the two stones on which were written the Ten Commandments? Let us find, if we can, a little picture of the ark, and tell me all you can about it. It was very precious because the commandments were in it, and it was kept in the inner chamber, the most holy place, of the tabernacle. The Lord's power was with the ark. Do you remember how this power was shown when the people came to the Jordan, and when they took the city, Jericho? It would be a very sad thing for them to lose the precious ark; but they did once lose it, as you will see.

The people were fighting with the Philistines, who lived near them in the green meadows, toward the sea. They were the same Philistines who were enemies of Samson. The fighting was in some of the valleys that run from the hills where Israel lived out into the meadows where the Philistines lived. A battle was fought and Israel was beaten. What could they do? They remembered the ark, which had brought them the Lord's power at the Jordan and at Jericho. They sent for the ark from the tabernacle at Shiloh, hoping that it would give them victory. There was another battle, and again Israel was beaten, and the ark was taken by the Philistines.

The Philistines put the ark in the temple of their idol Dagon. The power of the Lord was with the ark, and in the morning the idol had fallen on its face before the ark. It was a strange idol with the body of a fish and the hands and face of a man. They set up the idol again in its place, but the next morning it had fallen again and the head and hands of the image were broken off. Also a sickness with boils came on the people of the place, and mice spoiled the grain growing in the fields. The people of the city were afraid of the ark. They sent it to another city. But in this place also the boils came upon the people, and mice spoiled the grain. They sent the ark to still another city. When the people of this city saw it coming, they were afraid that the sickness and the mice would come also upon them. What should the Philistines do with the ark? Wherever it was taken there were plagues, the boils and the mice. Our next lesson tells us what they did.

##### **Junior**

Our chapter tells of war between Israel and the Philistines. Let us see on the map where the Philistines lived, in the southern part of Canaan, in the broad green meadows by the sea and reaching back to the hills. The Philistines were a people who had come and settled on these shores, more intelligent and skillful than the native people of the land. They were dangerous enemies of Israel. The Philistines had five principal cities: Ashdod, Askalon, and Gaza were near the seashore; Gath was near the middle of the country, and Ekron was the most northern of the five cities. Find these cities on our little map. See too on the map the wall of hills rising from the meadows, and valleys in which are brooks coming from the hills and crossing the meadows to the sea. The valley near Beth-shemesh is the valley of Sorek, which we read of in the story of Samson. The one next south of this is the valley of Elah which we shall read of in the story of David and

Goliath. The fighting in our story was in these valleys in the edge of the hills. Eben-ezer, "stone of help," where Israel was camped was probably near Beth-shemesh; Aphek, where the Philistines were, was probably near Gath.

Now comes the interesting part of the story. The army of Israel was beaten in a battle, and they said, "Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh." They hoped that the ark would bring them victory. Do you remember the ark, how it was made of wood and covered with gold, and the two golden cherubim on the lid? Why was the ark so holy? What was in it? What times do you remember when the ark showed a wonderful power? At the Jordan and at Jericho? The Philistines were afraid when they heard that the ark had come into the camp. Their words, "These mighty Gods," "These be the Gods," show how little these idol worshipers knew of the one true God whose laws were written in the ark. But again Israel was beaten, and the ark was taken by the Philistines. The ark had not lost its power, as we shall see, but it could help people only when the Lord saw that they were ready to be helped.

What now became of the ark? Follow it on the map. The Philistines took it first to Ashdod, and put it there in the temple of their idol Dagon. We heard of Dagon in the story of Samson. (Judges 16:23) The name Dagon means "fish," and the idol was part fish and part man, the body of a fish and face and hands of a man. How did the ark show its power in Dagon's temple? At the same time a sickness with boils came upon the people, and mice destroyed the grain in the fields. The mice are not mentioned in our lesson, but see chapter 6, verses 4, 5, and on. So they sent the ark from Ashdod. Follow it on the map to Gath, and then to Ekron. Everywhere it brought plagues, as Moses' word and rod had brought plagues in Egypt. The people were evil; the commandments could expose their evil, but could not give them blessing, because they did not obey them.

Does it seem strange that plagues should come with the ark? There are times when lovely things do not seem lovely to us; even kind words from friends annoy us; it is when we ourselves are not good and kind. At such times we do not enjoy the Bible; we do not find the strength and happiness it is meant to bring. It points out our faults, and annoys us.

1. Where was the Philistine country? Show me the five large cities of the Philistines.
2. What story that we have already learned belongs to the border land between Philistia and Israel?
3. From where did the children of Israel bring the ark into the camp? What became of it after the battle?
4. What was Dagon? What have we learned about him in the story of Samson? What more today?
5. Did the ark bring blessing to the Philistines?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

In preparation for this lesson we should read carefully the full explanation of the story in E. 700, and the briefer explanations in P. 326, and in T. 203.

The Philistines here have the same meaning as in the story of Samson, an intellectual power which is not making itself useful to a heavenly life, but is proud and cares nothing for goodness. We saw this pride pictured in the lion which roared against Samson, and we shall see it pictured again in the giant Goliath who fought with David. This intellectual power without good life is called briefly "faith alone." (A. 9340)

How do you account for the many images and pictures in Egypt and elsewhere, part animal and part human? They were used by the ancients to express and emphasize certain human qualities and Divine qualities of the Lord. Afterward they forgot the meaning of the forms, and worshiped them as idols. (P. 255; A. 10393, 10394) Remembering that the sea represents the lower atmosphere of natural knowledge and thought, and a fish the affection for such thinking, we begin to see what Dagon the fish-god represented, and why it was in keeping with the character of the Philistines. (S. 23; E. 817; F. 52) But the lion was not strong before Samson, nor Goliath before David, nor Dagon before the ark.

We have spoken of the ark as bringing plagues upon the Philistines, and of Moses' rod as bringing plagues in Egypt. But in truth does the Lord ever send plagues or punishments? No, but His commandments and His power expose the evils in which people are. It was so when plagues came upon Egypt and upon the Philistines. It is the same with the plagues in Revelation 8 and 9. Explanations in F. 52, A. 938, and P. 326 help us recognize the boils and the mice as types of evil into which spiritual Philistines fall, those who are intellectually proud, but careless about good life. We will learn more about this in our next lesson.

## Lesson 29

### 1 Samuel 6: The Ark Sent Home

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

You remember the precious ark, how it was made, and what was in it, and its place in the most holy chamber of the tabernacle. How did it come to be in the country of the Philistines who were enemies of Israel? But it brought no blessing to the Philistines. What had happened to the idol Dagon when the ark was put in the temple of the idol? There were boils upon the people, and mice spoiled the grain in the fields wherever the ark was sent. It was now at Ekron, and the lords of the Philistines, the rulers of their five chief cities, decided that it must be sent home. Their wise men told them how to send it. They must make a new cart, and yoke to the cart two cows, tying up their calves at home. And they must put into the cart with the ark a golden offering, golden images of the boils which had come upon the people and of the mice which had spoiled the fields, five of each for the five cities of the Philistines. They did this, as the wise men told them, putting them in a "coffer" or box. They sent no one with the cart to drive the cows. They watched and followed after the ark, and they saw the cows without any driver, lowing as they went, take the straight way across the fields from Ekron to the valley of Beth-shemesh in the land of Israel. The people of Beth-shemesh were harvesting wheat in the meadow. Looking up they saw the ark coming and were glad; and it stopped in one of their fields. There was a great stone near by, and

they offered the cows on the stone, and made other offerings to the Lord. But the people of Beth-shemesh were afraid to have the ark stay with them, for they looked into the ark and many of them died. They sent to the people of Kirjath-jearim (city of the woods) in the hills near by to come and get the ark, and it was there many years. As we read the chapter, think of the new cart with the precious ark and the golden offering, and the cows with no driver taking the straight way, as the Lord guided them, bringing the ark home. Some of you have a picture of the ark coming into the harvest field at Beth-shemesh.

## Junior

The ark sent home. Why? How did the ark come into the hands of the Philistines? And why did the Philistines wish to send it home?

Our chapter speaks of the five chief cities of the Philistines, and of the five lords or rulers. Our little map will help us to find Ashdod, Gaza, Askalon, Gath, and Ekron. It was in Ashdod that the idol Dagon fell before the ark. They sent the ark then to Gath, and then to Ekron, and wherever it came there were plagues, boils upon the people and mice in the fields. In all how long was the ark in the Philistine country? They had become thoroughly afraid of it; it must be sent home. But how should they send it? Their diviners told them. These were men who had some knowledge of ancient wisdom, such as the wise men had who brought presents to the Lord, and they studied out the way to send the ark.

How was it done? The new cart; the two cows; their calves; no driver; with the ark in the cart the box of golden offerings. So what did the lords of the Philistines see as they watched, and followed across the fields? The cows were lowing for their calves, but they went, and took the straight way to the land of Israel. I have ridden across the fields, from Ekron to Beth-shemesh, thinking of this journey of the ark, when the unseen power guided the reluctant cows to take the straight way and to bring the ark home.

Notice what is said about the reception of the ark. Find Beth-shemesh on your map, and Kirjath-jearim. The ark stayed here a long time, twenty years (1 Sam. 7:1-2), and more, perhaps seventy or eighty years in all, until David came for it and took it up to Zion. (2 Sam. 6)

How did it come about that the ark was in the Philistine country? How long was it there?

Why did the Philistines wish to send the ark home? Who told them how to send it? The Philistine "diviners," like the wise men and sorcerers of Egypt in the days of Moses, were men who had some knowledge of heavenly things handed down from long ago. Especially they knew something of the correspondence between natural and spiritual things. Some knowledge of this kind remained even to the time of the Lord's coming, among wise men of the East. From their knowledge of correspondences, the diviners "studied out" the instructions which they gave for the trespass offering and for sending the ark home. (T. 203)

1. How was the ark sent home? On what was it placed? What drew the cart? Who drove it? What offering was sent with the ark?
2. What way did the cows take? To what place in the land of Israel did they come?

3. Where was the ark before it was taken to the Philistine country? Where did it stay for many years after coming home?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

I have said that the diviners "studied out" the instructions which they gave for the trespass offering and for sending the ark home. This is Swedenborg's expression in T. 203. The diviners of that day did not have the perception of correspondences and of heavenly things, nor the intelligence in regard to them which people had in more ancient times, but they had the knowledge of some correspondences which enabled them to study out a way of sending the ark home which would be a true picture of spiritual experience.

Remember first what is represented by the Philistines, and by the presence of the ark with them. The Philistines represent an intellectual power which is proud and self-confident, and has almost no care for the life of charity in which truth ought to find expression. (A. 9340) What is the effect if the Lord's commandments are held in this way, as mere matters of knowledge without being obeyed? They bring no blessing; rather they bring plagues; they point out and condemn our faults and are an annoyance to us.

What is the remedy for this condition? You say at once that the way to put the commandments in their right place and to make them blessings is to obey them. This part of our duty is represented by yoking the cows to the new cart and by their taking the straight way. The cattle represent strong natural affections for work and pleasure; they are yoked to the ark when we compel these affections to obey the commandments. They may be reluctant to leave what they naturally love, as the cows were taken from their calves; but whatever the hardships, the reluctance, expressed by the lowing of the kine, we must keep the straight way and go as the commandments lead, having no other guide. The new cart on which the ark was carried represents a new principle or doctrine in regard to the commandments, perhaps in particular the new acknowledgment of the duty of carrying them into life, of doing what they teach. (A. 5945; T. 203)

And is this obeying of the commandments all that is needed to bring them to their right place? Ought we not also to confess the evils which the commandments have exposed and humbly ask forgiveness for them? And this is represented by the golden emerods and mice sent as a trespass offering to the Lord. The images of the plague are plainly a confession of the evil things; and the images were of gold because when wrongs things are humbly confessed and repented of, there comes forgiveness and a grateful love for the Lord in their place. The one to whom most is forgiven loves the most. (Luke 7:40-47) Can you distinguish in meaning between the emerods and the mice? The former represent the evil affections and the latter the slyness and deceit which the commandments have exposed. (F.,52; P.326)

In connection with the smiting of the people of Beth-shemesh because they looked into the ark we may remember the death of Uzzah because he touched the ark. (2 Sam. 6:6-8) Irreverence necessarily reacts with harm upon one who is irreverent, as is declared in the second of the Ten Commandments. Remember too that we cannot see the Lord in His Divineness, nor expect to see His infinite providence in events as they pass. "Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man

see Me, and live." The fullness of the Lord's love unveiled would be as a consuming fire. (Exod. 33:20; A. 6849; E. 504 latter half)

## Lesson 30

### 1 Samuel 7: Samuel as Judge

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

We remember Samuel as the little boy at the tabernacle, and how the Lord called him. We know too that when Samuel grew up the Lord was with him, and all the people in the land knew that Samuel was the Lord's prophet, sent by the Lord to teach them. (1 Sam. 3:19-21) One thing that Samuel tried to do was to help the people to remember the Lord, and to worship Him and not the idols of the other people in the land. He helped them too to find the Lord's help against their enemies the Philistines, who were taking away their cities and their fields.

There is a high pointed hill in sight from Jerusalem to the northwest, called today Neby Samwil, the prophet Samuel. This seems to be the hill called in our story Mizpeh (watch tower), where Samuel called the people together and prayed for them. The hill still stands to remind us of Samuel and of his faithful work for the people. Among the idols which Samuel told them to put away were Baalim, which means images of Baal that many of the neighboring peoples worshiped, and Ashtaroth, which means images of a goddess connected with Baal. The people promised Samuel that they would put the images away and serve the Lord only.

In the high hill Mizpeh where Samuel prayed for the people, he poured out water before the Lord as a sign that the people were making themselves clean from the idols and evil things. Then when they heard that the Philistines were coming against them, Samuel offered a little lamb as a sacrifice to the Lord. They would be innocent as the little lamb, and then the Lord would help them as their Shepherd. And the Lord did help them. There was a great thunderstorm that day which troubled the Philistines, and the men of Israel chased them back into their country.

Now there was rest from the Philistines, and Samuel went each year to several places where the people came to him to learn from him and have him settle their disputes. One of these places was Ramah where his father and mother had lived, and where Samuel had first lived as a little boy before his mother took him to the tabernacle. It was still his home.

##### Junior

The ark had come home from the Philistine country, and was at Kirjath-jearim, the "city of the woods." It was there a long time, but when it had been there twenty years, something happened that we are now to learn about.

The people were much oppressed by their enemies the Philistines who still ruled over them. You know that when an enemy oppressed the children of Israel it was always because they had disobeyed the Lord and worshiped idols. Moses had warned the people that it would be so.

We have learned about Samuel as a little boy at the tabernacle at Shiloh. We must now learn of him grown to be a man, known by all the people of the land as the Lord's prophet. He was teacher and judge. Read 1 Sam. 3:19-21. The high, pointed hill called Neby Samwil (the prophet Samuel) is a beautiful reminder of this good leader of the people, the last and greatest of the judges of Israel; for after him there were Kings. This same hill is also probably the Mizpeh of our story.

We see Samuel at work teaching the people to give up the idols which they had learned from the people about them to worship, and to serve only the Lord; and praying with them for the Lord's help against the Philistines. Baalim and Ashtaroth are both plural words, meaning images of Baal, whose worship was associated with the sun, and images of Ashtoreth, whose worship was associated with the planet Venus. The worship of these idols led to much evil and was again and again a snare to the people of Israel. Elijah's offering on Mount Carmel was to decide between the worship of Baal and the worship of the Lord. (1 Kings 18) Samuel was teaching the same lesson.

Think now of Samuel praying for the people gathered about him on the high hill Mizpeh. And still more earnestly he prayed when they saw the Philistines coming against them. What did it mean when Samuel poured out water before the Lord? And what did it mean when he offered a little lamb as a sacrifice to the Lord? What do you think it meant? And then see what I have said about it to the little children.

Does the thunder which helped the people of Israel against the Philistines remind you of other times when a storm helped them against an enemy? (Joshua 10:11; Judges 5:20-21) The valley down which the Philistines fled and the Israelites pursued, led to Beth-shemesh and so out into the plain. It was probably near Beth-shemesh that the stone was set up in memory of the deliverance, and was called Eben-ezer, "the stone of help." It was at this same place that, twenty years before, the ark had been taken by the Philistines. (1 Sam. 4:1; 5:1)

In the peaceful time that followed this victory we see Samuel going each year in circuit to several places to judge the people. Do you recognize the places, and can you find them on the map? Bethel you know, on the high hills north of Jerusalem, where Abraham and Lot looked out over the land, where Jacob had the vision of the ladder. Gilgal was in the plain of Jordan, where the people first camped after crossing the river. Mizpeh was the high hill that we have learned of in this lesson. Ramah was Samuel's own home. The little boy had grown to be the prophet and wise father of the people.

1. Where did the ark stay for a long time after it was sent back by the Philistines?
2. Where was Samuel born? Where did he live as a little child? Where was his home when he grew old?
3. How did Samuel deliver the people from the Philistines? Where did he gather the people together?
4. What did they do there as they made confession and prayed?
5. At what places did Samuel judge Israel?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

Keep in mind that Samuel, the last and greatest of the Judges, is a type of the best strength of childhood. The kings follow, who represent a maturer government of life by truth rationally understood. Consider more carefully some points that have been suggested to the junior classes.

How can we come together on a high hill to pray to the Lord, and go down from the hill to conquer our enemies? (E. 405; A. 795; R. 336)

In thinking of the water poured out by Samuel before the Lord, read Isa. 1:16, the whole verse. Read of the baptism by John the Baptist. (Matt. 3:2-6) Read of Pilate's washing his hands. (Matt. 27:24; R. 378; E. 475) Used sincerely, the water means repentance.

In thinking of the meaning of Samuel's sacrificing the lamb, remember the Lord's teaching that He is our Shepherd, and that we are His sheep and lambs. (Ps. 23; John 10) Remember the lamb sacrificed and eaten in the Passover, whose blood also on the side posts and above the door was a protection to the people. (Exod. 11:1-14) And remember the offering of a lamb each morning and evening on the altar before the temple. (Exod. 29:38-39) The lamb represents the innocent, trustful feelings which we must have toward the Lord if He is to lead us and protect us. (A. 3994, 10132; E. 314)

A voice from heaven may be heard as thunder by persons in a low, natural state, who are not able to receive particulars of the message but only a general sense of the Divine power. Remember the thunders heard by the children of Israel at Sinai (Exod. 19:16); and the voice from heaven to our Lord, when some said that it thundered (John 12:28-29). A voice of Divine love might be heard as thunder by the evil, and be terrifying to them. (R. 615; E. 855)

The Lord's Word is our prophet calling us to repentance and teaching us what is right. Do we need that it shall judge us in different places, on the high hills of Bethel, and in the low plain of Jordan, in our inner thoughts and motives, and in our outward work and pleasures? (A. 1450-1453, 1585)

### **Lesson 31**

#### **1 Samuel 8: Asking for a King**

### **THE STORY**

#### **Junior**

What do we seem to see when we hear the name "Samuel"? We see a little boy at the tabernacle in Shiloh, dressed in a linen ephod like a priest, and helping the old priest Eli. At the time you think of, what was the little boy doing? What was Eli doing? And what happened? Who can tell me about it? This was in Shiloh, the "place of rest." Where was Shiloh? When was the tabernacle set up in Shiloh? And what was the tabernacle? How did the people know how to build it? Moses told

them, you say? How did Moses know? Who can tell us about the tabernacle? What were its walls made of? its roof? What was in each of its three parts?

We read that people went to sacrifice to the Lord in Shiloh. In what part of the tabernacle were sacrifices offered? We read of the lamp of God in the temple of the Lord? Where was the lamp? We read that Samuel opened the doors of the house of the Lord. What kinds of doors were made for the tabernacle at Sinai? We read of taking the ark from Shiloh. Where in the tabernacle was it kept? But you have not told me why the child Samuel was at Shiloh. Did his father and mother live there? Did his mother ever see him there? and did she do something for him?

When Samuel grew to be a man, war with the Philistines was still going on. There was a battle between the Israelites and the Philistines in which the Israelites were beaten, and they sent and brought the ark from Shiloh. Who can tell me about it? What happened to the ark? How was its power shown in the Philistine country? How was it sent home? Yes, tell me carefully about sending it home; that is a story I love to hear. Was it taken back to Shiloh? No, not again to Shiloh, but it was kept in Kirjath-jearim among the hills of Judah, and it stayed there a long time, until when David was king he brought it up to Jerusalem.

But how about the war with the Philistines? How was it ended? Samuel, when he was a man, taught the people to put away their idols. Does someone remember how he gathered them at the high hill Mizpeh to repent and to sacrifice to the Lord? Then when the Philistines came against them the Lord made them strong, and they drove them back into their own country.

So Samuel was the judge and leader of the people, and he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh; and he judged Israel in all those places. And his return was to Ramah, for there was his house, and there he judged Israel. The people testified that Samuel was a just, good judge. (1 Sam. 12:1-5)

How had the people of Israel been ruled so far? Up to this time they had never had a king. In the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the old father of the tribe was the priest and leader. Then Moses and Aaron were leader and priest, and they taught the people the Lord's laws. Then came Joshua and the judges and Samuel, but as yet no king. The people began to wish for a king. The way they had been living seemed to them childish and they wanted to be like other nations and have a king to judge them and to lead their army.

Samuel was displeased that they wanted a king, but he prayed to the Lord, and the Lord told him that it should be as the people asked. Still, Samuel should warn the people what the king would be like, how his rule would be a hard rule, and he would make them serve him as soldiers, as farmers and herdsmen, and in the palace. Still they wanted a king.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

We may be governed and our lives kept right in several different ways. We may be led by love, and we are led in this way as little children. As older children we are governed by learning what is right and doing it obediently. These kinds of government in our life are pictured by the government of the people of Israel in the days of the patriarchs and of Moses and the judges to

the time of Samuel. Afterward they were ruled by kings who organized them as a nation with more of outward strength. This pictures the development of the power of reason. When this comes we are not led as we once were, by love; we do not simply obey what we are told; but we try to understand and do what we see is right. This change comes in youth and early adulthood. (A. 1672, 8770)

Samuel warned the people that the rule of the king would be a hard rule. And so is truth hard when it is held simply in the understanding and the reason. Applied in this cold hard way it often does great harm. Truth must be joined with love and kindness to make it really useful.

The hardness of truth as a ruler unsoftened by kindness is represented by what Samuel told the people about their king. Read also what Moses said in looking forward to the day when there would be a king. (Dent. 17:14-20) His words mean that when truth and reason rule they must be guided by the Lord's teaching, and they must be softened and made useful by love. (A. 6148, 2015)

Samuel was displeased that the people desired a king. It is often distressing to parents when young people begin to think and reason for themselves. They have been lovely little children; they have been obedient as older boys and girls. Now as young men and women they are less lovely, less obedient. They question things that they are told to do; they try to decide for themselves what is right, and are critical of others. Parents are distressed, and the gentle childlike spirit in the young person is still more distressed. This seems especially to be pictured in Samuel's displeasure, for Samuel stands for the noble childlike spirit. It does not understand the new development. But the Lord knows that the awakening power to reason and to understand will lead the way to a still stronger government of the life. This is meant in the Lord's telling Samuel that it should be as the people wished; they should have a king.

## **Lesson 32**

### **1 Samuel 9:1-4; 10:1, 17-27: Saul Made King**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Saul was a young man, tall and handsome, "from his shoulders and upward higher than any of the people." When we first hear of Saul, he was starting out from his home in Gibeah with a servant to search for his father's asses which were lost. His father's name was Kish. Gibeah stood on a hill a little north of Jerusalem, in the tribe of Benjamin. Saul and his servant went a long way looking for the asses, through the hills of Ephraim to the north and afterward in the country near Bethlehem to the south. At last they were giving up the search and returning home, when they found themselves near the town where Samuel lived. Samuel was known as a prophet. They would stop and ask his help to find the asses.

The town stood on a hill, and we see Saul and the servant climbing the steep path and stopping to ask their way of girls who were coming to the spring outside the town to draw water. You know how the women and girls in that country come with their jars to the spring and carry them full of

water on their heads back to their homes. The girls told Saul and the servant that they would find Samuel in the town, and they met him as they went in at the city gate. He told them that the asses were found. But Samuel was just going to a sacrifice and a feast on a hilltop near the town. He took the strangers with him and gave them the chief place among the guests. At the feast he gave Saul a shoulder of meat, which was a mark of honor, for it was the part given to the priest. (Lev. 7:32) He kept them with him all night, and gave Saul the cool pleasant chamber on the housetop. Early in the morning Samuel called Saul and went with him out of the town.

Why did Samuel show Saul so much honor? The day before Saul came, the Lord had told Samuel that he would come and that he would be king of Israel. When Saul came in at the city gate, the Lord told Samuel that he was the man. Now, as they went out of the town together in the early morning and were alone, Samuel told Saul what the Lord had told him, and poured oil upon his head and kissed him. This was called anointing, and it made him king.

### **Junior**

We must know the story of Saul's looking for the asses and of his anointing by Samuel, as I have told it to the little children. We can feel pretty sure that the hill on which Gibeah stood is the one often called "Gibeah of Saul." I wish that we could feel equally sure about Ramah, Samuel's home. It also was on a hill, for Ramah means a height. Ramathaim (1 Sam. 1:1) means a double height, and it was not very far from Gibeah.

Saul had been anointed king, but it was a secret. Before the anointing, Saul's servant had been sent on, so that Saul and Samuel were alone. (1 Sam. 9:27) When Saul came home and his uncle asked him what Samuel had said, he told him that Samuel told them plainly that the asses were found; but of the matter of the kingdom whereof Samuel spake, he told him not. (1 Sam. 10:14-16) Perhaps no one knew it except Saul and Samuel.

Samuel now called the people together to choose a king, and the Lord helped them in the same way that He helped them when they came to Shiloh to learn where each tribe should have its home. The meeting now was at Mizpeh, the high hill where Samuel before had gathered the people and one of the places where he judged them. The hill is still called Neby Samwil, the Prophet Samuel. Samuel drew lots, as Joshua had done at Shiloh, and the Lord guided the lots. First he drew lots among the tribes, and the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. This was Saul's tribe. Then Saul's family was chosen, and at last Saul himself. They could not find him, for he was hiding among the baggage. When they found him they saw how tall he was, and handsome. Samuel said, "See ye him whom the Lord bath chosen," and all the people shouted, "Live the king!"

We read that Samuel then told the people the manner of the kingdom and wrote it in a book and laid it up before the Lord. This would seem to have been a formal agreement between the people and the king as to his rights and duties. Looking back to chapter 8, we read that Samuel was grieved when the people asked for a king, and he told the people what a king might be like, drawing the picture from the harsh and oppressive ways of many eastern kings. Possibly the agreement written for Saul and the people was intended to guard against such abuses of kingly power. It is possible, also, that in the writing of this agreement there may have been some memory of the wise instruction given by Moses to the people in Deut. 17, looking forward to a day when the people might wish to have a king. Read Deut. 17:14-20, how the king should not gather

luxuries for himself, but should write a copy of the Lord's law and should read therein and obey it all the days of his life.

1. Where was Saul's home? In what tribe? Why was he away from home?
2. What is said of Saul's appearance?
3. Tell me about Saul's meeting with Samuel. Of whom did he inquire as he came to the town?
4. Did Samuel know Saul?
5. What kindness did Samuel show him? What did he tell him about the asses? What else did he tell him?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

In general, what is represented by the change in Israel from the patriarchal to the kingly government? (A. 1672, 8770)

For deeper lessons connected with this story we must go back to remember what is represented by the desire of the people for a king and by the establishment of the kingdom. We remember that the period of the judges represents states of older childhood before principles of truth rationally understood are established and attempt to order and direct the life. This maturer development is represented by the kingdom. The judges who were both king and priest represented a motive of rule in which truth and love were joined, but the king represents a motive of truth perhaps without love. Hence Samuel's dread of the kingdom and his warning of what a king might be. (1 Sam. 8:10-18) At best the reason at first is natural; it will be stronger and wiser as it becomes more spiritual. The natural reason which first rules is especially represented by Saul, commended by his outward appearance and strength. The riper spiritual reason is represented presently by David; and reason which is of a still higher celestial character, by Solomon. (A. 6148, 10540; E. 323)

It is in keeping with this meaning of Saul that he was made king while he was searching for his father's asses, and that David was anointed while he was tending the sheep. The asses represent a natural understanding, which attends not to interior spiritual things, but to things of the world and natural life. They represent a reason which is not yet very gentle, but is stubborn and self-willed. Those who have studied the story of Ishmael will remember that he also is a type of natural reason, hard and contentious. He was called a wild ass man. (Gen. 16:12) The relation of Saul to this first effort to govern the life by principles of truth grasped as yet only in a natural way, will become more evident as we study incidents of Saul's reign. There were fine things about Saul, but also limitations. (A. 2781)

Our story tells of an anointing. What was represented by the anointing of kings and priests and of the holy furniture of the tabernacle? Remembering that oil is a type of love, and the precious anointing oil a type of the Lord's own love, we can see that the anointing to a sacred office represented a gift of the Lord's love for the right performance of the duties of the office. Read Isa.

61:1-3, and Luke 4:18-22, which speak about the Lord's anointing. We need a touch of His love to enable us to rule our little kingdoms well. (Ps. 133; A. 9954; E. 375)

There is beautiful opportunity for spiritual study in Samuel's warning about the king, in 1 Sam. 8:10-18, and in Moses' picture of what a king should be, in Deut. 17:14-20. Samuel's warning tells how cruel the rule of a spirit may be which cares only for truth, ignoring love and kindness, how destructive it is of all spiritual life. Moses pictures the rule of a motive which the Lord shall choose; one of Israel's own people, a spiritual motive; one not trusting in horses of Egypt, its own intellectual powers; one not influenced to justify evil pleasures; a spirit which makes its own copy of the Lord's law inscribing it on the heart; which is wise by study of the Lord's Word, and in obedience is not turned aside to the right or left. So will life be long, rich in all that makes life worth while. Every young man and young woman choosing a king and establishing a kingdom should profit by Samuel's warning and by Moses' picture. (A. 6148, 2015 end, 2567 end, 6125)

## Lesson 33

### 1 Samuel 11; 12:1-5: Jabesh-Gilead Saved

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Saul is king, and we follow him into the country east of Jordan. The land of Gilead, east of Jordan, between the Dead Sea on the south and the Sea of Galilee on the north, was a good pasture country with groves of trees and fine brooks of water running down to the Jordan, through narrow valleys which they had worn for themselves. Some people of Israel who had many flocks and herds were allowed to live in this good pasture country. The tribe of Gad made its home in Gilead. Jabesh was a city of Gilead, and its people were in great trouble, for the Ammonites, a people living to the east of Gilead, came against them and were too strong for them. They were going to put out the right eyes of the people of Jabesh and make them their servants. The people of Jabesh asked for seven days in which to look for help, and sent messengers throughout the land to see if the people of Israel would help them. The people felt very sorry for the people of Jabesh. The messengers came to Saul's town, Gibeah. Saul heard their message as he came from plowing in the field. The spirit of God came upon him, and he sent through all the country to gather soldiers. They came to Saul at Bezek, north of Shechem, a large army, and Saul hurried with them to the help of Jabesh-gilead. He divided his men into three companies and from three sides at once they attacked the Ammonites while it was still dark, in the early morning. Many of the Ammonites were killed, and the rest were scattered, and Jabesh was saved.

Do any of you remember hearing of Gilead before, and of a war with the Ammonites, when Jephthah led the army and saved Gilead? It was the same Gilead which Saul saved, and from the same enemy. The people of Gilead were very grateful to Saul, and they afterward were kind to Saul and to his family.

The hearts of the people were turned to Saul by this victory. Samuel called them to Gilgal, near the Jordan, where they had first camped when they came into the land. There again they declared Saul king and made sacrifices to the Lord.

Read if you have time 1 Sam. 12:1-5, how the old Samuel asked the people if he had always been faithful as their judge and how they answered before the Lord that he had been always faithful.

## **Junior**

Our story is in the country beyond Jordan in the land of Gilead, between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee. We remember this fine pasture country with its trees and brooks when the children of Israel first came to it and two tribes and a half made their homes there: Reuben, by the Dead Sea; Gad, in the middle country; and half the tribe of Manasseh, north and east of the Sea of Galilee. Notice on the map three great brooks: the Arnon running into the Dead Sea at the middle of its eastern shore; the Jabbok, running into the Jordan midway between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee; and the Yarmuk, farther north, of which some of you have a picture.

Who lived in this eastern country? Remember when the children of Israel came on their journey from Egypt they were not allowed to have war with Edom, south of the Dead Sea, for the Edomites were descended from Esau, Jacob's brother. Neither might they disturb Moab, by the Dead Sea south of Arnon; nor Ammon, off to the northeast from Moab, for these tribes were descended from Lot, the nephew of Abram. They passed by these tribes who were their cousins and took land from the native people, from the Arnon to the Jabbok and farther north. Remember the story of Jephthah. When the Ammonites attacked Gilead, they said that Israel had taken away their land. It was not true. Jephthah denied their charge and in the battle defeated them. Now these same Ammonites again attacked Jabesh, a city of Gilead, and made the cruel threat that they would put out the right eyes of the people of Jabesh and make them servants. Was there no one to help? Our story tells us how the spirit of God came upon Saul, the new king, and Jabesh-gilead was saved. Saul's coming upon the Ammonites in the night, dividing his men into three companies, reminds us of the victory of Gideon. The night was divided into three watches: sunset to ten o'clock, ten o'clock to two, and two to sunrise. In the Gospels we find four watches, according to the Roman custom. (Matt. 14:25) The people of Jabesh-gilead remembered this help from Saul and afterward showed their gratitude. People from Jabesh recovered the bodies of Saul and his sons after their death and buried them in Jabesh. Some of Saul's family also found a safe home in Jabesh. (1 Sam. 31:11-13; 2 Sam. 8:9)

Following the victory of Saul over the Ammonites, we read of the gathering of the people at Gilgal to confirm his appointment as king. Remember the secret anointing of Saul by Samuel, the more public choice at Mizpeh, and now this still more public recognition. Read in 1 Sam. 12:1-5 the witness of the people to the goodness and faithfulness of Samuel.

We shall do well to associate the events of Saul's reign with three wars: this first war, relieving Jabesh-gilead, in which Saul was wholly successful; and his wars with the Philistines and with the Amalekites, in which he failed.

1. What was Saul's first fight after he was made king? Where was the battle? What had the Ammonites threatened to do to the people of Jabesh-gilead? To put out their right eyes and make them servants.

2. Show me on the map where the two nations, Moab and Ammon, lived.
3. Show me Gilgal where Samuel gathered the people after Saul's victory. What kind of a judge had Samuel been? Who would now judge the people? What would Samuel do?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Who lived in the land east of Jordan when Moses and the children of Israel took it? Moab south of the Arnon; Ammon to the northeast of Moab; Sihon, king of the Amorites, from the Arnon to the Jabbok; Og, king of Bashan, north of the Jabbok. But Sihon had taken his country from Moab. (Num. 21:21-26) Ammon also claimed that that land belonged to them and had war about it with the people of Gilead. (Judges 11:11-15) Perhaps the same claim led to the attack upon Gilead in the days of Saul. Let us recall the spiritual meaning of three things - Gilead, the Ammonites, and King Saul. Then we will put the three things together.

The study of this lesson recalls thoughts that we had when we learned of the choice of homes in this country beyond Jordan by two tribes and a half of Israel. The land of Canaan represents a heavenly, spiritual life. The country beyond Jordan represents more natural, external states, like states of physical enjoyment and recreation, which are blessed by the Lord if they are made helpful to spiritual life, not otherwise. Hence the requirement that the tribes which settled there must first help their fellow Israelites to gain possession of their inheritance; then they might return and enjoy this country. The tribe of Gad, occupying the district of Gilead, represents especially an external goodness in which is much self-confidence. We may associate this country with the rich young man who claimed to have kept the commandments, but needed to gain a humbler spirit. (E. 432; R. 352)

Moab and Ammon were tribes living in this land. They were descendants of Lot, who parted from Abram and chose the low plain of Jordan which seemed so pleasant. Lot represents the enjoyment of outward pleasant things. His two sons represent the two elements of love and thought in regard to such things: Moab the love of them, and Ammon the thought about them. Both may be good and useful, and the children of Israel in their journey from Egypt were not allowed to fight with Moab or Ammon. (Deut. 2:9, 19) But love and, thought about natural pleasant things easily turn to what is evil. Ammon in our story represents such thought, with its excuses and false reasoning. Ammon attacks Gilead, for how easily false thoughts, proud thoughts, excusing thoughts, creep into a good life which is not deep and spiritual, but of a natural self-confident kind. Ammon claims territory which belongs to Gilead. This enemy misleads the natural goodness and makes it blind. What does our story say? The Ammonites were about to put out the right eyes of the people of Jabesh-gilead. (A. 2468)

We have learned that the kingdom represents the governing of life, not in a child's way, but in a youthful and mature way, by principles of truth, understood and faithfully applied. The good king must learn the truth from the Lord and from His Word. But there are degrees in the development of this power. Saul, the first king, represents a first effort to rule the life, when truth is understood in an imperfect and natural way. By and by the rule of a truer, more spiritual understanding will be represented by David and Solomon. Saul was chosen for his height and outward beauty, which

suggests an understanding that is greatly influenced by outward appearances. Compare the choice of David. (1 Sam. 16:6-7) Still this understanding is able to set right many things in outward life. It may not be able to go deeply into motives, but here in the department of outward life, of conduct, it shows itself strong. Saul's brilliant victory at Jabesh-gilead, the lasting friendship of the people of Gilead for him, and his burial in that country suggest the external character of the truth and government of life which Saul represents. He had less success in wars with the Philistines and with Amalek, which represent deeper and more subtle evils which must be conquered by a riper, more spiritual understanding. David was successful where Saul failed. (A. 4763, 10540)

We have learned that the desire of the people for a king was sinful because it represents a separation of the kingly element of truth from the priestly and fatherly element of love, as if knowing were the most important or only important thing. (A. 1672, 8770) Can you see the meaning of the destructive rain given as a sign because the people had chosen a king? (1 Sam. 12:16-18) Is it not a picture of truth without love?

## Lesson 34

### 1 Samuel 13: Saul Disobeys

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Saul and the people of Israel were having serious troubles with their neighbors the Philistines. You know the home of the Philistines in these meadows by the Mediterranean Sea, but Philistine soldiers were also in many towns of Israel. The Philistines would not let any blacksmith among the people of Israel work at his trade; even the farmers had to go down to the Philistine country to get their farm tools sharpened. They had themselves only files for keeping their tools in order. The Philistines did this so that the people of Israel would have no swords and spears, and there would be no one to make them any when there was war.

The story takes us to an interesting place, to this steep rocky gorge among the hills, where a brook runs down toward the Jordan. The Philistines had gathered a great army at Michmash on the northern side of this gorge. They brought many chariots, which struck terror to the hearts of Israel. The people were so frightened that many of them were hiding in caves and in thickets, among the rocks, and in pits in the ground. Some of the people went over Jordan to the land of Gilead.

Saul called for soldiers and gathered the few that he could about him at Gilgal in the plain of Jordan. Saul was very fearful as the days passed, while he was waiting for Samuel. For Samuel had told Saul to wait seven days for him, and that he would come and offer sacrifices for him to the Lord, for Samuel was the priest and he was the one to offer sacrifices. But Saul was fearful and impatient and did not wait. His men were leaving him. The Philistines on the hills might easily come down upon him at Gilgal. He was afraid to wait. Samuel came and was displeased because

Saul had disobeyed, and told Saul that the kingdom would be taken from him and given to one who would be more faithful. "The Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart."

Saul went up, sad hearted, with the men that were still with him, to the gorge among the hills. Saul and Jonathan, his son, and their small army were on the south side of the steep, rough valley. The Philistines with their army and chariots were on the north side of the valley, and they were sending out companies of men spoiling the country. But victory would come soon through the bravery of Jonathan.

## Junior

We remember that on his way home after searching for the asses Saul passed a hill where there was a garrison of the Philistines. (1 Sam. 10:5) It seems that there were Philistine officers and soldiers in other towns. And not only that, but the Philistines would not let any blacksmith work at his trade in all the land of Israel. Even the farmers had to go down to the Philistine country to get their farm tools sharpened by Philistine blacksmiths. (The exact meaning of the verses about the tools is not very sure, as you will see by comparing the Revised translation.) They did this so that the children of Israel would have no swords and spears, and there would be no one to make them any when there was war between the countries.

One of the things that Saul did as king was to raise an army against the Philistines. He chose three thousand men, "whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in Mount Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin." If you go toward the northeast from Jerusalem through the country that belonged to Benjamin you come to a deep gorge with rough rocky sides and a brook in the bottom running down to the Jordan. On the south of this gorge was Gibeah, Saul's home, which we think of as a district including several towns. One of these towns was Geba. On the north of the gorge, nearly opposite Geba, was the town of Michmash, and still to the northwest were Ai and Bethel.

The army with Saul was on the north of this gorge, in Michmash and Bethel; Jonathan and his men were on the south side of the gorge. Jonathan was Saul's son and we shall learn many brave and noble things about him. "And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba." Some understand the words to mean rather that he smote the officer, perhaps the collector of tribute, who was stationed in Geba. It was in any case an attack on the enemy. The news spread among the Philistines and they gathered a great army against Israel. They came up from their meadows with thousands of chariots, horsemen, and soldiers and camped on Michmash where Saul's army had been. But Saul was not now there, for he had sounded a call through all Israel to gather to him at Gilgal in the Jordan valley.

There was terror everywhere at the sight of the great army of the Philistines. Some of the Israelites hid "in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits." We remember the empty cistern called a pit where Joseph was put by his brethren, and the winepress in which Gideon hid his grain. Some even fled beyond Jordan to the land of Gilead where the tribe of Gad had its home. The men who came to Saul in Gilgal did so trembling.

Samuel had told Saul to wait for him seven days in Gilgal, and that he would come and offer sacrifices and would tell Saul what he should do (1 Sam. 10:8), for although Saul was king, Samuel was still to teach "the good and the right way." (1 Sam. 12:23) Saul waited in Gilgal. The days

seemed long; the people were frightened and were leaving him. The Philistine army in the hills above might come down upon him at any moment. He grew impatient and offered sacrifice himself without waiting till the appointed time when Samuel would come.

Samuel was displeased and grieved. He told Saul that he had been disobedient and that his kingdom should not continue. The Lord had chosen another king. It seems a small thing that Saul had done and a small reason for taking away his kingdom. But it was serious, because it showed that he did not fully trust the Lord. He was afraid to do as he was told to do.

We are back again at the deep gorge in the hills of Benjamin. The great host of the Philistines with chariots and horsemen was on the north side at Michmash. Saul and Jonathan and their little frightened army were at Geba (see margin and Revision) on the south side. The Philistines boldly sent out companies to spoil the country. One company went to the northeast, toward Ophrah which was east of Bethel; another went westward toward Beth-horon, and another to the east toward Jericho. We cannot wonder that Saul's little army and the people of Israel were faint-hearted.

1. Show me Michmash; Geba, Bethel, Gilgal, Gilead.
2. In what ways were the Philistines oppressing the people of Israel?
3. Why did they come with a great army? What were in their army? Where did they camp?
4. What did Saul do at Gilgal? What should he have done?
5. Who was Jonathan?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

As you read in Isa. 10:28-32 of the approach of the Assyrians toward Jerusalem, you find yourselves at this same gorge in the land of Benjamin. "At Michmash he hath laid up his carriages: they are gone over the passage: they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled."

The Philistines were always enemies of Saul and they finally caused his death. We see a reason for this when we remember that Saul stands for the power of natural reason such as is developed in youth, and that the Philistines represent a pride in learning and intelligence. It is very difficult for a young person's understanding to free itself altogether from self trust, which makes one proud when things seem to go well and anxious when they go hard. There is need for a wiser understanding, stronger in its trust in the Lord, to rule the life. This will be represented by David, who will overcome the Philistines as Saul is not able to do. (A. 8770, 9340)

The Philistines made use of chariots in their level country, and you will remember the chariots of the Canaanites under Sisera, in the plain of Esdraelon, which were conquered by Deborah and Barak. You are familiar with horses as types of the power of understanding, of thinking and reasoning, sometimes of a high spiritual understanding; but fighting against Israel in the army of the Egyptians, the Canaanites, or the Philistines, horses represent intellectual power used to

justify evil and to destroy good. The chariots represent false principles and arguments used in such thinking and reasoning. How sure the spiritual Philistines are to use them! (E. 355; A. 5321, 8146)

"They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks." (Isa. 2:4; Micah 4:3) Swords and spears in a good sense represent principles of truth from the Lord with which we may resist and overcome what is wrong. The Ten Commandments are such weapons in our hands. In peaceful states we must not throw away the commandments; the same Divine truths are needed to cultivate the heavenly spirit and to guide it in doing good. What spiritual condition is pictured when the Israelites depend upon the Philistines for their weapons, and to sharpen their garden tools? (R. 52; E. 734)

In verse 9 we read of burnt offerings and peace offerings. They are so often mentioned together, burnt offerings being sacrifices offered wholly upon the altar to the Lord, and peace offerings being sacrifices which were consecrated by offering a part upon the altar, but the larger part was eaten as a sacred feast. The two kinds of offerings represented worship from love to the Lord and love to one another.

Saul's offering the sacrifices for himself without waiting for Samuel was a grievous offense. The whole of life is an offering; everything we do and say. To wait for Samuel the Lord's priest to offer the sacrifices is the expression of our need of the Lord's help to live and worship in those loves of the great commandments. To assume to offer sacrifice without the priest expresses a confidence that we can live and worship worthily of ourselves. Such self-confidence cannot safely rule the life; it must give place to a humbler and a stronger spirit. In connection with this impatience of Saul consider Ps. 37:7; Lam. 3:26, 27; Luke 21:19. Such verses have a lesson for Saul and for us. (R. 593; E. 813)

## **Lesson 35**

### **1 Samuel 14:1-35: Jonathan's Victory**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Some of you have a picture of the rough gorge between Michmash and Geba. Can you see the brook in the bottom, running down to the Jordan? On this side of the valley were Gibeah and Geba, where Saul and Jonathan and their army were. On the other side of the gorge were Michmash and the large army of the Philistines. There was at this place a sharp crag of rock on each side of the valley. The rock on the north side lay all day in the sunshine and was called Bozez, which means "shining." The crag of rock on the southern side was called Seneh, the name of the thorny bushes growing among the rocks.

Jonathan, Saul's son, and the young man who was his armor-bearer were where we stand, on this side of the valley, and Saul was some distance away under a pomegranate tree. They could see the great army of the Philistines with its chariots on the hills across the valley. Jonathan said to the young man, "Come and let us go over. It may be that the Lord will work for us, for there is no

restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." The armor-bearer was ready to go with him. Could they have some sign whether the Lord would be with them and give them power against the Philistines? We will go over, Jonathan said, and when they see us, if they say, "Tarry until we come to you," we will stand still in our place and will not go up unto them. But if they say, "Come up unto us," we will go up, for this will be a sign that the Lord is with us and will give us victory. It was so; when the Philistines saw the two men in the valley, they said, "Come up to us, and we will show you a thing." They climbed up the steep rocks to the Philistine camp on their hands and feet. (Some of you have a picture of them climbing.) Jonathan went first and his armor-bearer after him. The Philistine soldiers fell before them. A terror came upon the host and in their confusion they killed one another.

The watchmen of Saul, looking from across the gorge, saw the multitude melting away. What was the reason? Who had gone from Saul's camp? They numbered and found that Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not there. Saul and his men all joined in the pursuit. Some Hebrews who had been in the Philistine camp came back to their own people, some came out of hiding-places, and they chased the Philistines down into their own country.

### **Junior**

You will all want to know the story as I have told it to the little children. Then read the chapter in the Bible, I Sam. 14:1-35, and notice several interesting things. With the map and pictures, get as well acquainted as you can with the rough gorge among the hills of Benjamin.

Note (verse 3) that there was a priest with Saul, descended from Eli, the old priest at Shiloh when Samuel was there as a child. The ephod was a priestly garment, a sort of vest on the front of which was worn the breastplate set with precious stones. When the priest asked questions of the Lord, answers were given by the flashing of light in the stones of the breastplate, and by a voice if they did not understand the flashes. It is probably the ephod and breastplate that are meant in verse 18 and not the ark, when Saul wished to inquire of the Lord. (Where was the ark at this time?)

Who was Jonathan? We begin to love him in this chapter and we shall love him more when he becomes the generous and faithful friend of David. We shall do well to remember as a motto Jonathan's words, "There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few."

Look again at the map as you read of the pursuit from Michmash to Beth-aven, halfway between Michmash and Bethel, and then down the pass of Beth-horon to Aijalon. One of Joshua's battles was in this same country (Joshua 10:1-12), and there have been greater battles there in later history.

There was one thing to disturb the rejoicing of the people, something which threatened to bring the punishment of death upon the brave Jonathan. What charge had Saul given to the people, and with an oath which made it binding, like Jephthah's vow? How had Jonathan innocently disobeyed the charge? How was he saved from the punishment of death?

1. Draw me a picture, and show me how the land lay between the camp of Saul in Gibeath and the camp of the Philistines in Michmash. What were the two crags called? On which side was Bozez, the "shining" rock?
2. What brave thing did Jonathan do? Why was he not afraid?

3. Who fled, and who pursued?
4. What did Jonathan eat? Why was it wrong?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The grand lesson of this story is in Jonathan's words, "There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." Read in H. 229 and 230 of the incredible power which angels have from the Lord: "If anything there resists which is to be removed because contrary to Divine order, they cast it down and overturn it merely by an effort of the will and a look. Thus I have seen mountains which were occupied by the evil cast down and overthrown... Numbers are of no avail against them, nor arts, cunning, and leagues, for they see all and disperse them in a moment.... It is to be known, however, that angels have no power at all from themselves, but that all their power is from the Lord; and that they are only so far powers as they acknowledge this. Whoever of them believes that he has power from himself becomes instantly so weak that he cannot even resist one evil spirit." Repeating often Jonathan's words will help us to remember the power of the Lord which is with angels and with us in our temptations.

"Hebrews" is a name for the Israelites applied often to them as servants. In 1 Sam. 13:3 and 14:21 the Greek version gives the word "slaves." The name in verse 21 seems to mean people of Israel who had been pressed into their service by the Philistines. This is interesting in connection with the interpretation of the name in A. 1702, 1703.

There is much that is fine and lovely about Jonathan in this chapter and those that follow. Read David's lament for Jonathan. (2 Sam. 1:17-27) The kingly power in the soul is the Lord's truth. Saul stands for this truth understood in a natural and external way, as it is found in the letter of the Word. David, who was king after Saul, stands for the Lord's truth understood in a deeper spiritual way, as when we see beneath the letter of the Word its spiritual meaning. Jonathan comes as it were between Saul and David. He was Saul's son, but David's faithful friend. He represents those parts of the letter of the Lord's Word which are in full agreement with the spirit. From such passages doctrine must be drawn, and by them it must be confirmed. These passages teach plainly the things needful for salvation; like the face and hands, they are bare, while the rest of the Word is clothed. Read S. 55.

Jonathan tasted honey and his eyes were enlightened. Honey suggests pleasantness and sweetness. It is laid up by a humble creature, a little insect, and it represents the sweetness of simple thoughts of industry and usefulness, which are gained from the letter of the Word. The honey which John the Baptist ate represents sweetness of this heavenly but external kind. "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.... Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." (Ps. 19:8, 10)

Canaan was called a land flowing with milk and honey, representing the goodness and sweetness of a heavenly life. "That in the land of Canaan there was also much honey at that time on account of the church of the Lord being there, appears from the first book of Samuel," --the chapter which we are studying. "The reason of Jonathan's eyes being enlightened by his tasting the honey was

that honey corresponds to natural good and its delight, and this gives intelligence and enlightens. Whence Jonathan knew that he had done evil." (E. 619)

Food which the people ate at evening represents external pleasures, as of rest and recreation when duty is done. But the honey represents an unexpected sweetness in the doing of the duty. Compare the food given in the desert, in the morning manna with taste like honey, and in the evening the flesh of quails. (Exod. 16:12, 31; A. 8431)

Recognizing the flesh eaten in the evening as representing external pleasure granted by the Lord, we can see why this must not be eaten with the blood, which represents the higher spiritual life. This was the commandment in Gen. 9:4 and Deut. 12:16, 23-24. It meant that external pleasure must not be allowed to dominate the spiritual life and so destroy it. The spiritual must rule. (A. 971, 972, 1001)

## Lesson 36

### 1 Samuel 15: Saul Rejected

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

The Amalekites were a tribe of warlike people whom we hear of from time to time in the story. They had no fixed home but are heard of most often in the southern part of Palestine and in the open country still farther south. Do you remember a time when Moses went up to a hilltop and held up his hands to the Lord, while Joshua led the soldiers fighting in the valley? They were fighting with the Amalekites, who came upon the people when they were weary and smote the hindmost of them. This was on the journey from Egypt, just before the people reached Mount Sinai. How did the battle end that day? Joshua and his men were strong as long as Moses held up his hands, and they drove off the Amalekites.

Does anyone remember Gideon and his men, who with pitchers and torches in their hands went down against the enemies who had come into the land with their camels and cattle and destroyed the fields at harvest time? These people were called "Midianites and Amalekites and children of the east." The Amalekites were an enemy of Israel, and Samuel brought Saul a command from the Lord to go and destroy the Amalekites and their cattle and all that they had. Wickedness should be destroyed, and in those days they knew no other way than to destroy the wicked people.

But Saul did not wholly do what he was sent to do. He conquered the Amalekites in the south and chased them far out into the open country toward Egypt. He came back to Gilgal near the Jordan and Samuel came to meet him there. Saul said that he had done what he was sent to do, but Samuel knew from the Lord that it was not so, and he heard the bleating of sheep and the lowing of oxen; for Saul had spared Agag, the king of Amalek and brought him to Gilgal and also the best of the cattle, saying that he brought them to sacrifice to the Lord. Samuel was displeased that Saul had disobeyed. As he turned to leave, Saul took hold of Samuel's robe and it tore, a sign that the kingdom would be torn away from Saul and given to another king. "Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul."

## **Junior**

Saul's three wars: with the Ammonites, with the Philistines, with the Amalekites. Have we heard before of the Amalekites? Someone find and read to us Exod. 17:8-16 and Deut. 25:17-19. These verses remind us of the battle when Joshua fought in the valley and Moses in the hilltop held up his hands. They remind us, too, how the Lord promised warfare with Amalek, and how He charged Israel some day to blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. Someone else look up Judges 6:3 and 7:12, about the Amalekites and Gideon. They were warlike and wandering people, living chiefly in the country south of Canaan. The day of judgment had come for the Amalekites and Saul was sent to destroy them. Compare Gen. 15:16. Read the story of Saul's raid upon their country. Could the Lord wish Israel to destroy Amalek, and Samuel to destroy Agag? Does it seem like the Sermon on the Mount? No. Yet the Lord's commands must come to a people in their own language and according to their own development. The Lord could express the duty of resisting evil in one way to Saul and in another way to a Christian disciple. Each must obey according to his understanding of the Lord's will.

In verse 6 we meet the Kenites. Who were they? Evidently people to whom Saul felt friendly. He did not wish to harm them. It was in the tent of a Kenite that Sisera was killed in the days of Deborah and Barak. They were friendly people, the family of Moses' father-in-law, who had come with Israel from near Mount Sinai and lived among them in the land of Canaan, especially in the south. (Judges 1:16 and 4:11) Saul found them living with the Amalekites in the south. They must separate themselves not to be destroyed with them. Havilah was the eastern limit of the Amalekite country, and Shur, "the wall," the border of Egypt, was the western limit.

Saul was successful in his war with Amalek, following them far into the wilderness country to the south. But he did not do as he had been commanded, for he took the king, Agag, and the best of the sheep and cattle, destroying what was worthless. Returning from the war he passed to Carmel, not Mount Carmel, but a town to the southeast of Hebron. There he set up a monument of his victory and went on to Gilgal, the old camping place in the plain of Jordan, where the people had at other times come together with the prophet Samuel.

Samuel now came to meet Saul at Gilgal, and rebuked him for his disobedience. Saul made excuses. Read Samuel's words in regard to disobedience (verse 22), and learn what the result of Saul's disobedience would be. Notice the sign which was given representing the rending of the kingdom away from Saul. Together with Samuel's severe rebuke you see his tenderness and his grief for Saul.

How could it be that the Lord would command Saul utterly to destroy a people, and even their sheep and cattle? They were very rude warlike people in those days to whom a command of that kind could be given. You understand the meaning of the command when you know that this entire story represents experiences in the life of everyone. The Amalekites stand for some evil thing which must be utterly destroyed. It will not do to destroy only so much as we do not care for, and to save all that is pleasant to us. There should be no compromise, no half-way work in resisting what is wrong.

One other question. Twice in the chapter it is said that the Lord repented that He had made Saul king. In other places in the Bible, and even in this very chapter, it is said that He will not repent, for He is not a man that He should repent. (Verse 29) How do you explain this contradiction, and

what is the real fact about the Lord's repenting? The Lord's love is perfect. He knows all things and provides for them with perfect wisdom. The Lord cannot change His mind and repent as a person must often do. But things are often expressed in the Scriptures as they seem to simple minds. The word also contains the thought of the Divine compassion and mercy. (A. 587, 588, 10441)

1. In what three wars was Saul engaged, and with what success?
2. Where have we learned of the Amalekites? Where was their home? Who were the Kenites?
3. What was Saul commanded to do to the Amalekites? What did he do? What enemies ought we to destroy utterly? When do we fail as Saul did?
4. Tell me about the last meeting between Samuel and Saul. What did the rending of the mantle mean?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

We have taken up with the juniors the most difficult question in our lesson - how the Lord could send Saul on an errand of merciless destruction. The cruelty could not be according to the Lord's will. But the war with Amalek was a fight with evil, which Saul and the people of his day could understand. Compare "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" and other harsh laws of Sinai. The command to destroy the Amalekites utterly and all that belonged to them is a picture of our duty to resist an evil thoroughly and to make no compromise with it. It was wrong for Saul to save Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, as it is for us to cut off some conspicuous faults but leave still the root of the evil and indulgences of it which are pleasant to us. (P. 251; A. 6914)

We must connect the failure to destroy the Amalekite king and the cattle with what we know of Saul and his meaning, and with the meaning of Amalek. Saul represents a youthful effort to rule the life by truth understood in a natural and superficial way. It can correct some evident faults, but it fails to reach the root of deeper evils. Compare the escape of the king of Sodom in the battle with Chedorlaomer, but his submission to Abram. (Gen. 14)

Someone please remind us what is represented by a king and a kingdom and by the change from the patriarchal to the kingly government in Israel. The kingly power in us is the Lord's truth rationally understood and obeyed. Remember always the Lord's words to Pilate: "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." (John 18:37) And what in particular is represented by the first king, Saul? He represents the first rationality led much by the outward appearance of things, not yet interior and spiritual. (A. 8770, 10540; E. 323)

Following our last thought, will someone show us why Saul's only complete victory was in the country beyond Jordan, and why in his other wars he was only partly successful? The country beyond Jordan represents external, natural states, natural thought and deeds. It is that plane of thought and life in which the first rational power can do good service, subduing what is wrong and protecting what is right. But this first rational power has not the wisdom or the strength to

discover and completely overcome deeper evils. The most marked success in the war with the Philistines was gained not by Saul but by his son Jonathan, David's friend, who represents a literal grasp of truth indeed, but one in close accord with the spiritual, and partaking of its power. (A. 4763; E. 435; R. 352)

Today we have in particular to consider Saul's failure in the war with the Amalekites. The Amalekites stand for some wrong which is not plainly seen upon the surface of life, but is deeply hidden. They represent "the falsity from interior evil." They are enemies which do not attack us openly, but come upon us unawares with deceitful suggestions, as the Amalekites came upon the children of Israel and smote the hindmost and feeble ones when they were weary. They come with pleasant and attractive looks, as Agag came "delicately" to Samuel. They are the more dangerous because we do not plainly see their evil quality. The first rational power, superficial and self-confident, cannot completely discover and overcome them. The hidden nature of the enemy makes it the more necessary to depend upon the Lord. On this account it was said that the Lord would have war with Amalek from generation to generation. The perpetual war does not mean a doubtful conflict, but perpetual victory and protection, but not so long as we act with superficial understanding, and with trust in our own strength. (A. 8593, 8622)

How necessary it is in the spiritual warfare to be thorough and to destroy the enemies utterly. How easy to destroy the vile, and refuse what is seen by everyone to be hateful, but to leave the root of the fault, the king, untouched. When we read of "man and beast," the "man" represents the interior thought and purpose, and the "beast" the external life in which the inner purpose finds expression. Remember, for example, how both men and beasts were commanded to fast in Nineveh, and to wear sackcloth. (Jonah 3:7-8) Do you see the meaning? Does this help you to understand the command in the case of the Amalekites, to destroy the cattle with the people?

We save the best of the cattle when, professing to destroy an evil, we still indulge and excuse some of its external pleasures. (A. 7523; E. 650)

Do you see why the rending of the prophet's robe was a sign of the rending of the kingdom? Garments represent forms of truth in which the living affections find expression. The prophet's robe is the commandments and other external expressions of the Lord's Divine truth. It is upon these that the kingdom and the strength of the kingdom depend in us. As these are rent the kingdom falls. (A. 9825; E. 395)

## Lesson 37

### 1 Samuel 16: David Anointed

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Bethlehem: do you remember the name? What did shepherds once find when they came from the fields to Bethlehem? and wise men when they came a long journey from the East? They called it David's city where the Lord was born, for long before it had been David's home. David had tended sheep on these same hills. He led them about to good pasture and to water, and if they were far

from home he took them to some sheltered place at night. He had his staff and sling and protected them from harm, for there were lions and bears and other wild animals in that country. David's father was named Jesse, and there were seven other brothers. David was the youngest.

There came one day to Bethlehem an old man driving a heifer for a sacrifice and feast to the Lord. It was Samuel, for the Lord had sent him to anoint another king in place of Saul. He called Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice. David's brothers came, tall, handsome men, and Samuel looked for some sign from the Lord to show him which one should be king, but it was no one of these. Were these all? No, David had been forgotten; he was in the field with the sheep. They sent for him and he came, young and ruddy, and the Lord said to Samuel, "Arise, anoint him: for this is he." So Samuel poured oil on David's head to anoint him king, as he had done before to Saul. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon David.

But the Spirit of the Lord was not now with Saul, and at times he was greatly troubled. They looked for someone to play for Saul on the harp, perhaps singing as he played. (Have you seen a harp and heard it played?) David was found and came, and when he played Saul was refreshed and well. Listen and we will read the story.

### **Junior**

Saul was to be king no longer. Why? Who had anointed Saul? The same one was now to anoint another king. You know who it was to be, but he did not yet know. We follow with Samuel to Bethlehem—yes, the same Bethlehem where the Lord afterward was born, and we stand by while the sons of Jesse pass before him; for he has called them to a sacrifice and feast and is looking for a sign from the Lord to tell him which is the one chosen to be king. Not this one, though he is tall and handsome, "for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Nor this; nor any other of the seven older sons of Jesse. Saul had been tall and handsome, but he had disobeyed. There was one more, the youngest. The feast waited while David was called from the sheep in the field. The name David means "beloved." He was "ruddy" (with reddish hair and light skin), "of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to." He was the one whom the Lord had chosen, and Samuel anointed him with olive-oil from his flask made of a hollow horn.

Do you remember what was said about Saul at his anointing? That the Spirit of the Lord would come upon him, and that God gave him another heart. (1 Sam. 10:6, 9) Now the Spirit of the Lord came upon David, and an evil spirit was with Saul. He was gloomy and suspicious. People in Saul's day thought that influences both good and bad were from God. Read what was done to bring Saul relief. Perhaps David sang as he played. He afterward sang many songs and he was called "the sweet psalmist of Israel." They were not his songs, but songs that the Lord gave him to sing. David himself said, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue." (2 Sam. 23:1-2) Do you know whether any of the songs that David sang are preserved in our Book of Psalms? Open to the Psalms and read in many of the headings, "A Psalm of David." Often when wrong thoughts and feelings trouble us and make us unhappy, one of these Psalms will help us, if we read it or say it ourselves.

1. Who was anointed king in place of Saul?
2. Whose son was he? Where did he live? What was he doing when he was called?

3. Tell me what you can about the life of a shepherd in the land of Palestine.
4. How did David help Saul? What songs of David have we that bring us comfort?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Will someone read and present to the class the description of Bethlehem and its simple life that is given in the book of Ruth? Does the story of Ruth come before or after the time of David? Find the answer in Matt. 1:5-6. Is the book of Ruth one of the books of the Divine Word? Find the answer in A. 10325.

Let someone remind us what step of spiritual development is represented by the anointing of a king. What in particular is represented by the first king, Saul? Can you go on to show what is represented by the anointing of David? The coming into power of a spiritual rationality, a spiritual understanding and grasp of the Lord's truth. This spiritual rationality is stronger than the first natural reason represented by Saul; it trusts in the Lord and not in self; it has an interior perception and is not misled by appearances; it is inspired by love and is joined with love in the doing of good uses. The gentler character of this spiritual rationality is suggested by the fact that David was a shepherd, and was anointed king while keeping the sheep, Saul while he was looking for the asses. (E. 205)

"The spiritual of the celestial," "The truth of good," "The affection of truth from good," are phrases which Swedenborg uses in explaining the meaning of Bethlehem. They are nearly related to the meaning of Benjamin who was born near Bethlehem, and of David who was called from the sheep at Bethlehem and anointed king. We shall think more about Bethlehem when we study the story of the Lord's birth. (A. 4592, 4594, 6247; E. 449)

Many of the Psalms bid us to sing unto the Lord and to praise Him with musical instruments. (Ps. 149; 150) What does it mean spiritually? Spiritually we praise the Lord with music when we love Him and confess Him, whether our confession is expressed in song or in words or in useful deeds. There are two elements in expression by the voice: the tone and the articulation; the vowel sounds, which are most full of affection, and the consonant sounds, which express particulars of thought. There is the same difference between a wind instrument, like the trumpet, and a stringed instrument, like the harp. One represents praise and confession of the Lord more purely of affection, the other with more intelligent understanding. The music of David's harp represents confession which is intelligent from a deep spiritual understanding. There is power in such confession to keep evil spirits away. (R. 276; E. 323)

We have thought of all the leaders of Israel whom we have studied as being types of the Lord. (A. 1409) This representative character is perhaps plainest of all in the case of David. In the Gospels, the Lord is called the Son of David and is said to inherit the throne of David. In the Revelation, we read, "I Jesus . . . am the root and the offspring of David." When David is called a man after God's own heart we think not of the man David, but of the Lord whom he represented. The professions of innocence in David's Psalms could be true only of the Lord. Prophets who lived long after the

time of David still promised the coming of David to be a prince forever. (Ezek. 24:23-24; 37:24-25; Hos. 3:5)

Both Saul and David represent the rule of Divine truth in the Lord as it was grasped by His developing rationality: Saul the first rational power, David the rational power made perfect. As we read of David's wars, they describe to us the Lord's conflicts with evil in the power of the Divine truth. As we read David's Psalms of penitence and of triumph, they tell us of the Lord's states of trial and of glorification. A new and wonderful interest is disclosed in the Old-Testament history and in the Psalms by this one thought, that David is a type of the Lord. (A. 1888; E. 205; L. 43; T. 171 end)

This thought, that David represents the Lord, gives wonderful interest to the Psalms of David. They are in their deepest meaning expressions of the Lord's own heart in times of trial and of victory. The Lord on the resurrection day spoke to the apostles of things written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Him. (Luke 24:44) Swedenborg's Brief Exposition of the Internal Sense of the Psalms begins with the statement, "It is to be observed that since by David is understood the Lord, therefore where David speaks in the Psalms, there in the spiritual sense the Lord is signified." And in the interpretation which follows, most of the Psalms are explained as teaching of the Lord. "Concerning the Lord when in great temptations"; "Concerning the glorification of the Lord's Human"; "Concerning the Lord's victory over the hells"; etc. It is to keep us mindful of this relation of the Psalms to the Lord, that in our Church service we follow the reading of the Psalms with the Doxology, "To Jesus Christ the Lord be glory and dominion." (E. 205; L. 43, 44)

## Lesson 38

### 1 Samuel 17: David and Goliath

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

The people of Israel were at war with the Philistines. Saul was the leader of their army. They were in one of the valleys that run from the hills of Judah out into the Philistine plain. The camp of Israel was on the hills on one side of the valley, and the camp of the Philistines was on the other side. There was a green meadow between them, and a brook with a stony bed running through the meadow.

In the Philistine army was a giant named Goliath. This great strong man, taller than all the rest, came out toward the camp of Israel and called to them. He was armed with heavy armor on his head and body and legs. He carried a great sword and spear, and a man with a shield went before him. He called to the army of Israel to send out a man to fight with him; if Goliath killed him, the people of Israel would serve the Philistines; if Goliath was killed, the Philistines would serve Israel. The giant was so big and strong and proud! The men of Israel and Saul were greatly afraid. Each morning and evening for forty days Goliath came out and called.

No one dared to go to fight with Goliath till one day David came to the camp. He came from his home in Bethlehem; his father sent him with a present to ask for the welfare of his three older brothers who were soldiers in Saul's army. He saw the giant come out from the Philistine camp and heard his proud words, and everyone was afraid - everyone but David. He said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine" And he went, only a shepherd boy in his shepherd's dress, with his shepherd's staff and sling and bag, and in it five smooth stones out of the brook. He did not trust, as the Philistine did, in his size and in his armor, but in the Lord, who had helped him as a shepherd to save the sheep from a lion and a bear.

The Philistine despised David, but David said, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." And David ran to meet the Philistine and threw a stone with his sling. It struck the giant in the forehead and he fell on his face. The men of Israel shouted and chased the army of the Philistines down the valley and out into the plain. We must read the whole chapter. You will often think of the story, and it will remind you that even a child can be brave and strong trusting the Lord.

## **Junior**

We must read the whole of this grand story of David and Goliath. But first study with me a few things which will help us to understand the story when we read it. Find the place of this battle on your maps. There are three main water-courses which run from the hills of Judah across the Philistine plain. Naming them in order from the north, they are the valley of Aijalon, the valley of Sorek, which we learned of in the Story of Samson, and the valley of Elah, where this battle with the Philistines took place. The city of Gath, one of the five Philistine cities and Goliath's home, was by this valley of Elah as it comes from the hills out into the plain. At the place of the battle the valley is not wide, a little meadow between the hills and a brook with a stony bed running through the meadow. Notice also that it is not far across the hills to Bethlehem.

The giant and his armor. We learned of giants in the land of Canaan when the children of Israel sent spies into the land. (Num. 13:22, 33) Afterward Joshua destroyed the giants, and they remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod. One of these, you see, was Goliath's city. (Joshua 11:21-22; 2 Sam. 21:16-22) How tall was Goliath - six cubits and a span? A cubit, the distance from the elbow to the finger tips, is about 18 inches. A span or the stretch of the open hand is about 8 inches. His armor: a helmet of brass; a coat of mail, probably made of scales, and hanging nearly to the knees; the greaves were armor for the legs and feet; the "target of brass" (verse 6), called a "shield" (verse 45), was probably a javelin slung on his shoulders. (Revised Version) He had a sword and a very heavy spear whose staff was like the beam to which the web was fastened in the clumsy looms which the weavers used. About thirty shekels made a pound.

David the shepherd. David came from the sheep in Bethlehem with a simple present from home. "Parched corn" is new wheat roasted at the fire. His "carriage" means what he was carrying, his baggage. He laid aside Saul's armor and went with his shepherd's staff and scrip and sling. The scrip is the shepherd's bag, made often of the skin of a kid, and hung from the shoulder. The sling the shepherd uses for defense, and more often to attract the attention of the sheep by dropping a stone near them when they are heedless and do not mind his call.

As we read the story, please find a verse which seems to you to tell the secret of Goliath's weakness and of David's strength.

1. Show me on the map the valley of Elah. The city of Gath.
2. Who was Goliath? How was he armed?
3. What errand brought David to the camp? From where did he come?
4. How was David armed? Why was he not afraid?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

A battle in the Scriptures represents an experience of temptation, of spiritual conflict. Let someone take the scene and battle presented to us in this story and show how it is descriptive of spiritual conflict in ourselves. In our conflict, what are the two armies camped on either side? There is the army of heaven on the side of good, and the army of hell on the side of evil; and the state of freedom in which we are like an open valley into which we must go out alone to fight. As in the story, one giant comes out to meet us. We do not have to meet all evil at once; someone stands out as our enemy. If we resist this faithfully the power of all evils is lessened; if we yield to this the power of all is increased.

The great height of the giant suggests the pride and self-confidence of evil, and the armor represents the reasoning and excuses with which evil tries to silence our conscience and to overcome us. Such armor belongs especially to the champion of the Philistines, for they represent a pride of intellect associated with evil life. Shall we reason with the tempter and try to meet argument with argument? That would be to put on Saul's armor; it is not useful; evil is stronger than we at argument. We must refuse to do wrong because it is wrong, because the Lord forbids it. We must be prompt in our decision and short and decided in our answer. Remember the Lord's example in His temptation in the wilderness. (A. 1659, 1664, 1788)

What in particular is represented by the stones in David's sling? They represent simple facts of Divine truth which are all-powerful against evil. The brook from which we take them is the stream of the Lord's own Word. There were five stones. Five represents what is little or few, and at the same time what is enough. Compare the five barley loaves. (John 6:9) It is little of the Lord's truth that we are as yet able to gather from His Word, but it is all that we need; no giant of evil can stand against it. (E. 430, 548; A. 5291)

Someone may remind me that after Goliath had fallen David used the giant's sword to cut off his head. At the moment of temptation it is not wise to delay and to reason with the tempter, but after the evil is overcome by the Lord's strength then we may reason about it and see more clearly why it is wrong and to be shunned. We may then use the sword, turning the giant's own weapon against himself. (A. 2686, 2799) We read again about Goliath's sword and find it a good weapon in David's hand. (1 Sam. 21:8-9)

We have taken this scene and story as a picture of our own spiritual conflicts. In a deeper sense it must represent conflicts of the Lord's human life. David was a type of the Lord, and especially of

the Lord in His conflicts and victories. The meeting of David with Goliath teaches a grand lesson about the Lord in His temptations. As a boy and a young man He went out alone in His Divine innocence (from tending the sheep) to meet the giants of evil proud in their intellectual strength. People and angels stood helpless (like Saul's army), their fate depending upon the result. He made no argument with the tempter (trusted not in armor) but answered him with a simple, "It is written, Thou shalt not" (a stone from His sling). People and angels shared in the Lord's victories (Israel shouted and joined in the pursuit). Read about the Lord's conflicts with giants of evil, in A. 1673 and other numbers both before and after.

## Lesson 39

### 1 Samuel 18; 20: David and Jonathan

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

David had come back to Saul after killing the giant Goliath, and "the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." Do we remember Jonathan, the brave man who with his armor-bearer went across the rough valley and climbed up the steep rocks to the Philistine camp at Michmash and gained a victory for Israel? And Jonathan was Saul's son. As a sign of love, Jonathan gave David his robe and sword and bow and girdle.

But Saul grew jealous of David and hated him. This began when the women came out to meet the soldiers after the war, dancing and singing, "Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands." They were giving to David more praise than to Saul, and Saul asked what more David could have but the kingdom? (1 Sam. 18:6-9)

Saul's anger broke out at times, especially twice or three times, when David was playing the harp for Saul and Saul threw his spear to kill him. David knew that it was not safe for him to live at Saul's home, but Jonathan was David's friend and tried to make Saul feel kindly toward him. At last they agreed that Jonathan should learn Saul's feeling toward David in this way. David would stay away from Saul's table on the first days of the month when he would be expected to be there. When Saul asked where David was, Jonathan would say that he asked leave to go to his family. If Saul answered kindly, all would be well for David, but if he were angry they would know that David's life was in danger and he must go. Jonathan would come out and meet David in the field and would show him by a sign whether to go or stay. So they agreed, and swore always to be friends.

They carried out the plan. David was absent from the table and when Saul asked the reason and Jonathan made excuse for him, Saul was angry. So Jonathan went to the field where David had promised again to meet him, to let David know that he must go away. This was to be the sign: Jonathan would shoot three arrows and send his boy to pick them up. If he called to the boy that the arrows were nearer, it would mean that David could safely come back. If he called that the arrows were farther off, David must go away. He did as they had agreed, and then he sent home

the boy with the bow and arrows, and Jonathan and David talked again together and kissed each other and promised that the Lord should keep peace between them and their children forever.

## **Junior**

We must help each other to learn the story of the friendship between David and Jonathan. Who was Jonathan, and what sort of man was he? (1 Sam. 14:4-17) The friendship began when David came back to the camp after killing the giant Goliath. What did Jonathan do to show his love for David? (1 Sam. 18:1-4) Why did Saul soon begin to be jealous of David and try to kill him? (1 Sam. 18:5-9) How did Saul's anger especially show itself? (1 Sam. 18:10-11, and 19:9-10) We find a javelin or spear in Saul's hand at other times (1 Sam. 20:33; 22:6), and it was stuck in the ground at his head as he slept in camp. (1 Sam. 26:7) The spear was a sign of his kingly power. An Arab chief today carries a long spear as he rides on horseback, and sticks it in the ground by his tent door. David knew now that Saul wished to kill him. He fled to the old prophet Samuel at Ramah, but Saul followed him.

Meantime how did the people feel toward David? (1 Sam. 18:14-16) Jonathan still loved David and was still David's friend. We learn from chapter 19 that Jonathan was able for a time to persuade Saul to put away his anger and to be friendly toward David. (1 Sam. 19:1-7)

But David was soon in danger again from Saul. Jonathan and David consulted, and agreed that Jonathan should find out how Saul really felt toward David. How should he do this? (1 Sam. 20:1-10) What would be the sign by which Jonathan would let David know? (Verses 18-22) They carried out the plan, and with what result? Was it safe for David to stay with Saul, or must he go? (Verses 24-34) Jonathan went to the field with his bow and arrows and gave the sign to let David know. (Verses 35-40)

At both times when Jonathan and David were alone together in the field they showed their love for each other and promised to be always friends, and that the Lord should keep peace between them and between their children forever. (Verses 13-17, 41, 42) Notice especially David's promise of kindness to Jonathan's children, for Jonathan knew that David would some day be king. Remember this promise and see by and by how David kept it. David and Jonathan were faithful friends. Read David's lament at the death of Saul and Jonathan. "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." (2 Sam. 1:17-27)

1. What song was sung of David that displeased Saul?
2. How did Saul show his anger when David was playing on the harp?
3. How did Jonathan learn surely Saul's feeling toward David?
4. By what sign did he let David know?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The story of Saul's anger toward David and his persecution of him pictures the difficulty which we find in changing from a more natural and superficial state of life to one that is deeper and more spiritual; especially the difficulty of advancing from a youthful and self-confident understanding of the Lord's Word and all heavenly truth, to a humble and spiritual understanding, in which pride of intellect gives place to a patient love of use. We may know and acknowledge that such a change must come, and yet be slow to make it. We also feel in our youthful, natural state a kind of irritation and impatience with spiritual things, which perhaps is represented by Saul's hatred of David. Much the same is represented by the mocking of Ishmael at Isaac. David did not try to injure Saul, but fled from him to find safety. So the Lord provides that for the most part things of spiritual life shall remain unknown and hidden to us until we are ready to accept them, so that we may not do them harm. (P. 221; A. 1911, 2654)

Recall a thought which we had a few weeks ago in regard to Jonathan and the friendship between him and David. The kingly power in the soul is the Lord's truth. Saul stands for this truth understood in a natural and external way, as it is found in the letter of the Word. David, who was king after Saul, stands for the Lord's truth understood in a deeper spiritual way, as when we see beneath the letter of the Word its spiritual meaning. Jonathan comes as it were between Saul and David. He was Saul's son, but David's faithful friend. He represents those parts of the letter of the Lord's Word which are in full agreement with the spirit. From such passages doctrine must be drawn, and by them it must be confirmed. These passages teach plainly the things needful for salvation; like the face and hands, they are bare, while the rest of the Word is clothed. Read S. 55.

The going to Bethlehem and to the sacrifice there means a regard for the things of innocence represented by Bethlehem, and for the wisdom which is revealed to babies. (Matt. 11:25) This the natural state represented by Saul does not care for, it is even annoyed and made angry by it. While the mind is still made angry by the mention of Bethlehem, that is, by the innocent, gentle things that Bethlehem represents, the more spiritual life must wait; we are not ready for it. (A. 4594, E. 449)

There is a somewhat similar meaning in Saul's anger when David played upon the harp. His playing represents the happiness of a spiritual understanding, which is annoying to one in a rebellious natural state. (E. 323)

Jonathan gave David a sign by shooting the arrows beyond him. Truths from the Lord's Word which expose and condemn the evil are the weapons that the Lord gives us with which to fight against our spiritual enemies. A bow is like some general principle of truth, and the arrows are its many applications. It is interesting to note that arrows are used as weapons and also as sign boards to point the way. The arrows used by Jonathan as a sign to David would seem to represent truths of the Word which are for guidance, which show the way of safety. Notice the association of the bow, with Saul and Jonathan in David's lament, when Saul and Jonathan and the bow represent truth protecting the church. (2 Sam. 1:17, 18; E. 278; A. 2686)

## **Lesson 40**

### **1 Samuel 21; 22:1-5: David and the Showbread**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

David. What do you remember about him? He was a shepherd taking care of the sheep, he played the harp for Saul, and he fought the giant Goliath. Why was Saul angry with David, so that David could not live longer at Saul's home? Do you remember Jonathan, Saul's son? How did he show his love for David?

David had left Saul's home at Gibeah and he was trying to find a place where he would be safe from Saul. He came to the tabernacle at Nob, which was near Jerusalem. You remember the tabernacle at Shiloh, when the little Samuel was there and helped the old priest Eli. David came and asked for bread, and the priest gave him the only bread he had, which was the holy showbread. Each Sabbath day the thin loaves of bread were put in piles on the table in the tabernacle, and when it was taken away the next Sabbath it was eaten by the priests in the holy place in the tabernacle. The priest gave David this holy bread, and David gave some to the men who were with him.

David asked also for a sword, and the priest gave him the only one that he had, which was the sword of Goliath which David himself had taken from the giant when he killed him with the stone from his sling.

Where could David go now to be safe from Saul? He went first to Achish, King of Gath, in the Philistine country, but he was not safe there and he hid in a cave, the cave of Adullam among the hills of Judah, near to the place where he had fought with the giant Goliath and not far from Bethlehem where he used to live. His family came to him in the cave, and discontented men and men who were in trouble, until he had with him a band of four hundred men. He found a safe place for his father and mother, and went with his men to the forest or thicket of Hareth, among the hills of Judah. He did not stay long in one place, but was moving from place to place to be safe from Saul. We shall learn more about his wanderings.

##### **Junior**

Do you remember the leave-taking of David and Jonathan in the field, when Jonathan had found that Saul was still angry with David and that it was not safe for David to stay at Saul's home? Do you remember the sign that Jonathan gave, by shooting arrows? Why was Saul jealous of David and trying to kill him?

We have now to flee with David from one place to another, where he may be safe from Saul. He came one day to the tabernacle, not now at Shiloh but at Nob, near Jerusalem, perhaps on the northern ridge of the Mount of Olives. He asked for bread, and the priest gave him the holy showbread. Someone read Exod. 25:23-30 and Lev. 24:5-9, and tell us about the showbread. Where was it put in the tabernacle? ("Rows" probably means piles.) How often was it renewed?

What disposition was made of the loaves taken from the table? Who was Doeg in this story? You can read more about him in 1 Sam. 22.

We know from our story today what the Lord referred to when He said to the Pharisees, "Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungered, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the showbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?" (Matt. 12:3-4)

David asked for a sword, and the sword of Goliath was given to him. When have we heard before of this sword? (1 Sam. 17:45, 51)

We find David next with Achish, King of Gath. Do you remember Gath? Can you find it on the map? It was one of the five Philistine cities near to the hills of Judah and the valley of Elah where David had killed Goliath, and it was the city where Goliath lived. It would seem to be a dangerous place for David to be in, if the people remembered him and the battle in which Goliath had been killed. And they did remember. How did David escape? (1 Sam. 21:10-15)

We go with David to the cave of Adullam in the hills near the valley of Elah. Here David's family came to him. Where did David find a safe place for his father and mother? For Saul's anger might lead him to do them harm. (1 Sam. 22:3-4) And read of the men who came to David till there were four hundred with him. What kind of men were they? We now find David and this company of men in the forest or thicket of Hareth, among the hills of Judah, perhaps near Hebron.

Many of the Psalms were sung by David, some of them at the time of our story. Read the titles over Psalms 18, 34, 52, 54, 56, 57, 63, 142; and read Psalm 57.

1. Where did David go to the tabernacle when he fled from Saul? What did he receive there?
2. Where did David go in the Philistine country? In what cave did he hide? In what wood? Was David alone?
3. How did the Lord refer to this story of David at the tabernacle?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Coming back to the story of David, we are still with Scripture which in its deeper sense is about the Lord, for David represents the Lord as king, and His spiritual victories. David spoke from the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Sam. 23:1-2), and many things which he said in the Psalms about himself are in a fuller sense about the Lord. (L. 43, 44)

Remember that truth is the kingly power in life. (John 18:37) We have recognized Saul as a type of a natural and youthful understanding of truth which is limited in its power, and David as a type of a spiritual understanding which is stronger and more successful in ordering the life. Saul's jealousy toward David and his persecution of David describe the difficulty of the natural mind in yielding the rule of the life to a more spiritual understanding. There were trials for the Lord in humbling all natural thoughts and submitting all to the truth which was Divine. See in Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms the brief explanation of Psalms of this period of David's life in

application to temptations of the Lord. Psalm 56: "The Lord's temptations, in which His trust is fixed in the Father; the malice of the infernals; that the Father would assist Him in His affliction; that He shall be assisted; thanksgiving for protection." Psalm 142: "A prayer of the Lord to the Father that He would assist in temptation; because no one knoweth Him but the Father alone; in Whom is His trust; that He may be delivered from temptation and come amongst those who acknowledge Him."

The hardships of David in this part of the story picture the difficulty which a spiritual understanding and life find in becoming established in us. The persecution by Saul is the opposition on the part of our natural, self-confident feelings. The gentler, more useful and spiritual life seems weak to these natural feelings; they despise it; they are annoyed and made angry by it. But in this time of hardship the new and struggling life looks up to heaven and the Lord, as David fled to the tabernacle. (Ps. 27:5) It finds new strength both for heart and understanding, represented by the bread and sword that were given to David.

"Bread which strengtheneth man's heart," is satisfaction in unselfish usefulness, with a grateful sense of the Lord's great goodness. This is the daily bread that we ask for in the prayer. This is represented by the bread of the Holy Supper and by the showbread of the tabernacle. It was right that David should have the showbread, for the more spiritual, more trustful, more useful life that he represents, is sustained by this inward satisfaction.

In the beginning of this persecution David received bread at the tabernacle. We see in this a picture of the Lord's strengthening from the Divine by the bread of Divine goodness. The Lord cited this eating of the hallowed bread by David as justifying His use of the Sabbath. What David's action represented, the Lord was actually doing: receiving the bread of the Divine goodness and expressing it in abundant works of love. This was the very meaning of the Sabbath. And the Lord, like David, gave also to those who were with Him. (A. 2177, 9545; R. 854)

The sword in the hand of Goliath represented the power of keen intellect and reason used by a proud and evil motive to justify itself and destroy good. The same sword in the hand of David and received now from the tabernacle, represented the power of intellect separated from all evil motive and dedicated to the Divine service. When David now found the sword of Goliath at the tabernacle, it was "wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod." The ephod was the priestly vest to which was fastened the breastplate by which they inquired of the Lord. The giant's sword received from the tabernacle and from behind the ephod, represents the power of reason which is from the Lord and is guided by His truth. (A. 2799, 9824; E. 131)

David's escape from Achish by pretending to be mad suggests the safety which heavenly things sometimes have because they seem as foolishness to those who are in evil and not worthy of serious attack.

## **Lesson 41**

### **1 Samuel 26: David's Flight from Saul**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

David was in hiding from Saul, with a few faithful men, in the wild country in the south part of the land, especially in the desert toward the Dead Sea. This is a very wild country with steep cliffs and deep, rough valleys. The rocks are of many strange shapes and colors, and there are many caves and hiding-places. You might journey a long way in this country and not see a tree or a spring of water or any sign of life but some lonely bird or animal.

Saul heard that David was in the wilderness and came three times with his soldiers to catch him. Sometimes he came very near to him. One of these times we will read about today. David learned that Saul had come and that he was camping not far away. There was a "trench" about the camp, probably the baggage piled up as a sort of protection. Inside this defense Saul's men were sleeping at night, and Saul was asleep in the midst of his men, with Abner, who was his faithful captain. Saul's tall spear was stuck in the ground near his head, and a cruse or jar of water was standing by.

David and one of his men, Abishai, went among the sleeping soldiers to the very place where Saul was lying. Abishai wanted to kill Saul as he slept, but David would not let him: he would not do harm to the Lord's anointed. But they took the spear and the cruse of water and went away. Then David called to Abner and the rest and showed the spear and the cruse of water that they had taken. Saul knew David's voice, and when he saw how David had spared his life, he said that he had sinned in trying to do David harm. And Saul blessed David and went away to his home. Read 1 Sam. 26.

##### **Junior**

We are with David in his flight from Saul in the wild desert country extending the whole length of the Dead Sea on the west. It is called in the New Testament the wilderness of Judaea, and in the Old Testament Jeshimon, "the waste." It is a very desolate region, with bare hills and deep gorges. There are caves in the rocks. There is one spring called Engedi, "the spring of the kid" (notice 1 Sam. 24:1-2), at the middle of the west shore of the Dead Sea, and about it some greenness, almost the only spot of verdure in the region. In this wilderness David was fleeing and hiding from Saul, especially in the region between Hebron and Engedi, where were the wilderness of Ziph and the hill Hachilah, with excursions into the wilderness further south. Once Jonathan found David in his hiding-place, and they renewed their pledges of friendship. (1 Sam. 23:14-18) Twice Saul was in David's power, but David would not harm him. Once Saul came into the cave where David and his men were in hiding, and David cut off the skirt of Saul's robe (1 Sam. 24); and once David came into Saul's camp to the place where Saul was sleeping. This story we are to read today. Only a few words seem to need explaining.

The "trench" in verse 5 is the baggage piled around the camp. Remember the same word in the story of David and Goliath. (1 Sam. 17:20) As we read of the spear stuck in the ground near Saul's bolster we remember the long spears which the Bedouin chiefs carry and stick in the ground by their tent doors. The long spear is a sign of office, and it seems to be mentioned in verse 7 as marking the place where the king lay. The cruse of water was probably a small earthen jar. After taking the spear and cruse, David perhaps crossed some rough gorge, and spoke from a place of safety on the other side.

1. How did Saul's hatred toward David begin?
2. Did David wish to kill Saul? What shows that he did not?
3. Show me at least one Psalm which by its title is referred to this part of David's life when he was escaping from Saul.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

What is represented by the wilderness country in which David hid and fled from Saul? A wilderness does not represent a happy, fruitful state, but a state that is barren, without much that is satisfying and beautiful, a state of conflict and privation. And it is such a spiritual wilderness while the natural rule is yielding to the spiritual. Such a state was represented by the wilderness through which the children of Israel journeyed between Egypt and Canaan, and by the wilderness of our Lord's temptation. (A. 2708, 6828) What is represented by the fact that at Adullam and at Engedi David was hiding in a cave? It suggests that the state of life is obscure and constrained, not yet bright and free and happy. (A. 2463, 10582) We have seen that Psalms ascribed to this period relate to states of temptation in the Lord's experience and in ours.

What spiritual thought is contained in the fact that while David would not injure Saul he took from him at one time the skirt of his robe and at another time the spear and the cruse of water? We may think of all these as emblems of Saul's kingly power. When David took them, it meant that he was rightfully the king. Saul so recognized the sign when he saw the skirt of his robe in David's hand. He said, "And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand." (1 Sam. 24:20)

Thinking a little more deeply, it is the truth that we have from the Lord which makes us a king, enabling us to rule our life wisely. (John 18:37) The robe is an emblem of truth, as it clothes and expresses the inner life. Remember the rending of Samuel's robe as a token that the kingdom was taken from Saul. (1 Sam. 15:27-28) The spear is an emblem of this truth, as it protects from evil. The water also represents this truth, as it cleanses and refreshes. David claimed these things as his because he represents the truth in a fuller, stronger sense than Saul. His taking these things from Saul means that the spiritual intelligence should take and use the things of natural truth and knowledge as its own. This is not to destroy them, but to lift them to a higher place. (E. 395; A. 9825)

## **Lesson 42**

### **1 Samuel 28: Saul at Endor**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

Wherever David fled from Saul in the land of Israel, even in the wilderness, Saul followed him. So David went again to the land of the Philistines, to Achish king of Gath. A band of men with their families were with him. You remember Gath, one of the large Philistine cities, and the home of Goliath. David was more kindly received than when he came before to Gath (1 Sam. 21:10-15), and was given the town of Ziklag in the southern part of the Philistine country for his own.

Achish believed that David was now the enemy of Israel and the friend of the Philistines, and when there was war again with Israel, he took David and his men with him. But some of the Philistine princes distrusted David, and he was sent back to Ziklag. He found the town robbed and burnt by the Amalekites, the wandering people of the south, whom Saul had defeated but had not wholly destroyed. David went after them and brought back the people and the things that had been stolen, besides other spoil. You can read this story in 1 Sam. 27, 29, and 30. We leave David in Ziklag while we go to learn how it fared with Saul.

You remember this great green plain of Esdraelon shut in by Mount Carmel and the Nazareth hills, and on the east by the three mountains Tabor, Little Hermon, and Gilboa. Between these mountains valleys of green reach eastward to the Jordan. The beautiful branch of the plain which runs eastward between Little Hermon and Gilboa brings back the story of Gideon's victory over the Midianites. (Judges 6; 7) And there was the great spring from which Gideon's soldiers drank to know who would be chosen for the battle. The spring comes out from under a cliff on the mountain side, and sends a large stream down the valley to the Jordan.

In this same region we now find Saul. The Philistines were camped at Shunem, which was in the border of the great plain near the southwestern end of Little Hermon. Saul and the army of Israel were camped near the great spring, on Mount Gilboa. It is not a single peak, but a mass of mountains. (2 Sam. 1:21) "And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled."

Then in his fear Saul tried to inquire of the Lord. "But the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." Urim and Thummim were words used of the twelve precious stones set in the breastplate which was fastened upon the front of the ephod, the sacred vest of the priest. (Exod. 28:15-30) The priest wore the ephod and the breastplate when he asked questions of the Lord. Compare 1 Sam. 30:7. Answers were given by light flashing from the precious stones, and sometimes at the same time a voice was heard. (A. 6640, 9905) No answer of any kind came to Saul. When we are disobedient and willful, the Lord seems far away from us; we do not find help in His Word, and even the voice of conscience grows dim and fails.

Then Saul went by night across the valley and around the hill of Little Hermon to the village of Endor on its northern slope. There was there a woman "with a familiar spirit." She was one of

those who had communication with the other world, but it was with evil spirits who deceived those who spoke with them and did great harm. The Lord had strictly commanded that those with familiar spirits should be killed and that no one should be defiled by having dealings with them. Saul himself in his better days had tried to put away such people from the land. Now he did what he knew was wrong. He asked to speak with Samuel, and one appeared who Saul believed was Samuel. But Saul found no help. He was told that Israel would be beaten in the battle, and that he and his sons would die. We read of this in 1 Sam. 28, and must leave the story of the battle till our next lesson.

1. What town was given to David by the Philistines?
2. Where were the armies of the Philistines and of Israel in Saul's last battle? What armies had camped there long before?
3. What was the breastplate? What was its use?
4. Why did Saul go to the woman of Endor? Why was it wrong?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The Philistines represent an intellectual power of learning and understanding. This in itself is not evil, but it becomes evil if one grows proud and excuses evil ways of life. When Abraham and Isaac sojourned with the Philistines many days, and dug wells in that country, it represented an innocent development of intelligence. David's stay among the Philistines, in the town of Ziklag, "out-pouring," seems also to represent a period of intellectual growth. There may be for a time an outward likeness between the intellectual power represented by David and that represented by the Philistines, as Achish believed David to be his friend; but it is only an apparent likeness; the two at heart are different. The intellectual power for which David stands is for the sake of the heavenly life. (A. 2496, 3362)

In the story of David's pursuit of the Amalekites and his return with spoil, we read that he made those of his men who had waited exhausted by the brook Besor to share equally in the spoil with those who had overtaken the enemy; and it became a law that "as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff." From this has been drawn the helpful lesson that they who are faithful with small ability or opportunity, and who do patiently inconspicuous uses, receive the Lord's blessing as fully and are prepared for heaven as truly as those who with larger ability do more conspicuous service.

The words Urim and Thummim in Hebrew mean "light" and "integrity." But angels understand by these words, light and its bright shining forth; and they do not think of a natural light, but of the Lord's Divine truth and its going forth with brightness and power. (A. 9905) The gems in the breastplate represent sure facts of holy truth in the letter of the Lord's Word. As the priest received answers from the Lord by the flashing of light from the gems, so the Lord teaches and guides us by enlightening our minds as we read His Word. (A. 9863; E. 717; T. 218)

The orderly way for us to receive instruction from the Lord is by enlightenment through His Word. It is not right to wish to speak with those of the other world, and those who try to do so are in danger of coming into the power of evil spirits. The Lord said in a parable, "They have Moses and the prophets... If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." (Luke 16:29, 31; P. 171; H. 249)

## Lesson 43

### 1 Samuel 29; 31: Saul's Last Battle

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

David had been fleeing and hiding from Saul in the wilderness. Then he went again to the Philistine country, and Achish, king of Gath, gave him the town of Ziklag in the southern edge of the country. Now the Philistines were gathering for a battle, and the battle was with Saul and his army, who were in Mount Gilboa. Does anyone remember Gideon and the spring to which he took his men to drink? It was the same Mount Gilboa and the same spring where Saul and his army now are. Should David go with the Philistines to the battle? He started to go, and Achish wished him to go, but other leaders of the Philistines feared him. They feared that in the battle he might turn against them. So David was sent back to Ziklag and waited to learn the result of the battle.

And how was the battle? It went hard with Saul, and the Philistines chased Saul and his men in Mount Gilboa. Jonathan and two other sons of Saul were killed, and Saul killed himself rather than be taken by the enemy. They found Saul dead and took his armor and sent it to the temple of one of their idols. The bodies of Saul and his sons were hung upon the walls of Beth-shan, a city between the place of the battle and the Jordan. Then came some brave men from Jabesh-gilead beyond Jordan, going all night, and took the bodies of Saul and his sons to their country and burnt and buried them. It was an act of kindness because Saul had been kind to them.

A man now came to David at Ziklag and said that he had killed King Saul. He thought that David would be glad and would reward him. But David was not glad. He had not hurt Saul himself when he might have done so, and he was not glad that Saul and Jonathan were dead. Then David sang a song of love and lament for Jonathan and Saul. "Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided. . . . How are the mighty fallen!"

##### Junior

Where was this last battle between Saul and the Philistines? Read 1 Sam. 28:4; 29:1, and if you can, show me the places on the map—Mount Gilboa, the spring at Jezreel, Shunem. You see that we are at the place of Gideon's victory. But this story is different in many ways from the story of Gideon; that was a great victory; this was a defeat. One difference we notice before the battle. You remember how Gideon was strengthened by the Lord, and was encouraged by hearing the dream which foretold his victory. How was it with Saul? The spirit of the Lord was not with him; he had no answer by dreams nor by Urim (flashing light in the stones of the priests' breastplate), nor by

prophets. And when he sought help in the forbidden way from the woman of Endor (can you find the place?) who had communication with spirits, he was told of his coming defeat and death. (1 Sam. 28)

The story of the battle, the defeat and the death of Saul and his sons you read in 1 Sam. 31. In thinking of the battle, notice that Mount Gilboa is a group of mountains with many slopes and valleys. In David's lament it is called, "Ye mountains of Gilboa." (2 Sam. 1:21) Ashtaroth (verse 10) is the plural of Ashtoreth, and means images of the goddess. Compare "Baalim" and "Ashtaroth," both plurals, in 1 Sam. 7:4. There was a great temple of Ashtoreth in Askelon. Can you find Beth-shan (verse 10) not far from the scene of the battle, and Jabesh-gilead farther away in the same direction? Can you think why the people of Jabesh-gilead were grateful to Saul and were ready to show this kindness to him? (1 Sam. 11)

Meantime, where was David? You can learn from 1 Sam. 27:5, 6, and 29; 30. You see how near he came to being present in the battle, but why he was not there but at Ziklag in the southern part of the Philistine country when news of the battle came to him. The first chapter of 2 Sam. tells how the news was brought to David. Was it true, as the man told David, that he had himself killed Saul? Why did he tell David this? (2 Sam. 4:10) How did David receive the news of the defeat and of the death of Saul and Jonathan? Read the song of lament. (2 Sam. 1:17-27)

In our translation we read that David bade them teach the children of Judah "the use of the bow." But they had long used bows and arrows. (Gen. 27:3) It means rather that David taught the people "the song of the bow." It is usually supposed that this song of the bow was his own lament for Saul and Jonathan, in which Jonathan's bow is several times mentioned. It may possibly have been this song, but perhaps an older song, for the book of Jasher in which it was written was a book of the Ancient Word, for the most part at least, much older than the time of David. Find the book of Jasher mentioned also in Joshua 10:13. Have you seen something already of the love between David and Jonathan of which David speaks so tenderly in his song?

1. With whom was Saul's last battle?
2. Where was it fought? With what result?
3. How was word brought to David? How was it received?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Why was it wrong for Saul and why is it wrong for people today to seek guidance from spirits? We ought to seek guidance from the Lord. The orderly way for us to receive instruction from the Lord is by enlightenment through His Word. It is not right to wish to speak with those of the other world, and those who try to do so are in danger of coming into the power of evil spirits. The Lord said in a parable: "They have Moses and the prophets. . . . If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." (Luke 16:29, 31; P. 171; H. 249)

The Philistines were a people of culture, in constant contact with the people of Israel, sometimes friendly, but more often dangerous neighbors, as in the days of Samson, of Saul and David. They

were enemies of Saul throughout his reign. He never really subdued them, and he died in battle with them. The Philistines represent a natural intellectual power which may give helpful confirmation to a spiritual understanding (A. 2720, 2723); but it is apt to be proud and self-confident and to care little for good life. Such intellectual pride was represented by Goliath, the Philistine giant. Saul represents a first youthful effort to rule the life according to the Lord's truth. It is an effort that is not very humble or very wise. Something of self-confidence and of pride in intellectual strength easily creeps in. The danger is great of being satisfied with mere knowledge of heavenly things, without patiently putting this knowledge to good use. We need the more spiritual and loving grasp of truth represented by David to subdue this pride and the spirit of faith alone. (A.4763, 9468)

We saw pictured in Saul's help to Jabesh-gilead in the country beyond Jordan (1 Sam. 11) the success of the youthful grasp of truth represented by Saul, in correcting abuses and bringing order in outward conduct. Saul's burial in that country and the asylum given there to Saul's family after his death further suggest the relation of the youthful grasp of truth represented by Saul with the external life represented by the country beyond Jordan. (A. 10540)

But what can the death of Saul represent when we think of him as a type of the Lord? His death cannot then mean failure. It represents the recognition of the Philistine tendency and weakness in the inherited nature and the humble laying down of self-confidence and intellectual pride. This is especially suggested by Saul's taking his own life. We remember how the Lord said of Himself and of us, that there is a life to lay down that we may live again.

David's song of lament for Saul and Jonathan is spiritually in praise of truth from the Lord which Saul and Jonathan represent. Its power to lift up and bear one on toward heaven is suggested by the comparison of Saul and Jonathan to swift eagles and to lions. The effect of the Lord's truth in making life beautiful, even when the truth is understood only in a simple natural way, is suggested by the saying that Saul clothed the daughters of Israel with scarlet and other delights and put ornaments of gold on their apparel. Especially tender things are said of Jonathan, for he represents a natural understanding which is near to the spiritual, those parts of the Lord's Word which in their literal meaning are in perfect accord with the deeper meaning. The song is "the song of the bow." The association of the bow with Jonathan in 1 Sam. 20, and with Saul and Jonathan in the lament occurs because the bow represents a doctrine of truth protecting from evil and guiding in right ways. Note the use of arrows as weapons and to point the way. (E. 278, 281, 357; A. 2686)

The book of Jasher, we are told, was a book of the Ancient Word, which was given before our present Bible. A reference to the book of Jasher like this in our chapter today seems to show that the Ancient Word was still in use in the days of David. If "the song of the bow" was David's own lament, it would seem to show further that the Ancient Word was still receiving additions at that time. (S. 103)

## **Lesson 44**

### **2 Samuel 2: David Made King**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Saul had died, and David would now be king. At first he was not king of the whole country, but only of the southern part, called Judah, and his home was at Hebron. Hebron was a famous old city. Abraham had lived there under the oaks. David was well known in this region. As a boy he had lived at Bethlehem, not far away, and when hiding from Saul he had been in many parts of Judah. Why was David not king over all the country? Because Abner, who was a strong man and Saul's faithful captain, made a son of Saul, Ish-bosheth, who was still living, king of the northern part of the land, living across the Jordan where the people were so friendly to Saul. There was fighting between Saul's family and David. But David grew stronger and stronger, and Saul's family grew weaker and weaker. (2 Sam. 3: 1)

There was still one of Saul's family, Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son. He was lame in his feet, for he fell when five years old when his nurse picked him up hastily to flee on hearing of the death of Jonathan and Saul. You remember David's promise to Jonathan to be kind to his family. (1 Sam. 20:14-17, 42) David learned of him from Zeba, a servant of Saul, and treated Mephibosheth kindly for Jonathan's sake, and Mephibosheth lived at David's house.

##### **Junior**

Who would be king after Saul? Yes, David. But it was some time before David was established as king of all the country. When he knew of Saul's death David asked the Lord what he should do and was told to go up to Hebron among the hills of Judah. Judah was the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Bethlehem was at its northern limit and from there it reached southward.

Gradually the name Judah was given to all the southern country from Jerusalem to the southern desert and from the Dead Sea to the Philistine country. David was already well known in this region. He was born in Bethlehem and lived there as a boy. He had hidden from Saul in the wilderness toward the Dead Sea and in forests south of Hebron. The people of this region knew him. They were ready to come together at Hebron and anoint David king. You remember the old town of Hebron. It was now David's home and he ruled there as king of Judah for seven years and six months.

Meantime, who were left of the family of Saul and where were they? Three sons of Saul had been killed with him in Mount Gilboa and their bodies were buried by the friendly people of Jabesh-gilead. Another son was left, Ish-bosheth. He seemed to have been a weak man, but Abner, Saul's captain, was with him and he was a strong man. It was Abner who brought David before Saul after killing Goliath. Abner was sleeping near Saul when David came by night and took the spear and cruse of water. Abner now took Ish-bosheth to Mahanaim in the friendly country east of Jordan. This place was mentioned in the story of Jacob. It was where he met Esau when he came back from his stay at Haran.

Abner made Ish-bosheth king of the eastern country and of the northern part of the Holy Land. The Ashurites probably means the tribe of Asher, used in a general way for the tribes north of the plain of Esdraelon. Jezreel means the great plain itself, being the name of a town on its eastern border. Ephraim was the hill country south of Esdraelon, and Benjamin reached down to Judah where David ruled. This was Saul's own tribe and it might be expected that it would remain friendly to his son.

So there were two kings, David in Hebron and Ish-bosheth in Mahanaim, each wishing to be king of all the land, and there was war between them. We learn especially of one battle at Gibeon. But the trouble was not ended with this one battle. "There was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker."

As we read on in the story we notice David's kindness to the family of Saul. When Abner was killed, David mourned. When men killed Ish-bosheth thinking to gain David's favor, he reminded them of what happened to the one who brought him news of Saul's death; and they were killed at his command. We read this in the fourth chapter. The same chapter in the fourth verse tells us of a son of Jonathan, who became lame as a little child. There is more about him in the ninth chapter which you will like to read. David afterward found this lame son of Jonathan and brought him to Jerusalem and treated him kindly, providing for him from his own table.

1. Where is Hebron? What have we learned about Hebron before the days of David?
2. When was David first anointed, and by whom? When was he publicly made king? What part of the country did he rule over while he lived at Hebron?
3. Where did Saul's family for a time have power? What battle did they fight with David?
4. In what ways had David already shown kindness to Saul? When had he promised to show kindness to Jonathan's children?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

When does a king anointed by the Lord govern our little kingdom? When we rule our hands and feet and tongue and all our faculties of body and mind by the Lord's commandments; for the Lord's truth is king. (John 18:37) When is Saul king? When we obey the commandments in a natural, literal way, with a good deal of youthful self-confidence. When is David king? When we obey the Lord's Word in a deeper, more spiritual way with more humility.

When we study the twelve tribes of Israel and their allotments in the land of Canaan, we find Judah and tribes representing loving interior qualities of heavenly life in the south, and tribes representing more intellectual and external qualities of life in the north and beyond Jordan.

While the kingdom is divided between David and the house of Saul, we see why David's place is in Judah, and the place of Saul's house in the northern country and beyond Jordan. David also was from Judah and Saul from Benjamin. (A. 4750; R. 96)

Hebron was an ancient city of the southern country, the home of Hittites who remained even from the Most Ancient Church, and the home of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. It represents early childlike states, with their innocent affections and perceptions, which are carefully preserved within us by the Lord. When David becomes king, when as men and women we begin in a spiritual way to rule our kingdom with the Lord's help, we go back to these innocent states of childhood and they are the basis of our strength. Hebron is said to have represented the church before Jerusalem did, and to represent a more loving church; and Jerusalem a more intellectual church. It seems right that David's rule should begin in Hebron, representing loving childlike states (we remember his first anointing by Samuel in Bethlehem), and that he moved later to Jerusalem, representing states more intellectual and mature. (Ps. 2; A. 2909, 2981, 4447, 4614)

The dependence of Jonathan's lame son on David's bounty suggests the blessing to more external powers when they learn dependence upon things spiritual and Divine: the blessing to knowledge of nature when we see in nature God's love and wisdom, the blessing to knowledge of the letter of the Word when it is enlightened by knowledge of its spirit.

## **Lesson 45**

### **2 Samuel 5:1-12; 6:1-19: Bringing up the Ark**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

David was now king. At first after he was king he made his home in Hebron. This was an old city among the hills in the southern part of the land, the old city where Abraham had lived. Afterward, King David made his home in Jerusalem nearer the middle of the land. Jerusalem stood strong on its hills, and the strongest hill of all, Mount Zion, had perhaps never been taken by the children of Israel from the native people, the Jebusites. It was a hard place to take, but David was now a strong soldier and he had brave men. The Jebusites thought their fort was too strong for anyone to take; they said that the blind and the lame could defend it. But one of David's men climbed up "by the gutter" and the strong city was taken. The "gutter" was some water course and may have been a passage cut through the rock of the hill to bring the water of a spring inside the fort. David made the strong hill his home, and Mount Zion was called the city of David; and there a house was built for him by carpenters and masons sent by Hiram, king of Tyre, the strong and beautiful city on the seashore away to the north.

When David was settled as king in Jerusalem, one of the first things that he did was to bring the ark of the Lord and put it in a tent that he spread for it on Mount Zion. Who remembers the ark, the little chest covered with gold, to hold the two stone tables of the commandments? There were rings in the sides or ends of the ark and poles run through the rings by which it could be carried on the shoulders of the priests. Do you remember the tabernacle, the little building in which the ark was kept on the journey from Mount Sinai? It was set up at Shiloh after the people came into the land, and it was there when little Samuel lived at the tabernacle.

The ark was taken from the tabernacle in Shiloh in the hope that it would bring help in a battle with the Philistines, but it was taken captive. Do you remember how it was sent home, on a new cart drawn by two cows? The cart stopped at Beth-shemesh, in the edge of the hills of Judah, and from there the ark was taken up to Kirjath-jearim, "city of the woods." And there it stayed a long time, until David and his men went to this little town to get the ark and to bring it up to Zion.

They started from Kirjath-jearim with the ark on a cart drawn by oxen. At a threshing-floor (one of the flat spots near a village where the people heaped their grain to thresh it out by driving cattle around and around over it) the oxen stumbled and shook the ark. Uzzah put out his hand and took hold of the ark, and he died. David was afraid to bring the ark to Zion, and they turned aside and left it in the house of Obed-edom. There it stood three months and brought blessings to the house of Obed-edom and to all that he had. So once again David went with his men for the ark. This time they took it on their shoulders as the priests of old time used to carry it, and brought it up to Zion. They brought it up with gladness, with sacrifices, with shouting and the sound of the trumpet, and David himself danced before the ark. As it came to the city gates, we may think of the people with the ark singing, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates!" and people from the gate replying, "Who is this King of glory?" So the ark came to its place in Zion, David's strong city. We must read the story. (2 Sam. 6:1-19)

## **Junior**

After David had been king seven years and a half in Hebron, ruling over Judah, the people of the north also were ready to be ruled by him, and he was made king of the whole country. Now something important happened. David moved from Hebron to Jerusalem. Jerusalem became the capital of the country and began to be the important city that we find it from this time on.

Jerusalem was spoken of as taken in the days of Joshua when the land was conquered, but it is doubtful if the strong citadel of the town had ever been taken from the native Jebusites. The position was a strong one, as you will see if you look at a map which shows you the hills of Jerusalem. The Kidron valley is on the east of the city separating it from the Mount of Olives. The valley of Hinnom is on the west of the city and it bends around the city on the south to join the Kidron. The high ground between these two valleys was divided by another valley, the Tyropoeon, which was once much deeper before it became filled up with rubbish and ruins from the city. On the east of the Tyropoeon valley was the hill of Moriah where the temple was afterwards built. On the west was a higher hill which at its southern end stood out rough and bold above the valley. Here probably the Jebusite fortress stood with walls and a moat about it, and this strong citadel was afterwards Mount Zion.

You realize the strength of the position if you have a picture taken in the Kidron valley looking up toward the city, and imagine yourself climbing the hill to take it, when the hill was much rougher and steeper than it is now and strong forts stood on top of it. Notice the boast of the Jebusites who thought that their fortress could not be taken, and how it was taken. See what I have said to the little children about the meaning of "the gutter." So David was established in Jerusalem, and a house was built for him. Who were the skillful builders in those days who built the house for David, and who by and by helped Solomon in building the temple?

The ark, the sacred ark of the commandments, comes again into our story. Do you remember the ark - how it was made, and covered with gold, the two golden cherubim on the golden cover

called the mercy-seat? Where was the ark made? What signs of power attended it at the entrance into the land of Canaan? Where did it find a resting-place in the land? How did it fall into the hands of the Philistines? How did it come back to the land of Israel? Since then where had it rested? Kirjath-jearim was probably where we find the ruin Arma, quite near to Beth-shemesh, some twelve miles southwest of Jerusalem. The ark remained there a long time. Twenty years are mentioned in 1 Sam. 7:1-2, and many more years followed, making perhaps seventy or eighty years in all. (For possible exceptions see 1 Sam. 14:18; A. 1453.)

The ark was at Kirjath-jearim when David and his men went for it to bring it up to Zion. There is probably reference to this place, the "city of the woods," in Ps. 132:6. We see them taking the ark from its long resting-place. Gibeah means "the hill," the hill in Kirjath-jearim where the ark stood. They started on their journey with the ark, but at this first attempt they did not reach Jerusalem. Why were they discouraged? Why did they turn aside? It was irreverent for Uzzah to touch the ark so boldly. Remember the experience of the people of Beth-shemesh when some of them looked into the ark. (1 Sam. 6:19) But now after three months David came again and took the ark with gladness to Jerusalem. Perhaps among the songs which they sang that day was the beautiful Psalm, "The earth is the Lord's . . . Lift up your heads, O ye gates . . . and the King of glory shall come in." (Ps. 24) There was not yet any temple in Jerusalem, but David had spread a tent for the ark on Mount Zion, and there it rested until the temple of Solomon was built. You can read the particulars of the story for yourself, and let us say together the whole of the Psalm about the King of glory.

You see that it was right, now that David was king, for him to think of the ark of the Lord's commandments and to bring it to a strong place in his city. You see that if we are to be kings and are to rule our faculties and all our life wisely and successfully, we must remember the Lord's commandments, and not in any careless way, but must give them the central place. We must make them the central and ruling power in our kingdom.

1. Where did David rule as king of Judah? How long?
2. What did he make his capital when he became king of all Israel? Who were the native inhabitants of this place?
3. Where had the ark been for many years? To what place did David bring it?
4. What happened by the way which delayed the bringing of the ark to Zion?
5. What signs of gladness marked the bringing up of the ark?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Before we study the meaning of the bringing of the ark to Zion, let someone go back and remind us what it meant to have the ark captive in the hands of the Philistines, and to have it returned again to the land of Israel upon the new cart drawn by cattle. The ark is with the Philistines when the Lord's commandments are held as mere matters of knowledge with no effort to obey them. It is returned upon the new cart when effort is made to obey the commandments, when the natural

affections are brought under their yoke and compelled to go as the commandments guide. (T. 203)

But even when the commandments are obeyed, there are still different kinds and degrees of obedience; they may be given a secondary place in life or the chief and central place. In the course of regeneration the place of the commandments changes; they become more and more important and central in the life. This is represented by the bringing up of the ark to the citadel of Zion. Three stages on this progress are especially described, represented by the resting of the ark in Kirjath-jearim, in the house of Obed-edom, and in Mount Zion. Briefly these stages are first, when the commandments are kept not intelligently but dutifully in a simple way; second, when they are kept with intelligent understanding of their meaning and purpose; and third, when they are kept with love with all the heart. (A. 2831; R. 612)

You notice the more reverent manner of carrying the ark in the latter part of the journey. You notice how the oxen stumbled at a threshing-floor by the way. The threshing-floor represents an experience of temptation, and the shaking of the ark the faltering of our obedience in such an experience of trial. Uzzah's putting forth his hand and taking hold of the ark represents a self-confident effort lacking in true reverence and humility. Uzzah died, and this self-confidence must die before we can go farther. The music with which they accompanied the ark represents the happiness of receiving the commandments more and more deeply into the life. We shall learn more, as we go on, of Mount Zion the stronghold of Jerusalem as the type of the heart's inmost love. (A. 878, 8339)

"The bringing up of the ark signified the progression of the church with humanity from its lowest to its inmost, and this because those progressions are effected by Divine truth, which was signified by the ark. For the man of the church advances from the natural to the spiritual and through this to the celestial. In a similar progression are the kinds of good of the three heavens, wherefore the ascent through them in their order was also represented." Find a full interpretation of the whole story in E. 700.

## Lesson 46

### 2 Samuel 10: David's Victories

#### THE STORY

##### Junior

The ark had been brought to Mount Zion, but as yet there was no temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. We read in 2 Sam. 7 that David wished to build a temple. See also 1 Kings 5:3; 8:17. The book of Chronicles speaks of his even gathering materials for the temple. (1 Chron. 22:1-5) But the Lord told David by Nathan the prophet, that while he did well to wish to build the temple, he should not build it, but it should be built by his son who should be king after him. So the building of the temple was put off until the days of Solomon.

David was not allowed to build the temple because of his wars on every side. Soon after he took Jerusalem the Philistines came twice against him, and it was in one of these battles that the sound

of going in the tops of the trees was a sign to him that the Lord was with him. A little later he still further subdued the Philistines. Another nation which he conquered was Moab, whose country was to the southeast of the Dead Sea. Then he fought with the Syrians in the northeast and took Damascus and the country all the way to the Euphrates river. Another land that David conquered was Edom, the mountain country south of the Dead Sea. There was also long war with the Ammonites. These, you remember, were the people who had attacked Jabesh-gilead, when Saul came to its relief. Their home was away to the east of the Dead Sea.

Our chapter tells how the king of Ammon treated with insult messengers whom David sent with kindly purpose. The beard was and still is a sign of dignity with Eastern people, and the cutting of the beard was a disgrace. Jericho where the messengers waited was on their way back to Jerusalem. The Ammonites then hired soldiers of Syrian tribes living to the north and had a double army to meet the army that David sent against them. Do you remember David's captains, Joab and Abishai? They were his nephews, sons of his sister Zeruiah. They led the army in the battle at Gibeon when their brother Asahel was killed. It was Abishai who went with David into Saul's camp and brought away the spear and cruse of water. It was Joab who climbed up to the fort of the Jebusites, which led to the taking of the city. Joab now divided the army in battle, leading a part himself against the Syrians and sending the rest with Abishai to meet the Ammonites. The Syrians fled, and the Ammonites fled too to their city.

In the days of Samuel the phrase "from Dan to Beer-sheba" meant the whole land, from the northern limit under Mount Hermon to the pastures of the south. David's wars and victories extended the kingdom far beyond these narrow borders. He ruled perhaps a wider country on the east of Jordan than on the west, and to the Euphrates on the north and to the Red Sea on the south. The promises given to Moses and Joshua were fulfilled. (Exod. 23:31; Joshua 1:4) We see the meaning also of verses in the Psalms, which speak of the extension of Israel from the sea to the river Euphrates. (Ps. 72:8; 80:11)

1. What did David build in Jerusalem? What was he not allowed to build?
2. Who was prophet in those days?
3. How large was the land of Israel in the days of Samuel? How far did David's kingdom reach?
4. David was called a man of war; what were some of the nations that he conquered?
5. What battles have we to fight to strengthen our kingdom?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

This is a story of warfare. What can war represent in the spiritual life? There is conflict between goodness and truth on the one side and all that is evil and false on the other. This conflict is called temptation. Remember how the Lord said that He came to bring not peace but a sword, and that a person's foes shall be they of the person's own household. All the wars mentioned in the Scriptures represent such spiritual conflicts. (A. 1659, 1664)

David is one of those in the Bible story who represent the Lord. Was there warfare in the Lord's life? He met and conquered evil of every kind. This involves many and severe conflicts, which lasted all His life. The Lord's temptations are especially represented by David's wars. Even David's cruelty in destroying his enemies represents the Lord's thoroughness in temptation, making no compromise with evil but destroying it completely. (A. 1690, and especially A. 8273) David's wars represent not only the Lord's temptations but the battles that we must fight with evil by which the Lord's kingdom in us is extended and made strong. The kingdom begins to be established in us when we begin in a simple way to rule our lives by the Lord's commandments. It is strengthened as we understand the Lord's Word more deeply, and especially as we are faithful in temptations. Its power extends until every department of life and every faculty is brought under its dominion. This is represented by the extending and strengthening of David's kingdom by his victories. We may see in the calling of one nation by another to resist David, a picture of the way in which all evil and false things are in league together in opposition to the Lord. (Isa. 9:7; A. 5323)

David was not permitted to build a temple for the Lord because of his wars, but it was reserved for Solomon the peaceful king. The temple was a type of heaven and of the heavenly state in which the Lord can find a dwelling in the soul. The state of conflict is not heavenly; though it looks forward to heaven and is the necessary preparation for it, as David desired to build the temple and it was said that he did well to have it in his heart.

## Lesson 47

### 2 Samuel 12:1-23: Nathan's Parable

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Do you remember the prophet Nathan? It was he who brought the Lord's word to David when he wished to build a temple in Jerusalem, telling him that he should not build the temple, but that his son would do it. (2 Sam. 7) Now the Lord sent Nathan again to David with a parable about a rich man who would not take from his own flocks and herds to feed a traveler on his journey, but took from a poor man his one little ewe lamb which he dearly loved. When David was angry and said that the man who had done this thing should die, Nathan answered, "Thou art the man."

The Lord's parables in the Gospels are spoken to us all. Often after a parable the Lord said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," which means that we must try to understand the parable and take its lesson to heart. It is the same with the parables and commandments of the Old Testament. In them all, the Lord is speaking to us lessons which we ought to take to heart. We can always think as we read them, "Thou art the man." The parable of the little ewe lamb, which Nathan spoke to David, should make us ask ourselves how we have been selfish, how being bent on our own pleasure we have been careless of other people and have made things hard for them.

## **Junior**

We hear again of the prophet Nathan, who was sent to David with a parable about a rich man who would not take from his own flocks and herds to feed a traveler on his journey, but took from a poor man his one little ewe lamb which he loved. When David was angry and said that the man who had done this thing should die, Nathan answered, "Thou art the man." Looking back one chapter we learn what David had done. He had taken away Bath-sheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, who lived in Jerusalem, to become his wife, and he had sent Uriah to the war that was then going on with the Ammonites and had arranged that he should be killed in the attack upon the city.

You remember the Hittites, remnants of an ancient people whom the children of Israel found living in the land of Canaan. They were among the best of the native people. It was from Ephron the Hittite that Abraham bought the burial-place in Hebron. And you remember the Ammonites who lived far to the east beyond the Dead Sea; the people from whom Saul saved Jabesh-gilead, and with whom David had long war.

David had done two great wrongs, and when the prophet told his parable and said, "Thou art the man," he saw how he had sinned and was very penitent. Read Psalm 51. It is a wonderful Psalm of penitence, and its title tells us that it was spoken by David at this time. It is a very tender prayer that the Lord, who knows our life and our secret thoughts and feelings, will help us to put away all evil things.

The child of Bath-sheba was sick and died. While the child was sick, David mourned and fasted, but after the child had died he put aside his grief. He said, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." So we can always think when those that we love die. We ought not to wish them back again in this world, but should think of the heavenly world into which they have awakened, and should try with the Lord's help to live so that we shall keep near to them in spirit and shall come to them in heaven by and by. Afterward, Bath-sheba had another son. It was Solomon, who ruled after David and was a wise and peaceful king. We shall soon learn more about him and about his building of the temple.

1. Who was Nathan? On what two errands did he come to David?
2. What is a parable? Tell me two parables about sheep, one in the New Testament, and one in the Old.
3. What Psalm of penitence belongs to this part of David's life?
4. To whom does the Bible say, "Thou art the man"?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

Older scholars will think more particularly of the sins which David had committed and which are described in Nathan's parable. They are the two sins forbidden by the fifth and sixth commandments. In taking the lesson to ourselves we ought to think in particular of these evils and our need of the Lord's help to deliver us from them. We know that the commandments forbid

evil not only in outward act but also in thought and feeling. The Lord teaches this very plainly in regard to these two commandments in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 5:21-28) Suggestions of evil will come; for that we are not to blame, but we are to blame if we allow the thought of evil to linger in our minds.

There is especial need of promptness and courage in putting away every thought and feeling which is not pure. It would seem to be with special reference to evil of this kind that the Lord said, "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. . . . If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee." (Matt. 5:28-30) Every thought and every feeling which leads toward the forbidden evil must be promptly put away. We must remember the commandment which forbids it. We must ask the Lord's help and not delay. No kind of evil if it is indulged, so completely closes the mind toward heaven, and there is no temptation, if we are faithful in resisting it, which opens the doors more widely to the influence of heaven, or makes us more sensible of the Lord's protecting power. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." We may think of the little ewe lamb of Nathan's parable as representing especially the innocence of this holy kind which is so precious to the Lord. Read E. 982, 999.

This is a part of David's history which shows plainly that David as a man was not better than others. When he is spoken of as one after the Lord's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14), it is not David that is meant, but the Lord in His life on earth, whom David represented. But how can this part of David's story represent anything in the Lord's life? The Lord did no evil. He cherished no evil thought or feeling; and yet in the nature which He inherited from humanity He felt the temptation to every evil, and He felt the tempting power of all evil spirits. David's sin may picture to us the Lord's temptation; especially does Psalm 51, the Psalm of penitence, reveal to us the Lord's heart in His temptation. David was penitent in an outward way, but the real, deep penitence which the Psalm expresses is the Lord's not David's. Read P. P. Ps. 51; A. 1444, 1573. We know that Solomon was a type of kingly strength, and of the peace which comes to all and which came to the Lord after seasons of temptations. He would seem especially to represent the great peace and strength which come after faithfulness in the temptation here described.

The story has another beautiful meaning in application to the Lord. The Lord speaks of Himself as the husband, and of His church as the bride and wife. It is a very tender way of describing the Lord's love for His church. We read that King David, and after him King Solomon took many wives, and wives from other nations. This in itself was an evil thing to do, and still as a part of the Lord's Word it becomes a picture of something Divine and holy. It pictures the reaching out of the Lord's great love to all kinds of people who try to do His will, recognizing something of His church in everyone. David's taking the wife of the Hittite in this sense represents the Lord's love for goodness of a simple, Gentile kind, His desire to free it from its weakness and ignorance and draw it to Himself. (A. 3246; P. 245)

## **Lesson 48**

### **2 Samuel 15: Abalom's Conspiracy**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Besides David's wars with other nations, he had troubles at home with his own sons. One of these was Absalom. No one in the whole land was so much praised for his beauty as Absalom, and his hair was very thick and heavy. Absalom had been three years away from Jerusalem, with his mother's people in the country beyond Jordan. David had sent for him to come back to Jerusalem, for he loved him.

But Absalom wished to be king instead of David. He made ready for himself chariots and horses, and men to run before him, as was done for Joseph when he was made ruler in Egypt. Absalom also stood at the city gate and talked kindly with the people that came with their troubles to the king. In the old days the king used to sit in the gateway of the city or of the palace to hear and settle the disputes among the people. It was the most public place, and all the people knew any matter which was settled in the gate. So Absalom stole the hearts of the people from David.

Absalom now went to Hebron and had himself made king. Word came to David of what Absalom had done, and with some faithful people he sadly left Jerusalem and went across the Kidron and over the Mount of Olives and on to the country beyond the Jordan.

It is a sad picture. The king climbed the Mount of Olives weeping as he went, with his head covered and with bare feet, as a sign of sadness, and all the people with him with heads covered and weeping. A little farther on a man ran along the hillside, cursing David and throwing stones and dust at him. The priests brought the ark of the Lord to carry it with David, but he told them to take it back to its place, and told the priests to stay in the city. So David and the people with him came safely to the country beyond the Jordan. There they were kind to him and brought presents and food for him and those who were with him. (2 Sam. 17:27-29) We shall learn next time of a battle between Absalom's men and David's in this country beyond the Jordan.

##### **Junior**

In the first verse of our chapter we meet the name Absalom. He was a son of David and his mother was a daughter of the king of Geshur, a district beyond Jordan in the border of Bashan. (2 Sam. 3:3) Absalom now wished to make himself king instead of David. He was much praised for his beauty, and was especially noted for his heavy hair. (2 Sam. 14:25, 26) Absalom had been three years in Geshur, his mother's country, but David had sent Joab and brought Absalom home to Jerusalem, for David loved him. (2 Sam. 14:1, 21-24) David's love for Absalom and his kindness to him make Absalom's treachery toward David seem the more contemptible.

We learn now how Absalom worked to steal the hearts of the people. The chariots and runners remind us of the royal honor given to Joseph. (Gen. 41:43) Absalom's meeting in the city gate the people who came with cases to the king reminds us of the old custom of kings of hearing cases in

the gate where the people would be witnesses. Remember Abraham's bargain with Ephron in the gate of Hebron. (Gen. 23:17-18)

At last it seemed to Absalom a favorable time to have himself declared king, and he did this in Hebron, having made an excuse and got permission of David to go there. (Verses 7-12) News came to David. Visualize David leaving Jerusalem, climbing the Mount of Olives, barefooted with head covered, and weeping as he went. Verse 12 tells us that Absalom called to himself Ahithophel, a wise counselor of David. You will see as you read on in the chapter that this gave David great anxiety. But he found means through Hushai to counteract the advice of Ahithophel. (Verses 31-34) We read in chapter 17 how Ahithophel advised to pursue David at once, but Hushai advised to wait and gather a large army. So time was given David to make his escape.

Read, too, in chapter 15 about Zadok and Abiathar, the priests who had charge of the ark and were faithful to David. (Verses 24-29) We must also make acquaintance of Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, and Jonathan, the son of Abiathar, who waited outside the city to serve as messengers to take word to David. (Verses 27, 28) And this they did, and helped David to get safely across the Jordan. (2 Sam. 17:15-22) Note also the fate of Ahithophel. We find Ahimaaz in our next lesson running to David with another important message.

1. Who was Absalom? What is said of his appearance?
2. What did Absalom wish to do? How did he try to bring it about?
3. What did David do? Tell me about his going over the Mount of Olives.
4. Who at another time was rejected in Jerusalem, and found a welcome with the people beyond Jordan?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

In connection with this story, read Psalm 3. "A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son. Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! Many are they that rise up against me." In Prophets and Psalms this Psalm is seen in its application to the Lord "when He was in temptations and subdued the hells and was then in a state of humiliation in which He prayed to the Father."

A sad feature of this story is David's love for Absalom which had so poor a return. This appears still more strongly in our next lesson. There is in the treachery of Absalom and Ahithophel the sadness which we recognize in Judas' betrayal of the Lord, and in all unfaithfulness to Him in those who have opportunity to know and love Him. The sadness of such treachery is expressed in other Psalms. See Ps. 41:9; 55:12-15.

Several things that are said of Absalom give us some idea of the kind of temptation which is represented by this rebellion. His mother was a princess of Geshur in the beyond-Jordan country. This, like Saul's association with that country, at once suggests an external, not spiritual quality of life. Absalom was noted for his physical beauty and especially for his hair. Remember Samson's hair as a type of the letter of the Divine Word and its power. (S. 49) The mule which carried Absalom to his death and the branches of the oak in which he was caught both suggest a literal,

not spiritual mind. (A. 1949, 4552) Absalom's effort by flattery and attractive promises to win the hearts of the people away from David must represent the power of literal interest in the Word and of attractive externals of religion to draw one away from spiritual truth which searches the heart and makes life genuinely good. Saul represents a first literal grasp of the Lord's truth and a first effort by that truth to rule the life. This is good when it is the best understanding and obedience that one is yet capable of, but when one is able to understand and to live more truly and spiritually it is disloyal to be satisfied with a superficial understanding of the Word or with superficial piety. (D. 2658, 2694)

In David's leaving Jerusalem in order that war might not come upon the holy city, there is a suggestion of the Lord's Providence in restricting contention so far as possible to external things, keeping deeper things concealed until they can be received in a humble and reverent state of mind. (A. 4677, 9942)

## Lesson 49

### 2 Samuel 18: David's Grief for Absalom

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Absalom was David's son who was trying to make himself king. He gathered an army and followed David into the country east of Jordan. So David prepared for the battle. David himself would have taken chief command, but they urged him to stay in the city where he would be safe, and to give help from there if needed. He stood by the city gate as the army passed out, and all the soldiers heard him earnestly charge the captains to deal gently with Absalom.

The battle was in a wood. It is a country of hills and brooks and many trees. The thickets made it hard for Absalom's men who were beaten to get away, so that more were killed in trying to escape than in the battle. The wood also caused Absalom's death. He rode upon a mule, as kings and judges used to ride. The mule carried him under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught in the branches. Perhaps his heavy hair helped to entangle him. David's soldiers remembered the charge to deal gently with Absalom, but Joab disobeyed. He thrust him through and he died.

Joab must send tidings to the king. There was a young man there who wished to run to David with the news of the victory. It was Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok the priest, who before had come with a message to David from Jerusalem. Now Ahimaaz was anxious to serve again as a messenger, but Joab knew that David would not be glad to hear of Absalom's death, and he would not let Ahimaaz take the news. He sent instead a Cushite, an Ethiopian and probably a slave. Afterward Joab let Ahimaaz go, and running by a way which was more level, he reached Mahanaim, the town where David was, before the Cushite.

David was sitting between the inner and outer gates of the city, anxiously waiting to hear news of the battle. The watchman went up to the top of the wall over the gate to watch for a messenger. He saw a man running alone. It must be a messenger of victory, for if the army had been beaten

many would be fleeing. Then the watchman saw a second runner. The first was now near, and he knew by his running that it was Ahimaaz. He reached the king first and told him of the victory, but he dared not tell, or possibly did not know, about Absalom. The Cushite came. Of each messenger the king anxiously asked, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" The Cushite told the king that he was dead. David's grief made the victory like a defeat, and the people stole silently into the city. "The king went up to the chamber over the gate and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son."

## Junior

Absalom had come with his army into the country beyond Jordan. (2 Sam. 17:26) The battle with David's army would be there. We know Joab and Abishai, David's nephews, who were two of his captains; Abishai was with David when he took the spear and cruse of water from the camp of Saul. Joab was the first to climb up to the citadel of Zion. The third captain, Ittai the Gittite (of Gath) you can read of in 2 Sam. 15:19-22. Did David himself go with the army? Where was he during the battle? What charge did he give to all the captains about Absalom? What consequences came from the fact that the battle was in the woods? Someone read carefully verses 9-17, and tell us about the death of Absalom.

As we read in verse 18 about Absalom's monument in the king's dale, we may remember pictures of a little stone building with a pointed top called "Absalom's tomb," in the Kidron valley near Jerusalem. It is not very old, but it reminds us of this monument of which the Bible speaks. "The king's dale" was an old name for the Kidron valley between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. (Gen. 14:17)

"Then said Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok." (Verse 19) We remember Ahimaaz, one of the young men, sons of the priests, who had brought David important word from Jerusalem. (Chapter 17) Now he wished to serve again as a runner to take David news of the battle. Why did Joab at first not wish to send him, but sent instead another messenger? We must all listen to the story. How plainly we see the picture: David waiting anxiously for news of the battle; the watchman on the wall over the gate, straining his eyes to catch sight of a messenger with news; one runner, and then a second; the telling to David news of the victory, but to him sad news, for Absalom was dead. David's grief for Absalom made the day of victory a day of mourning.

Joab urged David, for the sake of the men who had gained the victory for him, to put away his grief, and soon David was welcomed back to Jerusalem, a company coming down to meet him at the Jordan. Do not fail to listen to this story of David receiving news of the battle and of his grief for Absalom.

You should read the first verses of chapter 23; they tell what David said about the Psalms which he had sung and written. They were not his own songs, and he knew that they were not, but they were Divine songs which the Lord had given him to sing. "The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue."

1. Where did David go when he fled from Jerusalem? Where was the battle with Absalom?
2. How was Absalom killed?

3. How did David before the battle show his tenderness toward Absalom? How did he show it again when news came of Absalom's death?
4. What is David's own testimony in regard to the Psalms?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Recall the things said of Absalom that show that he is a type of a superficial understanding of the Lord's Word and a superficial piety: his association with the beyond-Jordan country, his physical beauty and abundant hair, and his flattering and seductive ways. Another indication of the same sort is the mule which carried Absalom to his death. The animals of work and travel represent powers of mental labor, which are powers of thought and understanding, the horse representing a higher spiritual understanding and the ass and mule an understanding natural and often perverse. This quality of mind is seen in Ishmael, "the wild ass man." (A. 1949, 2781) Still another indication is the oak in which Absalom was caught. Trees represent growing intelligence. The oak (and if it was a terebinth, the meaning is nearly the same) represents not a well-ordered spiritual intelligence, but a natural, superficial intelligence, disordered and confused. Such intelligence may be sturdy and loyal in children who hold faithfully to what they have been taught, or it may be led by attractive appearances and by intellectual pride to superficial judgments. (A. 1443, 1616, 4552; E. 514) See the very interesting explanation of the ram caught in the thicket by his horns, in Gen. 22:13. (A.2831)

Absalom's monument "in the king's dale" suggests that the literal understanding of the Lord's Word and the interest in heaven for its outward pleasantness, have a right and permanent place in the life, but it must be a humble place. (A. 1723)

The most beautiful lesson of the chapter is seen in David's tenderness toward his rebellious son, his gentleness toward him, his solicitude for his safety, and his grief at his death. It is a picture of the Lord's tenderness toward those who are unfaithful to Him, especially toward those who misunderstand Him, or who prefer to take His words only literally, and to think of heaven and of Christian life and worship only in an external and superficial way. He loves even those who are rebellious and tries to lead them to a truer understanding of His Word and to a spiritual life. How infinitely tender David's words of lament for Absalom are, when we see that they express the Lord's pity for us when we choose a superficial life, and His willingness to do everything, even to die for us, to save us.

## **Lesson 50**

### **1 Kings 1:5-10, 32-40; 3:5-15: Solomon Anointed**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Solomon was a son of David, and he was the one who was to be king after David. But there were other sons who wanted to be king. One of these was Absalom, but he was now dead. Another was Adonijah. He gathered chariots and horsemen and won over some of David's leading men. Then he called together those who were his friends, to the rocky hillside across the Kidron valley from Jerusalem, and there they made him king and he gave them a feast. The cliff which was called "the stone of Zoheleth" was near where you see in pictures the present village of Siloam. There is a spring down in the valley below us which was called En-rogel "the fuller's spring," and the spring itself was called Gihon "the fountain head." But Adonijah had not called Solomon to his feast, and there were other people faithful to David whom he had not called: among these were Nathan the prophet and Zadok the priest.

So Nathan spoke with the mother of Solomon and they went to King David and told him what Adonijah had done and reminded him of his promise that Solomon should be king. David was now an old man and feeble. He told them to go at once and make Solomon king.

They took with them faithful people and made Solomon ride on David's own mule, for kings and judges in those days used to ride on mules and asses. So they brought Solomon down to the spring Gihon and there they made him king. Do you remember how Saul and David were made king, how Samuel anointed them with oil? Now Zadok the priest anointed Solomon with oil from a horn which he took from the tabernacle, from the tent which David had pitched in his city for the ark. Then they blew the trumpet and all the people said, "Live King Solomon." Then they came up the hill into the city with music and a great sound of rejoicing. All this was not far from the place where Adonijah and his friends were finishing their feast. They were just across the valley. They heard the trumpet and the noise and were very much afraid. We must read this story in 1 Kings 1:5-10, 32-40.

One beautiful thing happened when Solomon became king. He went to Gibeon to sacrifice to the Lord. Gibeon was a famous old town not far from Jerusalem, which was in those days "the great high place," a favorite place for worship. There the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." What do you think Solomon asked? Not long life, nor riches, nor the life of his enemies, but a wise and understanding heart; for he felt like a little child and knew that he needed the Lord's help to be a wise king. The Lord gave Solomon what he asked, and more than he asked; He gave him wisdom and gave him also riches and honor. But this is told so beautifully that I would rather read it to you. (1 Kings 3:1-15)

##### **Junior**

David was now old. How old was he at the end of his reign? (2 Sam. 5:4) What son of David was to be king after him? David had been a man of war, but his son would be a peaceful king. His name

means "peaceable." We have already learned about the attempt of David's son Absalom to be king, which caused David great sorrow. Now in David's old age another son tried to be king. What was his name?

Let us study a little geography before we read the story. On your map of Jerusalem, find the Kidron valley to the east of the city. Looking down the Kidron from Jerusalem, you see the village of Siloam on the hill across the valley. One of the cliffs near this village was "the stone of Zoheleth," where Adonijah gathered his friends and made his feast. Down in the Kidron valley opposite the northern end of the village of Siloam there is a spring, called now St. Mary's or the Virgin's Well. The spring comes out from the hill on the city side of the valley. We must go down a number of steps to reach the water. There is also a curious tunnel cut through the rock of the hill for some five hundred and eighty-six yards, carrying the water from the spring to the pool of Siloam. From this tunnel there also leads a passage to an underground chamber. The spring is intermittent, running from five times daily to only once, according to the season. This is the only real spring at Jerusalem and is probably the one which is called in our chapter by both names: En-rogel, "the fuller's spring," and Gihon, "the fountain head." What is a fuller's work? (Mal. 3:2; Mark 9:3)

Now I think you can read the story of Adonijah, and Solomon, and if you have time you will like to read from 1 Kings 1:5 through the rest of the chapter. Do you remember Joab, who was one of those who left David to go with Adonijah? He was a nephew of David and had been his chief captain. The Cherethites and Pelethites were the king's trusted guards. Notice how Solomon rode on David's own mule as a sign that he was king. You find reference in Judges 5:10; 10:3, 4; 12:14 to the old custom of kings and judges riding on mules and asses. You remember too how it stirred the people and how ready they were to greet the Lord as king when they saw Him riding on an ass into Jerusalem. (Matt. 21:5; Zech. 9:9) Both the altar of incense and the altar of burnt offering of the tabernacle had horns. (Exod. 27:2; 30:2) They were horn-like projections at the corners. One who fled to the altar hoped to be safe in that sacred place. The horns of the altar also represent the Lord's strength which supports and protects one who truly worships Him.

Before reading of Solomon's dream in which he asked for wisdom and the Lord gave it to him, look at the map and find Gibeon, about six miles northwest of Jerusalem. It stands on a hill which rises from a lovely meadow and was one of the high places where they worshiped before the temple was built and became the one place of worship for all the people. One account (2 Chron. 1:3) says that the tabernacle which had been built at Sinai was now at Gibeon, but the ark we know was in the city of David on Mount Zion. Is there something in this story of the gift of wisdom to Solomon which reminds you of the Lord's words in Matt. 11:25?

1. What two sons of David tried to make themselves king?
2. Who was to be king after David? What does his name mean?
3. What did Solomon ask of the Lord when he became king? What did the Lord give him?
4. Who are truly wise?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Let someone remind us what David and his victories represent in our spiritual experience, and then show us what is represented by the peaceful reign of Solomon which followed. David represents the Lord's truth as we grasp it with spiritual strength, and David's victories are the victories over evil in the power of this truth. After every conflict in which we are faithful comes a state of peace. But we remember that in the deepest sense David stands for the Lord in His conflicts with evil and His victories. After every victory there came to Him a Divine peace. As you read the chapters of history and the Psalms which describe the outward peace and glory of Solomon, you must remember that they tell also of this inward peace and glory of the Lord. When the Lord said, "Behold! A greater than Solomon is here," He meant that what Solomon represented was fulfilled in Him. (Matt. 12:42; A. 3048)

Let someone study the correspondence of the ass and the horse and show us why kings and judges in the old days rode on mules and asses. All these animals of travel represent the power of understanding to think and reason, to take this and that and to bring them into new and useful relations. So much is true of both horse and ass, but the horse is a nobler animal, more free in action, more sensitive, more attentive to the master's will. The ass is smaller and more self-willed, looking on the ground and picking its own way with much less heed to guidance. The horse represents the power of understanding and thinking of spiritual things; the ass the power of careful discrimination and judgment in natural things. And this was the work of the king or judge, who heard and decided cases among the people. Therefore, the ass rather than the horse was the animal for him to ride. (A. 2781)

Let some member of the class be prepared to show the different character of David and Solomon in Psalms which bear their names. See, for example, among the Psalms of David, Ps. 3, 68, 144; and contrast with these the two Psalms of (or for) Solomon, Ps. 72 and 127.

Saul, David, and Solomon represent three stages in the establishment of the Lord's kingdom in the soul. Saul rules when the Lord's truth is understood and obeyed in a natural, literal way. David rules when it is received more spiritually and intelligently and gives greater strength to conquer in severe temptations. And is there any more perfect state than this? There is the peaceful state when we shall love to do right and shall do it without conflict: this is represented by the reign of Solomon. (A. 3696; E. 365)

Solomon asked for wisdom and it was given him. What is wisdom? People may learn many facts and store them in their memory, but this is not wisdom. They may reason acutely and become intelligent, but this is not wisdom. Wisdom is the highest kind of understanding. It is the perception of heavenly truth which is given by the Lord to an innocent and loving heart. It is withheld from the knowledgeable and prudent, but is revealed to babes. Still the wise perception has need of facts of knowledge and of intellectual power and finds pleasure in them. This is represented by Solomon's marrying an Egyptian princess and receiving horses from Egypt. You remember that Egypt represents a natural state, especially the natural memory with its store of knowledge. (E. 654)

Can you think what meaning Absalom and Adonijah have in this story? They were earlier-born sons of David and represent more natural and external motives attempting to rule. Solomon was born later, after David's trials and repentance, and like Joseph and Benjamin, Jacob's last-born sons, he represents a later, more spiritual development. Still, Adonijah would seem to represent some element of character which is good and useful in its place, for Solomon told him if he showed himself a worthy man he should live, and sent him to his house.

What can it mean spiritually that certain ones who had offended were allowed to live through David's reign but were killed by Solomon, at David's dying command? Do they represent evil or imperfect elements of character which cannot be removed for a time, and not until regeneration is far advanced? Remember what David said about Joab after he had killed Abner. (2 Sam. 3:39) The words are very expressive as applied to things in ourselves which severely try our patience, but which we trust the Lord will some day help us to overcome.

## Lesson 51

### 1 Kings 5; 6:1, 38: Building the Temple

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Do you think these are pretty trees in the picture? (Show picture of cedars of Lebanon.) They look something like the firs that we use for Christmas trees, but they are different. See how flat they stretch out their branches. They are cedars of Lebanon, and they are the trees that King Solomon used when he built the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem and his own palace. They are called cedars of Lebanon because they grow on Mount Lebanon in the very northern part of the Holy Land. The mountain was not in Solomon's country, but in the country that belonged to Hiram king of Tyre, a city on the sea near Mount Lebanon. Tyre was a great city, and among its people were famous sailors who went in their ships to distant lands; and there were skillful workers- carpenters and stone-cutters, and workers in bronze and other metals.

King Hiram was friendly to Solomon and sent him workers to help build the temple, and cedar wood. How would they carry the great logs so far from Mount Lebanon to Jerusalem? Hiram's servants took them down to the sea and made them into rafts and floated them down to Joppa. You must take your map and follow along the coast and see how they went. At Joppa they drew the logs ashore and Solomon's servants carried them up to Jerusalem.

There were a great many people at work. Besides Hiram's servants, there were many more whom Solomon gathered from the different tribes and from the native people of the land. So the timber was brought for the building. The stone was got in quarries near by, and it was cut to the right size and shape in the quarry, so that there was no tool of iron heard upon the stone while the temple was building.

Look with me from the Mount of Olives over Jerusalem. (Show picture.) On the hill across the Kidron valley you see the city wall, and beyond it the dome of the Mohammedan mosque with an open space about it. This mosque stands where the temple stood. The hill was called Mount

Moriah. You will wish to know what the temple was like. It was quite different from the mosque that stands there now, although that is a pretty building. The plan of the temple was like the tabernacle, but it was larger. The temple had its inmost chamber for the ark, and the outer chamber for the altar of incense and the table of showbread and the lamp; and it had an open court about it where there was an altar for offerings and a laver for washing. All this was like the tabernacle, but larger.

There was another difference. The tabernacle was made of boards and curtains. The walls of the temple were built of stone. Inside they were covered with wood, and the floors and doors were of wood; and everywhere the wood was covered with thin gold. It must have been a beautiful sight when the doors of the temple were opened to the east, and the morning sun from over the Mount of Olives shone into the golden chambers. And besides, as the people gathered in the court to worship, they knew that the holy presence of the Lord was there.

It was a beautiful and holy temple. Seven years were spent in building it. I must read you some parts of the story. Perhaps you would like to hear about the bringing of the cedar trees and the great stones for the building. (1 Kings 5)

### **Junior**

You remember how David had brought the ark of the Lord to Zion and pitched a tent for it there. He had wished to build a temple, but he was not permitted to do so because of his wars. Now things were different. Solomon was king, and we read that "Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon." (1 Kings 4:25) It was a peaceful reign and the time had come to build the temple of the Lord.

When David built himself a house, who helped him, sending him cedar trees and carpenters and masons? (2 Sam. 5:11) Hiram king of Tyre helped him, and it was perhaps the same Hiram who also helped Solomon in the same way.

Have you found Tyre or the map, and the sister city of Sidon? The Phoenicians who lived in these cities were famous sailors and skilled workers. The noble cedars of Lebanon grew in their mountains. Do you find Mount Lebanon standing not far back from the sea? They were fine evergreen trees reaching out their branches in floors one above another. "Fir wood" is also mentioned, and probably means cypress, a tall spire-like tree with wonderfully enduring wood, and perhaps the term includes other evergreen trees. Look in 2 Chron. 2:16 and tell me how the timber cut in Mount Lebanon was carried to Jerusalem.

Many workers were employed in building the temple. Hiram sent workers to Solomon, and Solomon gave in payment a supply of wheat and oil. Also Solomon himself raised a levy of workers from the tribes of Israel, who came in turn for one month's work and then were two months at home while others took their turn. And there were many more workers from the native people of the land. Stones were also weeded for the building. These were quarried near by. We can see large quarries at Jerusalem today, extending far under the city itself. Notice what is said about the cutting of these stones. (1 Kings 5:18; 6:7) You will see that it must have taken time to build the temple. Read 1 Kings 6:1, 38, and learn how long it was in building.

Now we must learn about the temple itself, and first, the place where it stood. It was on the hill Moriah. You find this hill on your map of Jerusalem, between the Kidron valley on the east and the Tyropoeon on the west. The hill had a rocky top which you can still see if you go into the mosque which now stands there. Here had been a threshing floor which David bought as a place to offer sacrifice (2 Sam. 24:15-25; 1 Chron. 3:1); and it was probably here long before that Abraham prepared to offer Isaac. (Gen. 22)

The top of the hill is not large, and it was probably at this time made larger by building up great walls from the hillside below, and filling in with earth and stonework. In this way space was gained for the court about the temple. The plan of the building was the same as the plan of the tabernacle. Do you remember the plan of the tabernacle? Can you sketch it for me; the most holy place, the holy place, and the court about it? The temple had the same three parts, but the dimensions were double those of the tabernacle. The most holy place was twenty cubits square instead of ten. The holy place was forty by twenty cubits. Even so you see that the building was not large, but it was rich and beautiful. Before the door, which was to the east, as in the tabernacle, was a porch across the front of the building. So much for the general plan.

We have seen how timber and stone were gathered for the work. We must learn how the different materials were used. The walls of the temple were of stone. They were sheathed inside with cedar and carved with cherubim and palm trees and open flowers. The partition between the two chambers was of cedar with chains of gold. The floor was made of "fir," probably cypress. The walls and floors of both chambers were overlaid with gold. The doors between the chambers were of olive wood; the outer doors of "fir," carved like the walls and overlaid with gold. If we rightly understand the description, outside the temple on the two sides and the back were little chambers in three stories, one above another, the timbers of the chamber floors and roof resting on ledges in the wall of the temple.

Look now inside and tell me what sacred furniture belongs in each part of the building. Here in the inmost chamber is the place for the ark, and two large cherubim of olive wood overlaid with gold stretch out their wings touching the walls on either side and meeting above the place of the ark. What pieces of furniture belong in the outer chamber, the holy place? New furniture was made for the temple besides that which had been in the tabernacle. And what belongs in the court? Here there were a large brazen altar, and in place of the small laver of the tabernacle, a brazen sea resting on twelve brazen oxen. At the porch were two beautiful brazen pillars.

So everything was finished even to the golden hinges of the doors. In another lesson we shall learn how the people came together to the dedication of the temple.

1. Who built the temple? By what plan was it built?
2. What materials were used? Who helped to furnish them?
3. What formed the walls of the temple without? What covered them within?
4. What were the three divisions of the temple? What furniture belonged to each?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Some member of the class must draw for us on the blackboard the plan of the temple, which is in general the same as the plan of the tabernacle. It will be well to keep this before us as we study the meaning of the sacred building and its three departments. In general, what is the meaning of the temple? You may truly say that it was the Lord's dwelling-place with the people of Israel, and that it represents every dwelling-place of the Lord. It represents heaven. It represents a person of heavenly character in whom the Lord can dwell; and in the highest sense it represents the Lord's Divine Humanity. Speaking of Himself, the Lord said, "In this place is one greater than the temple." (Matt. 12:6) Again, He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up, and he spake of the temple of his body." (John 2:19, 21) Again in the Revelation we read of the Holy City: "I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." (Rev. 21:22) We might have said nearly the same of the meaning of the tabernacle. And yet there is a difference between the two. The tabernacle with its wooden walls and its curtains has a somewhat tenderer meaning than the temple with its walls of stone. It represents a more tender and loving character and the Lord's presence in His Divine love, while the temple represents a more intellectual character and the Lord's presence in His wisdom. (R. 585)

Now with the plan of the temple still before us, let someone point out the meaning of the three departments of the building: the most holy place, the holy place, and the court. If we regard the temple as a type of heaven, we have here a suggestion of the highest heaven, the middle heaven, and the lowest heaven. You find the three heavens described in H. 29-40. Regarding the temple as a type of an individual person, the most holy chamber is the inmost loving consciousness of the Lord; the holy chamber with its lamp is the region of intelligent thought and worship; the open court is the outward life with its duties of repentance and consecrated usefulness - the laver and the altar.

We ought also to make a little study of the materials used in the building of the temple, most important among them the stone, the cedar timber, and the gold, or in the court, brass in place of gold. What do the stones represent in the temple of character? They are the sure facts of knowledge on which character rests. The timber of cedar and other trees? It represents the intelligent understanding and principles of life, which are also needed in the formation of a heavenly character. The cedars of Lebanon in particular, with their successive floors of foliage, represent the understanding of the relation of higher and lower things, spiritual and natural, Divine and human. The gold which lined the walls and floors of the temple? It represents the heavenly love which is within every deed and every thought of a heavenly life. As the stone supported the wood and the wood the gold which was pressed upon its carving, so facts of knowledge are the basis of intelligence, and intelligence gives form to love.

Thinking of the stones used in the building of the temple, what is the meaning of the fact that no tool of iron was heard upon the stone as the building grew? Compare the command in regard to stones used in the building of an altar. (Exod. 20:25) Both passages mean that we must take the Lord's truths as they are, and must not try to fashion them to suit ourselves. (A. 8941)

What is represented by Hiram's league with Solomon, and his help in building the temple? The Phoenicians as friendly neighbors of Israel represent some natural faculty serving the spiritual life. In particular, these sailors represent the faculty of exploring all realms of natural knowledge to gather in what may be useful in the building of heavenly character. (A. 2967; E. 514)

## Lesson 52

### 1 Kings 8: Dedication of the Temple

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Solomon and the people of Israel were gathered in the court of the temple at Jerusalem. The temple had been building for seven years, and now all was finished - the walls of stone sheathed inside with cedar wood and lined with gold, the court with the brazen sea, and the great brazen altar. They had come to dedicate the temple, to set it apart as sacred to the Lord, to ask His blessing upon it, and on all who turned toward the Lord and the temple in their worship.

First of all they must bring in the ark and put it in its place. They took it from the tent on Mount Zion where it had been put by David, and other holy things of the tabernacle. The priests carried the ark by its staves upon their shoulders, and Solomon and the people offered sacrifices before it. So they passed in through the court and through the holy chamber to the holy place. There they set down the ark under the wings of the great cherubim. You know what was in the ark, the tables of the Ten Commandments. When it was put in its place the cloud of the Lord's glory filled the temple. It was a sign that the Lord was there and that the place was holy.

Then Solomon standing and kneeling by the altar before the temple with his hands spread forth toward heaven (verses 22, 54), gave thanks and prayed to the Lord. He thanked the Lord for himself and all the people, that He had helped them to build the temple; and he prayed that the Lord's presence and power might be felt there by all who looked to Him for help. Those who lived near the temple would come into the court and pray; others in their homes would turn their faces toward the temple; and even when they were captives far away in Babylon, we read that Daniel, his windows being open toward Jerusalem, kneeled in prayer three times a day. (Dan. 6:10) So Mohammedans today bow in prayer toward their holy city Mecca. Solomon prayed for people in many kinds of trouble, that their prayers might be heard and answered. When he had finished, the king arose from his knees and blessed all the people with a loud voice, and charged them to be faithful and obey the Lord.

Many sacrifices were offered that day, oxen and sheep, so many that they could not all be offered on the altar, and the king hallowed the middle of the court for the offering. The king and the people held a feast for fourteen days and they "went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had done."

## **Junior**

The beautiful temple was finished. Where did it stand? From the court one could look eastward to the Mount of Olives, and southward down the Kidron valley, and westward over the buildings of Jerusalem. Can you see the temple in your mind, so that you can tell me about it - its materials, its plan? How long had it been building? It was now about to be dedicated "at the feast in the month Ethanim which is the seventh month." The seventh month was in the autumn. Do you know what feast was kept at that harvest thanksgiving season? The Feast of Tabernacles which you can read about in Lev. 23:33-44. The feast is mentioned also in the Gospels. (John 7) It was a joyful thanksgiving feast and was a fitting time for the dedication of the temple.

The most important thing to be brought into the temple was the ark. From where must they bring the ark? How must they carry it? Where was its place in the temple? Do you understand about the cherubim mentioned in verse 6? See 1 Kings 6:23-28. The staves were never to be taken out of the rings of the ark (Exod. 25:15), but they were drawn so far out that the ends of the staves could be seen from the holy place, but not from outside the temple building. And what was in the ark? Comparing verse 9 with Hebrews 9:4 and Exod. 16:34 and Num. 17:10, we may believe that the pot of manna and Aaron's rod were near the ark rather than in it. Other sacred furniture was brought in besides the ark (verse 4), and perhaps what remained of the sacred tabernacle itself was folded up and laid away for safe keeping in the temple.

And now that the ark was in its place the cloud filled the temple, and in the next verse it is added, "The glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord." Read again what was said of the glory that filled the tabernacle when it was finished. (Exod. 40:33-34)

There is a wonderful dignity and beauty in Solomon's prayer, hardly equaled by anything in the English language, or perhaps in any language. We realize as we read it that these are words that the Lord gave Solomon to say. The heaven and heaven of heavens could not contain the Lord, much less this little building, but he prayed that the Lord's eyes might be always open toward the temple, and that He would hear and answer all prayers which the people should make toward that holy place. It does not matter now what way we turn our bodies, but it does matter how our love and thought are turned; they must be turned toward the Lord, and if they are turned to Him, every earnest prayer is heard by Him and brings His blessing. As we read the several clauses of Solomon's prayer describing people in different kinds of trouble, we think at the same time that they are describing us in various troubles that we may be in, in which we need the Lord's help.

First, Solomon prays for one who is accused of doing wrong to a neighbor, that the Lord will judge and show who is guilty and who is not (verses 31, 32); then for those who are smitten down by an enemy because they have sinned (verses 33, 34); for those who ask the Lord's help in time of drought, when all the earth is dried up because there is no rain (35, 36); for those who pray in time of famine or sickness (37, 40); he asks also that the prayers of strangers should be heard (41-43); and his petition is especially tender for those who are taken captive, and in a distant country turn with longing toward their dear land and the holy city and the temple (44-53).

We read at the end of the chapter of the thousands of sacrifices offered, more than could be offered on the altar, and of the feast held by the king and the people. The Feast of Tabernacles usually lasted for a week. The feasting was extended to two weeks on this joyful occasion of dedicating the temple.

1. The temple was finished: where did it stand? How long had it been building? Who had built it?
2. What filled the temple when the ark was carried to its place? What was done with the staves by which the ark was carried?
3. For what did Solomon thank the Lord? What did he ask of the Lord in his prayer?
4. To whom must we turn in our prayer, as the Jews turned toward the temple?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

What does the temple represent in our life? In the Lord's life? It is a type of a heavenly character and of the Lord's Divine Humanity. (E. 220; R. 191; T. 221, 301) This thought in regard to the meaning of the temple gives a wonderful interest to the story of its building, and to this account of its completion and dedication. The temple was seven years in building. So the preparation of the Lord's Divine Human temple required a full week of labor, leading to holy Sabbath peace. And what is represented by the glory which filled the tabernacle and temple when they were done, so that the priests could not stand to minister? It is a picture of the Divine presence completely filling and glorifying the Humanity of the Lord, so that nothing of imperfect, finite life could stand in its presence.

It was fitting that the temple should be dedicated at the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month. The three great feasts of the Jewish year represented three stages of regeneration, or of the Lord's glorification. The Passover in the spring represented deliverance from evil. The Feast of First Fruits in the early summer represented the doing of good works from knowledge of what is right. The Feast of Tabernacles in the autumn, when they had gathered in from the wine-press and the threshing-floor (Deut. 16:13), represented a state of full regeneration, and in the Lord, of glorification. (A. 9294, 10671)

Solomon represents the peaceful state which follows conflict and victory. Solomon's words express the gratitude of the Lord's heart that He had been enabled to do His work, and that His saving presence with humanity was forever insured. They suggest the Lord's tender thought for people in every kind of trouble, and His desire that they should turn to Him and accept the help which He now could give.

The Lord's words to the woman of Samaria (John 4:20-24) teach that in the Christian Church it is not necessary to worship in one place or another, or to turn the face toward any natural temple. The Lord Himself in His Divine Humanity, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the temple to which we must turn in spirit and in truth. The picture of the Lord's people near and far worshiping toward the temple was a prophecy of the day of which the apostle writes. "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow . . . and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." (Phil. 2:10-11)

As we read the several clauses of Solomon's prayer, we must think how they describe states of distress in which we may be and in which we need the Lord's help.

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: "The Temple of the Body"

There is a very close connection between the Old Testament and the New, and often the New Testament helps us to understand the Old. This is because in the New Testament the Lord spoke to His disciples and to all people directly with His own mouth, and not, as He did in the Old Testament, through an angel whom He filled with His Spirit.

Now, what do we learn about the temple in the New Testament, that helps us to understand the story of the building and dedicating of the temple of Solomon?

When the Lord Jesus Christ was in the world, He often went to Jerusalem to the temple. It was not the same temple that Solomon had built, although it was on the same spot. Solomon built the temple that we read about in our lesson a thousand years before the Lord came upon the earth. During that long time the Jews became idolators, they neglected the temple, they were conquered by their enemies, the temple was pillaged and burnt, they were carried to Babylon for seventy years, and they came back again and built another temple about five hundred years after the time of Solomon. The temple in which the Lord was seen so often when He was on earth was the third temple. It had been begun by Herod eighteen years before the Lord's birth, and took forty-six years to build.

One day, when He was in the temple, He said to the Jews, in answer to a question, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews thought that He spoke of the temple itself, and expressed their astonishment at what He said, but the Gospel explains that "He spake of the temple of His body."

A temple is the house of God - the house in which He is, and so in the body of Jesus Christ is the Infinite Divinity Itself. The temple therefore represented the Lord's body, or His human nature - the human part of Him, by which God came in touch with people.

The Jews did destroy the temple of His body: they placed a crown of thorns on the head of Jesus, nailed Him to the cross by His hands and His feet, and pierced His side. But three days after that, He raised this temple of His body from the grave. But, though it was the same body, it had become wonderfully changed, so that it was Divine, and could enter into houses where the doors were shut. (John 20:26)

When we read in the Word about the temple - it matters not whether it was the one built by Solomon, or the one built by Herod - let us always remember that it was built to represent the Lord's body - His human nature - which, at first, was merely human, like yours or mine, but which, when He "raised it up," was the Divine Human.

And does every particular in the description of the temple of Solomon represent something holy in the Lord's human nature? Yes; and it would take more than a library of books to explain it all, every bit.

Let us look at a few details.

The temple had four distinct parts. First in importance was the holy of holies, or the most holy room, where the ark was placed, and where were the two cherubim carved out of olive wood. This room was a square, 20 cubits each way.

Next was a larger room, the holy place, where there was an altar of incense, ten lampstands, and ten tables of showbread.

In front of this holy place, and opening on to it by cypress doors, was a porch, called the inner court, where were two columns, called "Jachin" and "Boaz" - something like the obelisks of Egypt only round, and with a capital at the top.

Beyond this again, and surrounding the entire building, was the outer court, where were the altar of brass, a large basin called the "brazen sea," and ten lavers of brass.

This entire temple represented the Lord's body.

Are there four great divisions in the human body that would answer to these four parts of the temple?

Yes. There is 1, the head; 2, the trunk; 3, the upper extremities (the arms and the hands); 4, the lower extremities (the legs and the feet).

The head is like the holy of holies, where the Lord is most immediately present. The trunk is like the holy place. The upper extremities are like the inner court. The lower extremities are like the outer court. When the enemies of the Jews invaded the land, the entire temple was destroyed. So when the Jews crucified the Savior, the crown of thorns hurt His head; the lance went into His body; the nails pierced His hands and His feet: the whole body was attacked and destroyed.

But the body is not the whole of the Lord's human nature. When He clothed Himself with the body, He first clothed Himself with a human mind, and the body clothed this. Then do the four divisions of the body clothe four divisions of the mind? Certainly.

You have heard of "the Grand Man of Heaven," have you not? All the billions upon billions of angels of the heavens taken together appear before the Lord as One wonderful Human.

The angels who are in the head are those in the most genuine, pure, devoted and tender love to the Lord. For this reason they are called heavenly, or "celestial," and they constitute what is called "the celestial kingdom" of heaven.

The angels in the trunk of the Grand Man are those with whom love to the neighbor is very strong, and so also the love of truth; these are called "spiritual," and they constitute "the spiritual kingdom" of heaven.

Now, you know that hands and feet simply obey what the head wants them to do. So the angels who are in the hands and feet are those who love to obey and to do what they learn from the Lord, and so they exercise great power. Those of them who are in the upper extremities are also celestial, but not so interior as are those in the head. Those of them who are in the lower extremities are also spiritual, but external.

We see, then, that in the temple the holy of holies represented the interior of the celestial kingdom; the holy place represented the interior of the spiritual kingdom; the inner court

represented the exterior of the celestial kingdom; and the outer court represented the exterior of the spiritual kingdom. If you wish to know more about all this, see what is said in the work on Heaven and Hell, about the two kingdoms and the three heavens. (H.20-40)

But all these different kinds and degrees of angelic love and life exist in heaven only because they come from the Lord. For every part of heaven receives life from the Lord, as every part of the body receives life from the soul. And so there are degrees and kinds of Divine love and Divine wisdom in the Divinely Human nature of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; but what these degrees and kinds are is too holy and deep a subject for us to understand now. It is enough for the present to know that they are.

When the temple was completed, then the ark was brought in, and the temple was filled with the cloud and glory of the Lord, "so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord."

This represents how the Lord's human was not Divine at first, but it became Divine, as the glory of Divine truth and good, from within or above, from "the Father that dwelt within Him" as His very Soul, came down and made the human nature Divine, and then everything that was merely human - even what was good but finite - could no longer remain, just as the priests could no longer stay in the temple.

You will notice in verses 29, 30, 35, 44, 48 that Solomon speaks of prayers that people would make "toward this place" or "house." And we can now understand why the Jews when praying looked and bowed toward the temple; and why the Psalms speak of "worshiping toward the Lord's holy temple." (Ps. 5:7; 38:2; 28:2) The reason is that it represented the Lord's Divine Human. Therefore, when, at the beginning of our Sunday worship, in church, the Pastor says, "The Lord is in His holy temple," we understand that it means that Jehovah is in His Divine Human.

## **Lesson 53**

### **1 Kings 10: Solomon's Glory**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Solomon's palace was very rich and beautiful. Gold was plentiful in Jerusalem in those days. The dishes on the king's table were of gold. Choice wood was brought from distant countries and ivory and also strange things - apes and peacocks. The fame of Solomon's glory and his wisdom spread to all lands.

The queen of Sheba was one of those who heard of Solomon, and she came to see his glory and to ask him hard questions. She came from the south, from a part of Arabia famous for its gold, and she brought to the king gold and a great abundance of spices. She came with her servants and a caravan of camels. At Jerusalem she saw all the beauty of the king's palace and his servants and the way by which he went up to the house of the Lord. It was far more beautiful than she expected. She asked the king hard questions, and he answered them all. She was overcome with

wonder; the half had not been told her. And she went back to her own country with rich gifts from the king.

How did Solomon get all these beautiful and costly things? He had made ships on the Red Sea where it reaches up toward Palestine on the south, and Hiram, king of Tyre, sent with Solomon's men some of his ship-men who had knowledge of the sea. They brought gold and choice wood and precious stones. There were also large ships called "ships of Tharshish," which came once in three years with choice things. Rulers of other countries brought Solomon presents or tribute year by year - silver and gold, garments and armor, and spices, horses and mules. Solomon's merchants traded also with Egypt. Many horses came from there, some for Solomon and some to be sold to kings farther to the north and east. In all these ways Solomon gathered riches.

We are told of one very beautiful thing which Solomon made, a great throne of ivory and gold. A throne, you know, is a beautiful chair in which a king sits. Solomon's throne was such a chair with arms, and a back that probably was high and arched over the king's head. There were six steps to the throne; and lions standing by the chair, and on each step at either side. In parts the white ivory showed and in parts it was covered by the yellow gold. There was no throne like it in any kingdom. You will remember what we have learned today about the richness of Solomon's palace and his kingdom, and about his beautiful throne, and the visit of the queen of Sheba, when you hear the Lord's words about "Solomon in all his glory."

## **Junior**

A chapter which we have passed over (1 Kings 7) tells us how besides the temple King Solomon built a beautiful palace for himself and "the house of the forest of Lebanon," which was probably so called from its many cedar pillars, and was perhaps an armory adjoining the palace. Hiram, king of Tyre, with his skillful workers, helped Solomon in all his building and also on the sea.

Verses 26-28 of chapter 9 and verses 11 and 22 of chapter 10 tell of the ships which brought Solomon gold and treasure. He made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, at the head of the eastern arm of the Red Sea, and Hiram's sailors sailed in the ships with Solomon's. Look on your map and see where these ships would go, to Arabian ports and perhaps to the coasts of Africa and India. They brought gold from Ophir, which was probably in Arabia, and "almug trees," which were some choice wood, perhaps sandal wood, and precious stones. There was also "a navy of Tharshish," which means large ships such as the Tyrians used in their long voyages to Tharshish in Spain. These large ships sailed far on the southern seas and brought once in three years gold, silver, and ivory, and apes and peacocks to enrich and beautify Solomon's palace and city.

Our chapter tells us also of Solomon's merchants who traded in spices, and of tribute which the king received from governors of the country, and from kings of neighboring countries (verses 15, 25); it tells especially of the trade with Egypt, from which country great numbers of horses were brought. They came in droves. We might say "strings of horses," but the word is wrongly translated "linen yarn." They came to the king's merchants at a wholesale price, and the merchants supplied the kings of the Hittites to the far north and the kings of Syria to the northeast. From all this traffic much money came to Solomon. Notice especially what is said in our chapter about the abundance of gold. It is mentioned several times, especially the shields of beaten gold which the king hung in the house of the forest of Lebanon and the drinking vessels and other vessels of gold.

Verses 18-20 describe a beautiful throne that Solomon made. Read the description carefully. It is called "a great throne of ivory, and overlaid with the best gold." It was a kind of work which the Greeks also made, the gold decorating the white ivory and covering it only in part. The chair of the throne was raised upon six steps. The throne had stays, in Hebrew hands, in English arms. Figures of lions stood at either side by the arms of the throne and upon the steps. "The top of the throne was round behind," apparently arching overhead.

We have learned enough to see how the fame of Solomon's riches and wisdom must have gone abroad, and we know something of the glory which the queen of Sheba saw when she came to visit Solomon. She is called "the queen of the south." (Matt. 12:42) Her country, Sheba, was a part of Arabia, famous for its gold. See Ps. 72:15 and Isa. 60:6. Read how the king answered her hard questions, and of her wonder at all that she saw, and of the presents which she gave to Solomon and which Solomon gave to her when she went back to her home.

1. What things helped to make the kingdom of Solomon glorious?
2. What treasures came in Solomon's ships? What precious thing was most of all abundant?
3. What queen came as a visitor to Solomon? By what name did the Lord call her? Why did she come? What did she bring?
4. Tell me about Solomon's throne.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Much is said about gold in this story of Solomon. Gold represents the purest, the most precious love for the Lord and for one another, such as existed in the Golden Age, and such as is commanded by the Golden Rule. The state of life represented by Solomon and his kingdom is a state that is full of love for the Lord and for His commandments. The stage is passed when right is done as a hard duty or with only intellectual interest. Intelligence in regard to heavenly things might be represented by silver, but love for them by gold. In Solomon's time gold was abundant and silver was nothing accounted of. (A. 5658; E. 70; H. 115)

We have thought of the Tyrians and other neighboring nations who were helpful to Solomon as representing natural states and faculties that are useful to heavenly life. The queen of Sheba represents such a natural faculty; a natural affection for truth. The Lord called her "the queen of the south," and the south is the quarter in heaven associated with intelligence. He made her a type of those of simple heart who listened gladly to His teaching. The queen of Sheba came with camels, and camels represent understanding of a natural, external kind. She brought gifts to Solomon, representing the contributions of the natural mind to heavenly wisdom. The spices in particular represent the graces of gratitude and humility that give an outward sweetness to heavenly life. The hard questions which the queen brought to Solomon suggest the many questions which cannot be answered by the natural understanding, but are made plain by heavenly wisdom. (A. 3048, and about spices 1171, 10199, 10254)

The wonder of the queen of Sheba at the glory and the wisdom of Solomon pictures the wonder of a natural mind as it opens to the glory and wisdom of spiritual life. It suggests the glad wonder which all persons of good heart must feel when they come into the other world and into the glory and blessedness of heaven. Those who know the most about spiritual things in this world will then say, as the queen of Sheba said, "It was a true report that I heard in mine own land. . . . Howbeit I believed not the words until I came and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me." (H. 169, 270, 314)

The throne is plainly an emblem of the king's rule. The yellow gold is an emblem of love in perfect rule; the white ivory is its truth and rightness. Teeth with which we examine our food represent principles of right that we accept as standards by which we test what we are asked to believe. The tusks of the elephant represent such principles strongly developed and used to expose evil and to defend the right. Truth is joined with love in perfect rule, especially in the Lord's Divine rule, which Solomon's throne in its highest sense represents. "Justice [which in the Bible sense means love] and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before Thy face." (Ps. 89:14; 97:2; E. 297) The lions at the sides and on the steps of the throne are plainly emblems of the Lord's Divine power to carry out the purposes of His love and truth. (A. 5313; E. 253)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Solomon's Wisdom

I love to think of the story of young Solomon when, after he had become king, he went to Gibeon, where the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and told him to ask what He should give him. And Solomon did not ask for money, or long life, or honor, or the punishment of his enemies - but asked for a "hearing heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad." A "hearing heart" means a wise and understanding love. And you will remember that the Lord was greatly pleased with Solomon's wish and gave him what he asked for, and in addition to this promised him honor and riches and long life. (1 Kings 3:5-14)

Our present chapter tells us the story of the fulfillment of the Lord's promise. Solomon was so wise that people came from far and near to propose questions and enigmas, or hard sayings, and they also brought him great wealth.

Since Solomon cared more for wisdom than for the wealth, let us do the same, and so let us find out wherein his wisdom consisted. If we turn back to chapter 4:29-34, where his great wisdom is spoken of, we read that "he spoke of trees, from the cedars that are in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that cometh out of the wall; he spoke also of beasts and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. Therefore there came of all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon."

His wisdom then consisted in his being able to tell how these trees grow, the spiritual force that produces them, and therefore the spiritual correspondence of each object in nature. These were "enigmas" to the people at that time, for they had forgotten most of the science of correspondences.

But does wisdom consist merely in knowing what trees and animals correspond to? Am I wise if I know that the olive tree corresponds to the highest and best of all loves, the love of heavenly

goodness; that the grapevine corresponds to the next highest love, the love of heavenly truth; and that the fig tree corresponds to the love of doing and saying good things? This is part of wisdom. But I am not fully wise until I cultivate these loves in myself. Solomon, remember, was given "a wise and understanding heart."

Let us understand this rightly. Wisdom consists not so much in knowing how to name plants and animals, and to be able to tell them when one sees them, to know what use to make of them, to know what their organs are, to be interested in the habits of animals, etc. - there are hundreds of books that are published nowadays that do all this, and they are very good and interesting, but they do not impart wisdom.

Wisdom is to be interested in the things of one's soul. There are so many and such beautiful things in the soul, that all things in nature are not enough to picture them forth. All natural objects correspond to spiritual things. To know these things in your soul; to know the different kinds of love you have - the love of the church, the love for your country, the love for your parents, the love for your playmates, the love for your studies, the love for your games, etc. - and the different kinds of thoughts you have about how to show these various loves - to judge of them whether they be good or bad, and to shun the bad, and strengthen the good - all this is to be wise.

And such wisdom makes one happy. For this reason we read in today's lesson that the wisdom of Solomon made the queen of Sheba so happy that she realized the great privilege all those enjoyed who were with Solomon, and she exclaimed, "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, who stand before thee continually, and hear thy wisdom."

In today's grand story we have a picture of heaven. The angels in heaven have all the wealth they can possibly enjoy. Every angel has a beautiful home, most beautifully decorated, and with the handsomest ornaments, and surrounded by a charming garden. The air is sweeter and purer than any you ever breathed in this world, and the sunlight more brilliant. Their dresses are softer, finer and more becoming than dresses can be made on earth. They have all the gold and silver and gems they want. And yet, though they enjoy all this, it is not really what makes them happy. Their wisdom, their loving service of others, this is what makes them happy.

The glory of Solomon, then, consisted primarily in wisdom, his wise and understanding heart; his magnificent houses and great wealth were only secondarily his glory.

## **Lesson 54**

### **1 Kings 11:1-13: Disobedience and Trouble**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

It seems strange that when the people had been so often commanded to worship and obey the Lord, and when they had received such blessings from Him, they should disobey Him and worship idols! And yet it is often the same with us. The children of Israel had been especially commanded that they should not marry with the native people of the land of Canaan, but should keep apart

from them and from their evil worship. (Exod. 34:11-16; Deut. 7:1-5) The Zidonians lived in Zidon, or Sidon, the sister city of Tyre. They worshiped Baal the sun god, and Ashtoreth a goddess connected with the planet Venus. There were many evil things in this worship. The Ammonites, we remember, lived to the east in the country beyond Jordan. Milcom or Molech was their idol, and in this worship children were offered as sacrifices in the fire. (2 Kings 23:10; Jer. 7:31) Moab was the nation close to the Dead Sea on its eastern side. Chemosh was worshiped in Moab and in other neighboring countries.

Solomon disobeyed the Lord and married wives from these nations round about and, as the Lord had said, they turned away his heart. The king built places for the worship of these idols "in the hill that is before Jerusalem," the Mount of Olives. The warning that had been given would come true. (1 Kings 9:1-9) The kingdom would be taken away. Still it would not happen in Solomon's lifetime, but in the days of his son, and it would not be wholly taken away, but one part of the land would remain, the southern part, the tribe of Judah, with Benjamin which was at this time often counted as a part of Judah.

When people are not faithful to the Lord and do not obey Him, He cannot protect them from their enemies. So enemies rose up against Solomon when he was disobedient. One enemy was Hadad the Edomite. Where was Edom? When that country was conquered by David and Joab (2 Sam. 8:14), Hadad, a prince of Edom, had fled and found safety in Egypt. When David and Joab were dead, Hadad returned and began to "do mischief" against Israel, though it seems to have been some years before he seriously disturbed the peace of Solomon's kingdom. Another enemy who sprang up against Solomon was Rezon the Syrian. He had been a servant of Hadadezer, the king of Zobah in the far northwest. When David conquered Zobah and the country of Hadadezer as far as the Euphrates River (2 Sam. 8:3-5), this Rezon found a home in Damascus and grew strong there. These were the enemies who rose up against Solomon outside the land of Israel.

More serious trouble arose at home, in the land of Israel itself and in Jerusalem. Jeroboam was the leader of the rebellion. This man was employed in Solomon's work in Jerusalem, in the building of the fort Millo and other defenses of the city. We have learned that Solomon made a levy of men from all the tribes, to do his building. (1 Kings 5:13-18) Jeroboam was over the men of the house of Joseph, which means especially the tribe of Ephraim, to which probably Jeroboam belonged. (The Revised Version in verse 26, reads Ephraimite instead of Ephrathite.) See Rev. 7:8, where the tribe of Ephraim is called by the name of his father Joseph. Jeroboam was "a mighty man of valor" and "industrious"; but afterward Solomon feared Jeroboam and would have killed him had he not fled to Egypt for safety.

It was because Jeroboam hoped himself to be king, and the hope was strengthened by the words of Ahijah the prophet from Shiloh, and by a sign which Ahijah gave. The prophet said to Jeroboam, "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and I will give ten tribes to thee." And as a sign the prophet rent his robe into twelve pieces and gave ten to Jeroboam. Do you remember a sign like this when Samuel told Saul that the kingdom would be taken from him? (1 Sam. 15:27-28) But the kingdom would not be safe in Jeroboam's hands any more than it was in Solomon's, unless he faithfully obeyed the Lord.

1. On what condition was Solomon to keep his power and glory? In what way did he disobey the Lord?

2. What two enemies rose against him outside of Israel? What enemy rose against him in his own land and city?
3. Who was Jeroboam? What did Ahijah the prophet tell him? What sign did he give him?
4. Why does disobedience to the Lord bring trouble?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The command to the children of Israel not to marry with the native people of the land teaches the duty of those who are trying to lead a heavenly life, to shun the evil and false things which those nations represent. Trouble is sure to come if natural evil pleasure wins the heart, and one turns the Lord's truth from its true meaning, to excuse and justify evil. This is especially represented by the people of Israel marrying strange wives and being led by them away from the worship of the Lord. (E. 141; A. 9193)

When we think of Solomon as a type of the Lord, this that is told of him represents something beautiful and holy in the Lord's life. It means that the Lord loves all people and accepts whatever there is of holiness (700) or of truth (300) in every people or religion, as belonging to His church. (A. 3246; P. 245)

It is said that the Lord stirred up enemies against Solomon. It seemed as if the Lord did this, and it often seems as if He sent punishments. This is not really so. The Lord always is trying to protect us and to do us good. The punishments come from the evil things into which we fall when we turn away from the Lord. He cannot protect us from them when we disobey Him, for His commandments teach the only safe ways. (A. 2768, 6997; P. 251)

Those who have studied the meaning of the nations which were neighbors of Israel will know that Edom here represents what is evil, and Syria what is false; both of which rise up as enemies. Notice also that it is said that the Lord (Jehovah) stirred up the Edomite; and that God stirred up the Syrian. The name Jehovah is used when the will and love are spoken of, and the name God when speaking of truth and understanding. (A. 2001, 3322; E. 559)

Garments represent the forms of thought and speech and conduct which clothe one's life to others. The prophet's garment especially represents the Lord's truth in which He is revealed to us. It is this truth, when we receive and obey it, that makes us kings and enables us to rule our little kingdom in order and strength. This is why on two occasions the rending of the prophet's garment was made a sign of the rending of the kingdom. The Lord's truth is disregarded, disobeyed, and our kingdom cannot stand. (A. 4763; E. 395)

"The book of the acts of Solomon" is mentioned in verse 41. 2 Chron. 9:29 gives the names of some who kept such records.

## **Lesson 55**

### **1 Kings 12: The Kingdom Divided**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

What king do you remember who was king of the people of Israel in the Holy Land? Perhaps you think of Saul who was the first king anointed by the prophet Samuel; or of David who was anointed in Bethlehem, who conquered Goliath and other enemies and brought up the ark to his city Jerusalem; or of Solomon who was king after David, who had wisdom and riches, and built in Jerusalem the beautiful temple of the Lord.

After Solomon, troubles came from outside enemies, for the people forgot the Lord, worshiped other gods, and did evil; and when they did so, enemies always troubled them. There was also trouble among the people themselves which led to the dividing of the kingdom into two, the kingdom of Israel in the north, and the kingdom of Judah in the south.

It came about in this way. Solomon to do all his building and to make Jerusalem beautiful made the people pay large taxes and do much hard work. They were tired of these burdens, especially the people in the northern part of the country who lived far away from Jerusalem. They hoped that Rehoboam, Solomon's son who was to be king after him, would make the burdens lighter. It was a very important day when Rehoboam went to Shechem in the middle of the country to be made king of all the people. The people of the northern tribes asked him to make their burdens lighter. The old men advised him to do so. But Rehoboam listened to the advice of young and unwise men and said that he would make them heavier and the punishments more severe. The people of the northern tribes would not agree to be ruled so; they separated and made a kingdom by themselves, the Kingdom of Israel, and the southern part of the country that stayed with Rehoboam was the Kingdom of Judah. Who would be king of the new Kingdom of Israel? They made Jeroboam king, who had been a leader in Solomon's work, "a mighty man," and "industrious." He had also been told by a prophet that he would some day be king. Rehoboam still lived in Jerusalem, and Jeroboam at first lived in Shechem in the middle of the land.

Jeroboam did another thing. He was afraid if the people of his kingdom went to Jerusalem for the feasts and for worship that they would join again the Kingdom of Judah. To keep them away from Jerusalem, Jeroboam made two calves of gold and set them up for the people to worship, one at Dan, far north at the springs of the Jordan, and one at Bethel, near the southern border of his kingdom, in sight of Jerusalem. This was remembered as Jeroboam's great sin. So the kingdom was divided and became two kingdoms.

##### **Junior**

Saul, David, Solomon. Each name brings to your mind a king who ruled the whole country of Palestine, David making Jerusalem the capital city, and Solomon adding to its strong defense and building the beautiful temple to be the center of worship of all the people. The kingdom was one. It is sad to see evil days coming upon Jerusalem even before Solomon's death, because the people

disobeyed the Lord and worshiped idols that were worshiped by the nations about them; and idols were even brought into Jerusalem by wives whom Solomon married from these nations. (1 Kings 11:1-13) Then nations around began to be enemies, as was always the case when the people were not faithful in worship of the Lord.

There were troubles nearer home, and the one united kingdom was divided into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah. We must find out what brought about this division.

Do you remember Shechem in the middle of the land? After the death of Solomon there was a meeting at Shechem to make Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king. The northern tribes were already holding a little apart from the southern. This was perhaps the reason for Rehoboam's going to meet them at Shechem, instead of their all coming to Jerusalem. They felt that their burdens were too heavy, and asked Rehoboam that he would make their yoke lighter than Solomon had done. (1 Kings 5:13-16; 9:10, 15)

How did Rehoboam answer them? (Verses 4-11) We remember the heavy taxes and labor imposed by Solomon for his building and other work. (1 Kings 5:13-18) A scorpion here means a whip with sharp points which wound like a scorpion. Was Rehoboam's answer wise? It caused the revolt of the northern tribes and the division of the kingdom. They went to their homes leaving only the people of the southern country, Judah (with the little tribe of Benjamin which counted as a part of Judah) to serve Rehoboam. Rehoboam sent to the rebellious people a messenger, "Adoram, who was over the tribute." He is called Adoniram in 1 Kings 4:6. The "tribute" means the labor which the tribes were forced to give. The angry people would be the more angry when they saw this man, and they stoned him. So Rehoboam fled in his chariot to Jerusalem. He prepared to make war, but word came from the Lord that they should not fight with their brethren. The prediction of Ahijah, the prophet of Shiloh, was coming true.

Who was Jeroboam who was made king of the northern kingdom, Israel? We find his name in verses 2 and 3 of our chapter, and we learn more about him if we look back to chapter 11. What had he done when Solomon was king? (1 Kings 11:26-28) Also what had the prophet Ahijah predicted, and what sign had he given which made Jeroboam know that he would be king of some of the tribes? Some verses speak of the tribe of Judah as alone in the southern kingdom, but Benjamin was with it, in which Jerusalem was. (1 Kings 12:23) Chapter 11 also tells us why Jeroboam was in Egypt, till called back to be made king. Where was Shechem which Jeroboam at first made his capital? It was an old city, but Jeroboam strengthened it.

One of the strongest ties to hold the northern tribes and the southern tribes together was their having the same worship, and their going up to the temple at Jerusalem, especially three times each year at the three great feasts: the Passover in the spring, the Feast of First Fruits in the early summer, and the Feast of Tabernacles, the thanksgiving feast, in the autumn. (Deut. 16) If the people went in this way to Jerusalem to worship, it would help to draw the tribes together again as one nation, with Rehoboam as their king. To keep the people of the northern tribes away from Jerusalem and the temple, Jeroboam made idols, two calves of gold, and set them up for the people to worship, one at Dan, far north at the springs of the Jordan, and one at Bethel, on the high hills near the southern border, in sight of Jerusalem. What do these golden calves of Jeroboam remind you of? Compare also the words of Jeroboam with the words in Exod. 32:4. This is often mentioned afterward in the story, as "The sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." And also to keep the northern tribes from going to Jerusalem to the Feast of

Tabernacles, Jeroboam appointed a feast of their own a month later, in the eighth month, and sacrificed to the golden calves.

The land was now divided into two kingdoms. If you draw a line across the map between Jerusalem and Bethel, the part above the line is Israel, Jeroboam's kingdom; and the part below the line is Judah, the kingdom of Rehoboam.

1. What son of Solomon was king after him? What tribe was faithful to him? What was his kingdom called?
2. What was the kingdom called which was formed by the tribes that revolted from Rehoboam? Who was its first king?
3. What did Jeroboam do to keep the people of his kingdom from going to Jerusalem and the temple? Why did he wish to keep them away?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Why this apparent collapse after the peace and glory of Solomon? We have thought of Solomon as representing a heavenly peace in ourselves and Divine peace in the Lord after victories are gained. Why do we come again to rebellion and evil days? In a broad view of the Bible story David and Solomon represent an ideal of heavenly truth and love which after it is seen in its beauty must be slowly worked out through many discouragements. Also when Solomon represents the Lord, the story that follows may be thought of as describing the slow steps by which the Lord's kingdom is established among human beings.

The Land of Canaan is a type of a heavenly mind or character, and the tribes are its several faculties. We recognize two kingdoms of the mind, the will with its affections, and the understanding with its thoughts and outward expressions of life. These kingdoms of the mind are represented by the two kingdoms of Canaan, the will by Judah, and the understanding by Israel. In the perfect heavenly state the two faculties are in harmony and act as one, but in the progress of regeneration they are allowed to act independently and are often in conflict. A separateness of action is needed and is permitted by the Lord so that when the will is naturally evil we can learn what is right and by practice come to love it. (A. 4292, 4750; E. 433; R. 96)

The rebellion of the northern tribes against the burdens of Solomon and Rehoboam can also represent the impatience of the understanding with the requirements of good life; the disposition to be content with knowing what is right and with superficial goodness and forms of worship, without the patient obedience which makes life deep and brings one near in affection to the Lord. The counsel of the old men suggests that the yoke which at first seems heavy will become light as one advances in heavenly life. (Matt. 11:30; H. 359, 533)

Compare these idols of Jeroboam's with the golden calf of Sinai and consider their meaning. There is an Egyptian association with them both. Cattle represent affections for natural comforts and uses, and when made objects of worship they represent supreme regard for these natural things. What can be represented by the gold which goes into the making of these idols? The worship of

the calf at Sinai represented especially the regard of the people for the external forms of worship to the neglect of the heavenly affections of love to the Lord and to one another. We recognize a similar meaning in Jeroboam's idols. (A. 9391; E. 391)

The turning away from heavenly love and deeper heavenly life to mere knowledge and to outward forms of goodness and of worship is further represented by Jeroboam's keeping the people from the temple at Jerusalem, and especially from attendance at the Feast of Tabernacles. This autumn harvest feast, after they had gathered in from the threshing-floor and the wine-press, represented deep union with the Lord in faithful life. The impatient Jeroboam spirit makes light of this deep experience and prefers its superficial life. (Deut. 16:1-17; A. 9286, 9296)

## Lesson 56

### 1 Kings 17: Ahab and Elijah

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Ahab was the king, and Elijah was the Lord's prophet. But Ahab was not king of all the country as Solomon had been. After Solomon's death the Holy Land was divided into two kingdoms. One was Judah, and Jerusalem was its chief city; the other was Israel, and its chief city was Samaria on a beautiful hill a little northwest of Shechem. Can you find the two cities on your map? Samaria was the home of Ahab and his wife Jezebel.

Ahab and Jezebel were not a good king and queen. "Ahab did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him." Jezebel was the daughter of the king of Zidon (you can find that city on the Mediterranean shore), and she did much to lead the people of Israel away from the Lord to worship Baal the sun-god, which was the favorite idol of the people of Zidon.

Elijah was the prophet. He was a man like John the Baptist whom we read of in the Gospels. You may think of him as looking much like John, a stern, brave man, with a coarse hairy mantle, and his own hair uncut and long. He spoke boldly, telling the people how wrong it was to worship idols, and calling them back to the worship of the Lord. You can imagine that Elijah was both feared and hated by the wicked king and queen.

One day Elijah was sent by the Lord to Ahab, to tell him that there would be drought and famine in the land because the people were so evil. For three years and six months there would be no rain. The fields would be dry, grain would not grow, fruit-trees would not bear fruit, the cattle and the people would have little water and little food and there would be great distress. Elijah spoke his message and then hid as the Lord told him to do by the brook Cherith, which was near the Jordan. There is a brook there now running in a deep wild gorge which is often thought of as Elijah's hiding-place. There he drank of the brook, and each morning and evening the ravens brought him bread and flesh. Some think the word means Arabs and not ravens, but in any case they were the Lord's servants caring for the prophet.

When after a time the brook dried up the Lord sent Elijah across the country to a little town called Zarephath on the seashore. Tyre and Zidon were sister cities on the Mediterranean shore. Zarephath was a little town between them. You must read the story, and I will not tell it to you beforehand, how Elijah was met at the city gate, how he was taken care of, and what the Lord gave him power to do for the household who were kind to him. We will read the whole chapter.

## Junior

We must read our chapter twice, first stopping many times to think of things which have been happening between our last story and this, and to find places on the map; and then again to feel the full interest and beauty of the story. We are in the northern kingdom, Israel. Jeroboam has died and several kings who ruled for short times after him. Ahab and Jezebel are now king and queen, and Elijah is the Lord's brave, faithful prophet. Elijah the Tishbite, we read in the first line. It is not surely known where his town was. Some think it was in the tribe of Naphtali. Do you remember where the lot of that tribe was? But he was living beyond Jordan in the land of Gilead. He was sent by the Lord with a message to Ahab.

Ahab's home was in Samaria. In the Gospels, this is the name of a district in the middle of the country, but here it is the name of a city a little northwest of Shechem. It was on a broad-topped hill in the midst of a very fertile region. Omri the father of Ahab had bought the hill and built the city. (1 Kings 16:23-24) There are many ruins there today. Among them are columns that belonged to a colonnade on the brow of the hill, from which was a beautiful outlook.

But why was the king living in Samaria? The king's home was Jerusalem in the days of Solomon. When the kingdom was divided after the days of Solomon, Jerusalem remained the capital of the southern kingdom, and Samaria soon became the capital of the northern.

Before you finish reading the first verse you find that the prophet's message to Ahab was a warning from the Lord that there would be no dew or rain for some years except according to his word. If there were no rain, there would be no harvests; there would be famine in the land. Why was this to happen? It was because the people had turned away from the Lord to the worship of Baal the sun-god. Ahab's wife was Jezebel, a princess of Zidon, where Baal was much worshiped; and she used her power to lead the people of Israel away from the Lord to this idol.

In the broad valley to the north, between the ranges of Lebanon and Hermon, there are ruins of two great temples. In one of these there are three enormous stones, perhaps the largest ever used in building, one about sixty-four feet long and thirteen feet high and wide. A still larger stone, seventy-one feet long, is still lying in the quarry. These were temples of Baal, and the place is called Baalbek. The temples were built long after the days of Ahab and Elijah, but they suggest the power of that worship which had taken so strong a hold upon the nations about Israel, and which so often led the people away from the Lord.

After giving his message of warning to Ahab, Elijah was sent to hide by the brook Cherith. It was some brook near the Jordan. The brook Kelt runs out from the hills of Judea near Jericho, and this has often been looked at as Elijah's hiding-place. It is a very wild, deep gorge, so deep and rough that looking down from above you often cannot see the brook which you hear running in the bottom. There is today a little convent in the gorge built in memory of Elijah and of his hiding by

the brook. This may be the place, but at any rate it was by some lonely brook that the prophet was cared for and protected from the angry king and queen.

Reading on, you learn that the brook dried up. It is no wonder, for the drought lasted long, in all three years and six months, as we learn from the Gospel. (Luke 4:25) Then Elijah was sent to Zarephath. How was he cared for at that place, and what blessings came to those who cared for him there? In the Gospel, Zarephath is called Sarepta, which is the Greek form of the name. You notice also that the name Elijah in the Gospel appears in its Greek form, Elias. Zarephath was a city of Zidon. It was on the shore between Tyre and Zidon, at the point where the beach sweeps farthest outward into the sea. The first hiding-place had been on the eastern border of the land; this was on the western.

We have read far enough to meet all the words which need study to understand, and all the places which you need to look up on the map. Let us read the chapter. It is a beautiful story of the Lord's protection and care for His prophet who boldly spoke His word and did His work, when the king and queen and nearly all the people were against him.

As it had been with Elijah, so it was with the Lord when He lived in this same country and walked over these same paths. He was hated by the rulers of the people because He told them of their sins, but He was loved by those of simple Gentile heart. The people of Nazareth were angry when He told them this, that He would do no mighty works for them, but for people more deserving.

1. Where were Gilead, Cherith, Zidon, and Zarephath? Who was Ahab?
2. Why did drought and famine come upon the land? How long did it last?
3. Where did Elijah stay during the first part of the famine? How was he cared for there?
4. Where did Elijah afterward find a home? What blessings did his presence bring?
5. How is this story referred to in the Gospel of Luke?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The Kingdom of Israel had separated from Judah and abandoned the worship and service of the Lord. When love of the Lord is absent, what other love comes in and takes possession of the heart? The love of self and of evil pleasure, and this is represented by the worship of Baal which gained so strong a hold upon the Kingdom of Israel. It was associated with sun worship. The sun in a good sense is a type of the Lord's Divine love, but in an evil sense it is a type of supreme self-love. We shall think of this again when we read in the next chapter of the choice between the Lord and Baal, and Elijah's words, "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God." (A. 2441; E. 324)

Jezebel, the patron of Baal's worship, is the impersonation of the love of self and of evil pleasure, which compels the kingly power, the reason, to do its will, as Jezebel incited Ahab to evil actions. Jezebel is named in Revelation as the type of the love of self and of evil pleasures. (Rev. 2:20; E. 159)

Gentle and refreshing rain was to the ancient people a picture of truth from the Lord received in a mind that is open toward Him. Dew was to them a picture of such truth perceived very gently in a time of quiet meditation. "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew." (Deut. 32:1-2) "As the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven . . . so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth." (Isa. 55:10-11) The promised land was distinguished from the land of Egypt, as drinking water of the rain of heaven. (Deut. 11:10-11) Why would it now suffer from drought on account of worshiping Baal? The drought came because love of self and of evil pleasures closes the mind toward heaven, to the Lord's instruction, and to all interior perception of truth. A spiritual famine follows when there is none of the Lord's truth in the thought, and as a consequence no good works in the life. (R. 496; E. 644; A. 3579)

Read carefully the passage in Luke 4:25-26 in which the Lord compares His treatment by the people of Nazareth and by others of that day with the treatment of the prophet Elijah in the old time. It was the Lord's truth condemning evil and showing the way of duty which was hated, whether spoken by the prophet or by the Lord Himself. The spirit of self-love and self-indulgence is always angry with the Lord and with His Word which rebukes evil. But there were those who cared for the prophet in the evil days, and there were some who received the Lord and listened to His words. There were repentant publicans and sinners, and there were simple-hearted Gentiles who gladly received and followed Him, especially in the country beyond Jordan when He was rejected in Jerusalem. Such simple Gentile people were represented by those who were kind to the prophet, not in Samaria where Ahab ruled, but on the borders of the land. Simple, ignorant people, but ready to receive the Lord and to serve Him according to their power were represented by the ravens that ministered to Elijah at the Cherith. A spirit very conscious of its need and of its destitution of the bread of heaven is represented by the widow with her very little oil and meal as food for herself and her child. But by putting care for the Lord before care for herself the little was increased and was enough for every need. Where that spirit is there can be no drought or famine for the soul. (A. 866, 4844, 9198)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### **Leading Thought: Ahab and Elijah**

We are in one of the most interesting stories of the Old Testament, and again we find the Old and New Testaments closely connected, for this story is referred to in the New Testament, not only in the Gospels (Luke 4:24-26) but also in the Revelation. Look up Revelation 2:20, in the message to the angel of the Church in Thyatira. The Jezebel there spoken of is the wife of Ahab. She was the wickedest woman in the Old Testament, and her husband, King Ahab of Israel, or Samaria, allowed her to influence him and to do as she pleased.

She and her husband represent the wickedest loves there are - namely, the loves of self and of the world, when these have the dominion. Do you know what that means? You know what it is to be selfish, and what it is to be unselfish. To think of yourself all the time, and not care for others and their pleasure, is not true adulthood. So long as the loves of self and the world are the chief things a person cares about - or, as we may say, so long as they rule or have dominion over him or her - so long as they do as they please with a person, that person cares nothing for the Word of the Lord.

Such people are not interested in it, and would even like to see it put out of the house, out of the schools, and out of the world. (N. 65-83)

Our story tells us about this when it tells that the wicked king and queen who represented these loves hated the prophet Elijah. For Elijah represented the Word of the Lord. Just as Elijah told the people of Israel what the Lord wanted them to know, so the Word of the Lord tells us just what the Lord wants us to know. Elijah therefore represented the Lord's Word, and the teaching or doctrine of the Lord's Divine truth, and the king and queen wished to kill him.

Because of Ahab's wickedness, there was no dew or rain for three years and a half. This lack of water and the resultant famine represent the lack of all really happy spiritual life in the Church when people live only to gratify the loves of self and of the world, and do not care for the Lord's Doctrine.

When people do not care for the Word of the Lord, their souls shrivel and dry up. We cannot see this in the natural world, but if the eyes of your spirit were opened so that you could see the souls or spirits of people, you would find that evil spirits look all wrinkled and dried up, while the good spirits and angels look well-formed and beautiful. They may be compared with the two sets of ears of grain, and the two sets of cows in the dream Pharaoh told Joseph.

Now, no one could have Elijah the prophet live with him because the wicked king and queen were hunting for him everywhere, to have him killed, they hated him so much. But the Lord took care of him as you read in the story.

How wonderful his life at the brook Cherith must have been!

At last, when even this brook dried up, the Lord sent Elijah outside of the land of Israel or Samaria, to a foreign country, to a city called "Zarephath" in Hebrew (or "Sarepta" in Greek), where a widow took care of him. The Lord refers to this in the Gospel of Luke 4:24-26.

We know that every single word in the Holy Word means something. There was a reason why Elijah was sent to a "widow." And what was the reason? A woman is more affectionate than a man. You always find mother a little more loving than father, while on the other hand father is looked up to more for his knowledge, his ideas, his judgment, and his wisdom. A woman therefore stands for good, a man for truth. A woman that has lost her husband by death, that is, a widow, represents a person who loves to be good, but does not know the truth, and yet wishes for it, just as a widow wishes she had her husband. (Her wish is fulfilled after her death when she meets him again in heaven.)

As Elijah represented the Divine truth and the doctrine of Divine truth, he also represented the Lord; therefore, the widow first made a cake, or bread, for him of the little flour and oil she had left; for this act of hers, at a time, too, when she had so little food in the house, represented love to the Lord coming before the love of oneself and one's family.

So you see how beautifully she obeyed the great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord above all things." How different from Ahab and Jezebel was this widow! Yet they ruled Israel, and she was poor and of another country. What a contrast her love of the prophet - greater than her love of self and son - compared with the cruel love of self and the world of Ahab and Jezebel!

When we obey the great commandment, then all is right with us, and the Lord can take care of us just as He took care of the widow and her household, who suffered no want during the rest of the days of the famine. Does not this remind you of the story of Solomon of last week, when we read the Lord's injunction, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you"?

## Lesson 57

### 1 Kings 18: Elijah's Sacrifice

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

When we left the story there was great drought and famine through all the land. It has lasted three years and six months. Who was the king in those days? Ahab was king, and his home was in Samaria. Who was the prophet of the Lord? Elijah was the prophet, and he was in hiding, being cared for by the widow in Zarephath. Why was there this drought and famine?

The Lord spoke to Elijah and told him that there would be rain, and sent him to tell Ahab. Before we read the story, climb with me to the place where the people gathered to Elijah on Mount Carmel.

The mountain is a long, straight ridge, one end reaching out into the sea, making the point that you notice in the coast line of Palestine on your map. The other end of the ridge overlooks the great plain of Esdraelon. This is the point to which I am leading you. Here is a broad lap of ground just under the cliff which makes the point of the mountain. Let us sit here and rest with the cliff behind us, and enjoy the view while we talk about the story and read the chapter. The great plain is spread before us like a green lake. The hills of Galilee make its northern shore, the hills of Samaria its southern, and in the distance, some sixteen or eighteen miles away, are the mountains, Tabor, Little Hermon, and Gilboa. There on the lowest slopes of Gilboa was the city Jezreel.

I have called the plain green, but it is often varied like a checker-board with many colors, patches of red where the ground is newly plowed, and patches of russet and gold where crops are ripening. At the time of our story it was brown and dry with the long drought. Below us, near the foot of the mountain, runs a stream which you know is the Kishon.

Shall we take one look the other way, westward? We must climb the cliff behind us, but as we pass we notice a fine spring on this lap of ground under the cliff. They say the spring is never dry. From the top of the cliff we can look westward across the plain of Sharon to the Mediterranean Sea.

Now we must read the story. As we read of the people coming to Mount Carmel, you think of them gathering on this level lap of ground where we have been resting enjoying the view. As we read of pouring water upon the altar and the sacrifice, you think of the spring near by. When Elijah brought the prophets of Baal to the Kishon and slew them there, you think of the little river at the foot of the mountain and remember the hill by the river's side which is still called "the hill of the

priests." When Elijah went again into the mountain and said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea," you think of the servant climbing the cliff above the spring and looking westward to the Mediterranean. As we read how the heaven was black with clouds and the wind, we can imagine the gathering of the storm and the dark shadows falling across the hills and plain. And when Ahab made ready his chariot and Elijah ran before him to the gates of Jezreel, we see the way they took across the plain. For the hand of the Lord was on Elijah and gave him strength.

## **Junior**

Please read what is written above for the younger children, for the older children too must join the company and sit with us on Mount Carmel to see the place of Elijah's sacrifice, and look out upon the view.

Before we read together there are also a few points for you older children to study. The first verse tells us that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, sending him to Ahab. The third year of what? How long did the drought last? (Luke 4:25) Who was Elijah, and where was he? Who was Ahab, and where did he live?

Verse 12 speaks of the Spirit of the Lord carrying the prophet away. We read of something like this in the story of Philip (Acts 8:39-40) and also in the story of Ezekiel. (Ezek. 3:14-15) At such times, the consciousness of the apostle or prophet was opened to the other world, and he was led by the Spirit of the Lord in this world not noticing where he went. At such times he was led safely and in ways not familiar to him. Also he had no fatigue, although the way was long. Read about this in H. 441.

The fire of the Lord falling and consuming Elijah's offering reminds us of the fire from the Lord that once consumed an offering upon the altar at the tabernacle. (Lev. 9:24) This fire from heaven, like the fire which burned always on the altar, is a picture of the fire of heavenly love which comes to us from the Lord when we make ourselves or any work we do an offering to the Lord. The vain efforts of Baal's prophets to get the answering fire picture the effort to find the fire of happy love by living in selfish ways. Though we toil all day selfishly, and strain and hurt ourselves in the effort, we shall surely be disappointed, for the fire of happy love is only from the Lord.

The question asked by Elijah is one that we may well ask ourselves: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him." It is foolish to live along half serving the Lord and half serving ourselves. "How long halt ye?" Is it not wiser to see that real life is only from the Lord, and to decide once for all to make our offering to Him? Compare Joshua's farewell appeal to the people. (Joshua 24:15) Much of the hardship of serving the Lord is from being undecided and half-hearted. The strong and happy way is to serve the Lord promptly and with our whole heart.

1. How was the trial made to decide whether the Lord or Baal was the true God? Where was it made?
2. Describe the offering by Baal's priests.
3. Describe Elijah's offering.
4. Describe the coming of the rain.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

No pupils are too old today to enjoy with the little children the visit to the place of Elijah's sacrifice and the view from Mount Carmel. And surely all must listen together as this story of the sacrifice is read. The lesson already suggested from the chapter is one which the oldest pupils can take to heart.

In this story of Elijah, and still more in chapters that follow, we find Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, the especial enemy of the prophet. It is worth while to give a little thought to Jezebel and her meaning. Several names which are made familiar to us in the Bible histories are carried over into the Book of Revelation, for the sake of their spiritual meaning. Jezebel is one of these. See Rev. 2:20. What we learn in the history helps us to understand what spiritual qualities and states are meant by the names in the Revelation. A good king represents the Lord's truth ruling in the life. A good queen represents the affection for such truth, and for its many beautiful and useful applications. A bad queen represents the affection for evil pleasures and for false teachings which excuse evil. This is the meaning of Jezebel in our story and in the Book of Revelation. You see why she is the special enemy of Elijah who stands for the Lord's truth. (R. 132; E. 160)

The gathering upon Mount Carmel to decide between the Lord and Baal shows the importance of deciding in our minds this question, whether we will live for the Lord or for ourselves. We, too, must go into a mountain for this decision. We must rise into a higher state of mind from which we can look down upon ourselves and our usual ways of life, seeing them in truer relation and perspective. Mount Carmel was the place of meeting, and there is special meaning in that mountain. Mount Carmel stood in the midst of a region of fruitful fields and vineyards. The name means "fruitfulness" and it is often in the Scriptures associated with fertility. To go into Mount Carmel seems in particular to mean rising into a state of illumination in which it is perceived that worship of the Lord is the source and inspiration of fruitful life. (E. 601, 730)

The test was made by offerings to learn whether the Lord or Baal would send fire; whether service of the Lord or service of self will fill the life with satisfying happy love. In that elevated state we see how vain selfish strivings are. They cry and strain all day and all life long, and in the end are disappointed. Pure service of the Lord receives an answer which selfish striving cannot find - the fire of contented, happy love. "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God." (E. 504)

With good love comes also the perception of truth in regard to the good and fruitful ways of life. This is the abundant rain. When selfishness rules, the heaven is shut up and there is no perception of heavenly truth. When the Lord is chosen and His service, the windows of heaven are opened. Now we can make a clean sweep of the old excuses which have encouraged and shielded us in wrong doing. "Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape." The Lord's truth now leads; and this was pictured when the hand of the Lord came upon Elijah, and he ran before the chariot of Ahab. For once the king found his true place, following the guidance of the prophet. So he came to the entrance of Jezreel. In one place, and perhaps the only place, in the doctrines where Jezreel is spiritually explained, it is said to mean a new church. (A. 3580) Perhaps here it may stand for a new state of faith and life upon which we enter when the Lord's truth leads in all its power, and we obediently follow.

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Baal and Jehovah

In our last chapter, we learned that Ahab and Jezebel represented the two leading evils in the world and in hell. What are they? We shall need to pay very good attention to understand what comes next.

Remember what we learned in our last lesson about husband and wife. We learned that the husband represents wisdom or truth, and the wife love or good. Let us apply this to Ahab and Jezebel.

"Oh!" you exclaim, "we cannot, for they were not good and true, they were evil and false!"

That is so! Know, then, that evil is good changed into the opposite, and falsity is truth twisted into the opposite. Did you ever stop to think that when you like a thing, you say, "That's good"? Wicked people like evil and therefore they call evil good. Evil gives them pleasure. If it did not give them pleasure they would not do it. But the day comes when this pleasure is turned into suffering. Just as the pleasure of eating too much is turned into pain; as the pleasure of drinking too much strong drink is turned into headache and worse. As a woman represents good, therefore a wicked woman represents evil pleasure or delight. Jezebel in particular stands for the pleasure one feels in loving self above all others, and more than use. Ahab stands for the evil and false thoughts which a person indulges to favor evil pleasures.

And Baal: what of him?

Baal was the name of a man who once lived and who had such power that people began to worship him and the statues that were made of him. After his death, people continued to worship his statues, which were called "Baalim," which is the Hebrew plural of "Baal."

The idol Baal whom Jezebel had worshiped in her native country of Zidon, and whom she persuaded Ahab to worship and to whom they built a temple, also represents something connected with the loves of self and the world, namely, worship. You see, what people love above all else, they imagine to be the greatest thing there is, and they worship it. But in any church, or in any person, in which love of self or the world - or, let us put it a little differently, where reputation, selfish ambition, the pleasures of the world, the love of money - are worshiped; where people admire people who gain much money, even if it be by unfair and unlawful means - in that place there is no worship of the love that prevails in heaven, there is no worship of the Lord, no unselfish love of the neighbor. And so we read the story that the altar of Jehovah was broken down, but that there were many altars to Baal in Israel.

The Lord lets people do wrong if they want to, but He warns them over and over again how wrong it is, and that they must give it up. But if they continue, at last comes a day of reckoning. If this day does not come before death it is absolutely certain to come after death, when they enter the other world; for then they are judged. Entire churches have been judged when the Lord came into the world. The Jewish church was judged when the Lord was on earth; the Christian church was judged in the year 1757 when the Lord made His Second Coming. The Lord let the famine in Samaria go on for three years and six months, for these numbers mean from beginning to end.

Then the Lord through the prophet Elijah called the land to judgment by destroying the prophets of Baal, as you read in the chapter.

An altar was the principal representative of worship in ancient times, that is, the altar itself was not worship, but it represented worship; it represented that good and holy state in people when, from their great love of the Lord, they pray to Him, thanking Him for all that He has done and constantly does, and singing to Him from a full heart, and opening their hearts and minds wide to let in all the beautiful sunshine of Divine love and truth that the Lord wants to give them. But we can get into this holy state of goodness represented by the altar, only when we know and live according to the truths which the Lord teaches in His Word. And now mark how beautifully this was represented in the restoration of the altar of Jehovah by Elijah.

He built the altar of stone. We know that stone means truth. But he took twelve stones - one for each of the tribes of Israel. The twelve tribes represented all the truths of the Church. So that the altar so built represented that in our worship of the Lord we must conform with all the truths that we have learned from the Lord. It is not enough when one does not steal, and yet tells lies. It is not enough to be pure and honest in deed, and yet to covet what belongs to the neighbor. It is not enough to keep all the commandments in the second table of the Decalogue, and yet never go to church and never read the Word from one end of the year to the other. We must keep all the commandments: there were twelve stones that made up the altar of Jehovah built by Elijah.

And what of the "burnt-sacrifice" on this altar of twelve stones?

There were different kinds of sacrifices. In some, parts of the animal were eaten by the worshipers and parts burnt, but in burnt-offerings the whole animal was burnt. Now fire means love, as you all know, and so the burnt-offering was burnt to indicate that the affection represented by the animal (innocence by a lamb, etc.) was offered up from the heart. In this case the fire came down from heaven, to show that such a worship is accepted by the Lord, and to show still further that the fire of a truly Christian worshiper's heart comes from the Lord. No such heavenly or Divine fire reaches the heart of those who love themselves and the world, for evil loves do not and cannot come from the Lord or from heaven, and so no fire fell on the sacrifice prepared by the prophets of Baal. All these prophets were then slain to represent the judgment upon such people, in the other life, that they pass to hell, where there is no lovely life, no real life, as in heaven, but only misery which is like being dead - dead to all the beautiful and happy things of heaven.

## **Lesson 58**

### **1 Kings 18: Elijah at Horeb**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Elijah was discouraged. He had done bravely all that the Lord had told him to do at Mount Carmel. Jezebel was the more angry with Elijah. Who was Jezebel? Then Elijah fled for his life, far away to the southern part of the country and out into the wilderness. There he sank down discouraged

under a "juniper tree." It was hardly a tree, but a desert shrub which grows sometimes ten or twelve feet high. It has delicate pea-like flowers, pink and white in color, which come out before the leaves. When a whole hillside is covered with the shrub in blossom it is said to be as beautiful as the loveliest apple orchard. The shrub under which Elijah rested seems to have been growing by itself, as it often does in the desert.

The Lord who had cared for Elijah and fed him at the Cherith and at Zarephath cared for him now. An angel touched him as he slept, and showed him a cruse of water and a cake baked on the coals. Twice he ate and drank. He was refreshed, "and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God."

Horeb: have we heard that name before? It is another name for Mount Sinai, or for the group of mountains of which Mount Sinai is one. These are the mountains to which Moses came when he was keeping the sheep, where he saw the burning bush and the Lord sent him to Pharaoh. They are the same mountains to which the children of Israel came in their journey, when they camped before the mountain and heard the Ten Commandments spoken by the Lord. Going to Horeb was like going where the Lord was, for encouragement and help. And he found encouragement, as you will see.

Now Elijah went back from Horeb to the land of Israel. He was strong again, not weak and discouraged any more. His way was up the Jordan valley toward Damascus, and on the way he met and called Elisha who was to be his servant and the prophet after him. It was in a meadow by the Jordan. Twelve plows drawn by yokes of oxen were making as many furrows across the field, one following a little behind the other. They were rude plows such as the people in that country use today, which only scratch the ground with a sharp point. They were driven by Elisha's servants and the last one by himself. Elijah left the path and crossed over to Elisha and cast his mantle upon him. We heard of his mantle at Horeb when he wrapped his face in it and stood in the entrance of the cave, and we shall hear of it again in our next lesson. We think of a rough, hairy mantle such as prophets wore (Zech. 13:4), perhaps of camel's hair like John the Baptist's. (2 Kings 1:8; Matt. 3:4) It meant that Elisha was to be Elijah's servant and to be the prophet after him. He asked first to go home and say good-by, but the Lord had called him and he must come at once. So he made a feast (which was perhaps also a sacrifice) hastily in the field, and went after Elijah and helped him. (2 Kings 3:11) Now we will read the story.

## **Junior**

If you will look over the chapter with me, I will point out a number of things for a little study, so that when we read the story we shall understand it and need not be interrupted. Verse 1. Who were Ahab and Jezebel, and what did Ahab tell Jezebel that Elijah had done?

Verses 3, 4. Can you show me Beer-sheba on the map? Keeping on to the south from Beer-sheba Elijah came into the wilderness. It was almost a desert, with a few desert shrubs and plants and little water. Notice what I have said to the little children about the "juniper tree." It was a desert shrub called by the Arabs roetem, very beautiful when in flower. The Arabs burn the roots for charcoal.

"Coals of juniper" you read in Ps. 120:4; and it would seem that in times of great need the roots were eaten. "Juniper roots for their meat." (Job 30:4)

Does this scene in the desert and the shrub remind you of another story that we learned, about Hagar and Ishmael? You may like to turn back to Gen. 21:1-21, and compare the two stories. Both are stories of discouragement. In both there are the desert and the shrub, and the angel who gave refreshment and new courage.

We follow Elijah to Horeb, the stern rocky mountain of Sinai. It takes us back to the time when Moses keeping the sheep of the priest of Midian came to Horeb, and the Lord spoke to him from the burning bush. (Exod. 3:1-6) We remember too when all the people on their way from Egypt stood before the cliff of Sinai and heard the Ten Commandments. (Exod. 19:10-25) Horeb was "the mount of God." To go to Horeb in a time of discouragement was to go to the Lord for comfort and strength. Among the rocks at the top of the cliff of Sinai was the cave in which Elijah found shelter. And he found the comfort and the strength that he needed. He felt the Lord's nearness, not in the wind and the earthquake and the fire, but in the still small voice. He was again the Lord's brave prophet as he went back to his work.

Verse 20. Elisha's request to kiss his father and mother reminds us of the words of one whom the Lord called to follow Him: "Lord, I will follow Thee, but let me first go bid them farewell, which are home at my house." And you remember the Lord's answer. (Luke 9:61-62) Elijah's answer shows displeasure (A. 5895), and it means that when the Lord says something is right we ought not to linger or delay for anything. "Go back again; for what have I done to thee?" as if he said: "Stay in your old home, if you are not ready to leave everything for the Lord."

1. Why did Elijah flee after the sacrifice on Mount Carmel? Who sought to kill him? Where did he go?
2. What other name do you know for Horeb? What had happened there?
3. What were Elijah's feelings as he journeyed into the wilderness? How was he strengthened for the journey?
4. Why was Elijah encouraged and stronger when he came again from Horeb?
5. On whom did he cast his mantle? What did this mean?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

If we take some particulars of this story for deeper study, it must be to make more full the grand lesson of the chapter - finding strength in the quiet remembrance of the Lord, when all outside is threatening and discouraging. We recognize the wilderness in this story of Elijah as in the stories of Hagar and of Moses as in keeping with states of trial. We find again the expression "forty days and forty nights." What other associations have we with this phrase and with the number forty? (A. 730)

Let someone make a little study of the shrub under which Elijah sat in his discouragement. Trees and plants correspond to intelligence of many kinds. Some kinds of intelligence, of thought and understanding, like some trees, are strong and fruitful; other kinds are meager. Sitting or dwelling under a tree suggests taking spiritual rest or comfort in truth which is rooted and growing in the

mind. The kind of truth in which one finds delight and rest is suggested by the kind of tree under which he sits or dwells. The oaks under which Abraham camped at Shechem and at Hebron (Gen. 12:6; 13:18, Revised Version) represent strong, sturdy thoughts of right and justice. The palm under which Deborah dwelt (Judges 4:5) stands for intelligence of another kind, intelligence in regard to the Lord's power to save. Dwelling under the vine and fig tree in the days of Solomon (1 Kings 4:25) pictures a state of rest and delight in principles of spiritual and natural charity. So the fig tree under which Nathaniel was sitting when he was called to follow the Lord. (John 1:48) In the story of Jonah we read of a gourd under which he found shelter, which was destroyed to his grief. (Jonah 4:5-10) In that case the gourd represented not true and heavenly principles, but the selfish, exclusive thoughts of Jonah and his people in which they took selfish pleasure. (E. 401) What sort of thoughts, of understanding of truth, can the desert shrub represent, under which Elijah sat in his discouragement? It represents a very meager perception of what is true, so little as to amount to almost nothing. Compare this passage in the story of Elijah with the story of Hagar and Ishmael. (Gen. 21:14-21) They were cast out into this same wilderness of Beer-sheba, and there Hagar cast the child under one of the shrubs, and presently an angel comforted her and showed her a well of water. This story is fully explained in the Arcana, and it is there said that the shrub or bush denotes perception so little as to be scarce anything, and that to be cast under one of the shrubs is to be desolated as to truth and good even to desperation. This seems to be the meaning also of the similar passage in the story of Elijah. (A. 2682)

Remembering the associations of Horeb, and noticing that it is here called "the mount of God," we see that Elijah's journey to Horeb represents an earnest effort in a time of discouragement to come nearer to the Lord that we may feel His power. That it was little which the prophet could perceive is suggested by his dwelling at Horeb in a cave, which represents a dark and restricted state, also by wrapping his face in his mantle as he listened to the Lord's words. (A. 2463, 6829)

The wind, the earthquake, the fire, and the still small voice. When we are in careless and evil states violent things in nature and in our own experience may be useful in awakening us to remember the Lord and our duty to Him. But the gentle things in nature teach us truer lessons of His presence and His power. The moving of the stars so steadily on their way; the springing of the little plants and the opening of the flowers through all the fields and woods; the awakening of the whole earth in spring after the sleep of winter; the healing of the scars which floods and fire and other violence make upon the face of nature - these gentle things, like the still small voice, remind us that the Lord is near and are tokens of His power. The smoke and fire, the quaking of the mountain and the trumpet voice growing louder and louder, were all representative of the seeming harshness of the Lord's commands and of His providence to those who are in low and evil states, while always inwardly it is only love and speaks with a still small voice. (A. 8823)

There were seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed unto Baal. Elijah was not so entirely alone as he had thought: We may always have this encouragement, that there are other people trying to serve the Lord. Heaven is on our side if we are trying to do right. There may seem to be few who are with us, but there are seven thousand, for the number means all heavenly influences which are working with the Lord.

Elijah and Elisha are both types of the Lord, both prophets spoke His word, both are referred to by the Lord in Luke 4:24-27 as types of Himself. The story seems to present Elijah as the sterner man, and Elisha as of gentler character. Elijah who slew the prophets of Baal and who is so often

mentioned as of the same spirit as John the Baptist, seems especially to represent the power of the letter of the Word to condemn evil. Elisha, the gentler prophet who was called after Elijah had heard the still small voice at Horeb, seems to represent the same Word with the appearance of harshness softened by a perception of the Divine spirit of love within it. We shall think of the relation of the two prophets again in our next lesson. (E. 430)

Let someone of the class compare Elijah's rebuke to Elisha when he wished to kiss his father and mother farewell with the Lord's words in Luke 9:61-62, and Matt. 8:21-22, and tell us what is meant by the father and mother who are to be left without a farewell kiss. (A.5895)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Comforting Angels

You have often heard that angels are sent by the Lord to care for us. The Psalm tells us that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." (Ps. 34:7) Trusting the Lord's care for us, we pray to Him when we go to sleep that He may send His angels to guard us during the night. In the Old and in the New Testaments there are stories about angels sent to those who are in distress. Remember that when the Lord had been tempted by the devil, angels came and ministered unto Him. (Matt. 4:11) When, later, He prayed in an agony, just before His crucifixion, there was seen an angel who comforted Him. (Luke 22:43) In the Old Testament we read that when Hagar had been driven into the wilderness with her son Ishmael and he was dying of thirst, an angel appeared comforting her and showing her a well. (Gen. 21:17-19) An angel came to Gideon when he was in great distress because the enemies of his country oppressed the people, and the angel comforted him telling him what to do. (Judges 6) I cannot here refer to all the stories, but I must not omit the angel who greatly comforted Moses, after he had fled from Egypt, because he was afraid for his life. It was on Mount Horeb, "the mountain of God," that the angel appeared to him out of the burning bush, bringing comfort by telling him that his brethren, the Israelites, should be delivered from slavery, and that he himself was to return to them and lead them out. (Exod. 3) We are reminded of this story by what is told of Elijah in today's chapter - about the angel meeting him, when he was in great distress and fled for his life to the mountain of God, because he had done what was right. And in both cases the Lord Himself manifested Himself through an angel.

Though people get into trouble when they stand up for what is right and oppose what is wrong, they are always helped by the Lord, either directly, or indirectly through, angels. Yet when they have won a victory, their troubles do not come to an end at once.

When people feel distressed and anxious because a good cause for which they are fighting seems in danger of being destroyed, that is called a temptation. A spiritual temptation takes place when the cause for which we fight is spiritual. That is, when we fight for the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ against those who laugh at it or bluntly argue against it, and deny and lead people away from the worship of the Lord; or when we fight for the Divinity of the Word; or for the Second Coming of the Lord; or for honesty in business as being the way to show our love to the neighbor; or when we feel within ourselves that we are inclining to do what the Lord has forbidden, and we are afraid that we may not be able to succeed in fighting the evil down, and yet try with all our might; in all such conflicts, especially if they last a long while, we get to feeling discouraged and in

despair, like Elijah. But when the worst discouragement and despair come, as with Elijah when he wished he were dead, then we are strengthened by the Lord, we are fed with heavenly food, with love and truth by the Lord's ministering angels, as Elijah was fed with bread and water by the angel in the wilderness.

Such spiritual warfare or temptation is meant by the number "forty." Therefore it is said that, after Elijah had been fed by the angel, it took him forty days and forty nights to get to the mountain of God. So the Lord fasted forty days and forty nights, during which time He was really fighting with the hells, who are meant by the wild beasts with whom He was. (Mark 1:13) Moses was forty days and forty nights on Mount Sinai at the time the Law was given. (Exod. 24:18) Remember what is said about the forty days in connection with the flood. (Gen. 7:7, 17) How many years were the Israelites wandering in the wilderness, before they came to the land of Canaan? From all these occurrences you can see very clearly that the number forty signifies trial and temptation.

The comfort which the angels give is not always a promise that trouble will cease, but it consists in the strength given us to go on with our warfare, with our temptations. So was Elijah helped to continue the journey. When at last he arrived at the mountain, he was not then at once out of trouble and doubt and darkness. This is shown by the fact that he went into a cave. A cave is a dark place to live in, and so represents the darkness in which we are during temptation. But he learned there that the Lord comes to people through trouble. For the destructive storm, the earthquake, and the fire represent the troubles through which we must pass. The Lord does not bring them on, but if we pass through them safely, then comes quiet and peace and we hear the Lord's gentle and loving voice, as Elijah heard the still small voice. And this voice comforted him by telling how the wicked rulers of Israel would be destroyed and the Lord's Word, represented by Elisha, Elijah's successor, would be established.

## **Lesson 59**

### **1 Kings 20:1-21: The Syrian Invasion**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

There are two names in the Bible story that sound much alike, Syria and Assyria. Syria was a shortening of the longer name, but it came to be applied to a different section of country, so that the two names must not be confused. It may be a help to remember that the longer name belongs to the larger country. The center of the Assyrian kingdom was at Asshur, and afterward at Nineveh, on the Tigris River, and its power reached far to the east and west. The name Syria was given to a smaller district; its great city was Damascus, and its farthest limit was the Euphrates River.

Assyria was a strong kingdom about the time that the Israelites under Joshua entered the land of Canaan; and we shall learn farther on in our story, that it afterward became a still stronger kingdom. (2 Kings 15:19, 29; 17:6) In the time of David and Solomon, and for some years after,

including the time of our lesson, we hear little of Assyria; but we hear often of Syria, the nearer neighbor; and after the separation of Israel and Judah, these three kingdoms Judah, Israel, and Syria were almost always at war among themselves.

The king of Syria in our lesson is Ben-hadad. The name means "son of the god Hadad," and was the title used by several Syrian kings. In verse 34, Ben-hadad speaks to Ahab of "the cities which my father took from thy father." You can read the story in 1 Kings 15:16-20. Ben-hadad lived in Damascus, that most interesting old city to the east of Mount Hermon. You can see the caravans of camels pass out at the gates for their long desert journeys, or come in with their burdens after their weary march. There are in the city most interesting bazaars, streets lined with little shops, where silks and metal ware and all kinds of Oriental goods are sold, or workers are busy at their trades. There is so much that is old and quaint about Damascus that it seems easy to picture the place as it was in Bible days. The city was there in the days of Abraham. And presently we hear of Damascus in the story of Elisha and Naaman the Syrian.

Ahab was king of Israel, and he lived in Samaria, the city which his father Omri had built on the hill to the northwest of Shechem. Now, as we take up our story, we find Samaria surrounded by a great army of Syrians with horses and chariots. Ben-hadad was their leader, and with him thirty-two smaller kings or chieftains. The king of Syria was so strong and proud, that he sent to Ahab to give him all the gold and silver that he had, and even his wives and children. Ahab said that they should be given up. But Ben-hadad sent again and asked more; he said that his men would go through the palace and the houses of the rich people about the king, and take away all that they valued. Consulting with the elders, the king refused. Ben-hadad's reply was a threat that Samaria would be wholly destroyed; the dust of its ruins would not be enough for each one of the Syrian army to take a handful. A prophet of the Lord encouraged Ahab and told him that the Syrian army would be defeated; it would be done by the young men, servants of the princes of the provinces, who were in Samaria. (There were other prophets besides Elijah. We learn presently of a prophet named Micaiah, and also of companies of prophets at Bethel and Jericho.) The young men came out from the city as a small army, at noon, when Ben-hadad and the kings with him were drinking wine and becoming drunken, in the booths of branches which had been put up for their comfort. The prophet's words came true; the Syrians were defeated, and their king escaped on a horse with other horsemen.

1. Who was Ben-hadad? In what country and city did he live?
2. Who was Ahab? What were his country and city?
3. What was happening at Samaria?
4. What messages did Ben-hadad send to Ahab? What answers did he receive?
5. What word did the prophet bring?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

We may wonder that the Lord's prophet should speak good news to Ahab; and that the Lord should give him victory. He was a wicked king, and, we think, did not deserve it. That is true, and still at the same time, because he was the king of Israel, he represented a ruling principle of heavenly life, and even the Lord Himself, the heavenly King. It was because of his office and not from his character as a man, that Ahab could have this meaning, and be given the victory by the Lord. "All the kings of Judah and Israel, of whatever quality they might be, represented the regal function of the Lord; and all the priests, of whatever quality they might be, represented the priestly function of the Lord. Thus the wicked as well as the good were capable of representing the Lord and the celestial and spiritual things of His kingdom. For, as was said and shown above, the representatives were altogether separate from the person." (A. 1025, 1409, 1876)

We must think of the spiritual meaning of Syria. The Holy Land is the type of heaven and of the spiritual life in each one of us. The nations around the Holy Land represent natural, external states and faculties, which may be helpful to the spiritual life, or may be hostile to it. We have thought of Assyria and Syria together, and they are also related in their spiritual meaning. They both represent intellectual powers of a natural and worldly kind, which may be helpful to the spiritual life, or if these become proud and self-confident, work against it. Assyria, the stronger nation, represents the strong power of reasoning, of putting this and that together in their true relations, and drawing just conclusions. It is a noble faculty, but it easily grows self-confident and proud; and then it is dangerous. (Isa. 10:12-13) Syria, where something of ancient wisdom was for a long time preserved, also represents a power of thinking and understanding, but in a natural, worldly way. The Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, which seemed better to Naaman than all the waters of Israel, represent the streams of natural thought, the judging of right by worldly standards rather than by the Lord's teaching and commandments. The horses and chariots of Syria represent the arguments of the natural thought. The drunkenness of Ben-hadad suggests its self-confident pride which leads to foolishness. (A. 1186, 3249)

Syria was fighting with Israel, and by and by Israel was destroyed by Assyria. For the kingdom of Israel represents a true spiritual intelligence, which is open to instruction from the Lord; and the powers of natural thought and reason, when they grow proud and self-trustful are the special enemies of this true intelligence. (A. 4292, 4720)

## **Lesson 60**

### **1 Kings 20:22-43: Prophet and King**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

We were learning about Syria, and its king Ben-hadad. The Syrians were at war with Israel, and their army had besieged Samaria where King Ahab lived. Who encouraged the king of Israel? The

Syrians were driven off. At the same time, the prophet warned Ahab to strengthen himself, for at the return of the year the king of Syria would come against him again. The spring when the bright weather came again after the cold and wet of winter, was "the time when kings go forth to battle" (2 Sam. 11:1); for they depended more on war than on useful work for the enrichment of their kingdoms.

So the next year in the spring the Syrians came again, but this time they did not come to Samaria, nor into the hills. They said that the gods of Israel were gods of the hills, and they hoped that they would not be with them in the plain. The Syrians came across the Jordan from the east and camped in the great meadow of Esdraelon, where so many battles have been fought. The town of Aphek, near which they were, was the same town by which the Philistines camped in their last battle with Saul and Jonathan. (1 Sam. 29:1) It was in the eastern border of the plain near Mount Gilboa.

The army of Israel was gathered together, and pitched near by. They were so few compared with the host of the Syrians that they looked "like two little flocks of kids." But the very fact that they were so few would make them more sure to depend for strength upon the Lord. They waited seven days, and then in a battle the Israelites drove the Syrians before them. They found shelter in Aphek, but a great number were killed by a falling wall.

The Syrians with every sign of submission and humility asked pity for Ben-hadad. Ahab was too easily deceived. He called the Syrian king his brother and received him into his chariot, and they made promises of friendship. A prophet now came to Ahab, and by a sort of parable showed the king what wrong he had done in letting his enemy go. We can often know ourselves more truly and judge of our own conduct when we see the same in other people. Remember Nathan's parable to David, and our Lord's parables. We see nothing clearly in the parable, and then we see that it is the same in ourselves. As you read how Ahab saved Ben-hadad whom he should have destroyed, are you reminded of another story which we learned, of Saul? (1 Sam. 15)

1. Who was Ben-hadad? For what purpose did he come to Samaria? With what result?
2. When the Syrians came again why did they meet the army of Israel in the plain and not among the hills?
3. What other battles had been fought near this same place?
4. What was the result of this battle? What did Ahab do which he should not have done?
5. How did the prophet show Ahab his fault? What similar wrong had been done by another king?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

Because some enemy, of wrong habit or wrong feeling or thought, has been overcome by the Lord's help and ceases for the time to trouble us, we ought not to feel secure against it and be off our guard. It will return. We should make use of the time of rest to strengthen ourselves, so that

when it comes again we shall be ready, by the Lord's help, to defeat it again, and gradually it will lose its power.

The Syrians, when they came the second time, fought with Israel in the plain. We may perhaps be strong in good resolutions. If our enemies should attack us in our higher, holier states they could not have success, but they meet us in the valley; they lie in wait as we are busy with the work and cares of the world; they find us when we are tired and discouraged and our good resolutions are in part forgotten; and we must be prayerful and watchful or they will overcome us. The Holy Land is a land of hills and valleys. There are in a good life, in a heavenly life, internal and external states; there are times for worship and holy resolution, and there are times for the business of the world. The Lord is ready to give protection and blessing in them all; only let us be sure that our God is with us as we go from the hills into the valleys. (Deut. 8:7; 9:10-11; E. 518, 644; A. 2702, 8278)

The army of Israel seemed "like two little flocks of kids" as it lay encamped against the Syrians. What element of heavenly life does the kingdom of Israel represent in us? Spiritual intelligence, as Judah represents heavenly affection. Goats in their best meaning also represent spiritual intelligence, the affection for learning and thinking true thoughts about the Lord and heaven; and kids represent such intelligence of the most innocent and gentle kind. (A. 4169; E. 314)

The armies waited seven days. This reminds us of the seven days at Jericho, when the ark was carried about the city. Seven is associated with a full week of labor and the state of heavenly strength and peace which follows. So in both these cases the seven days preceding the victory represent the thoroughness of preparation, the patience with which we must persist in what is right, until the right prevails. (E. 257; A. 433)

Aphek by which the Syrians camped and in which they took refuge, the same city by which the Philistines once took their stand, would seem to represent some false and perverted state of thought. Especially the wall in Aphek, which fell upon the Syrians, must represent false principles and reasoning in which the mind trusts for defense, but which bring destruction. We may remember Jericho again and its walls which fell before the ark. We may remember the Philistines in Gaza when Samson pulled their own house down upon them. (A. 6419, 8815)

Ahab saved the Syrian king alive, as Saul had saved the king of the Amalekites. A battle in which an enemy is defeated, but in which the king is saved alive, represents a conflict with an evil of life, in which some external wrongs are corrected, but the root of evil is not overcome. We love it too well. We own it as our brother. Ben-hadad making friends with Ahab in his chariot is natural, self-confident reasoning and thought mingling with true spiritual thought which is from the Lord. There is a similar suggestion of the mingling of our own natural thought with the Lord's pure truth, in the Syrians' making streets in Samaria, and Ahab making streets in Damascus. In all our conflicts with wrong habits of life, of thought, and of feeling, we must be thorough, and must not save alive what is pleasant to ourselves and make compromises with evil. (A. 7523; E. 650)

## **Lesson 61**

### **1 Kings 21:1-20: Ahab and Jezebel**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

How beautiful this world can be on a bright spring or summer day, with green fields and trees and bright flowers, and soft clouds in the sky. A bright spring day suggests to us the beauty of heaven, or an autumn day with sunshine and bright leaves and fruits in the gardens and orchards. If people are good, loving the Lord and one another, this world can be almost like heaven. But if people are selfish, if they forget the Lord and quarrel and treat each other meanly and unkindly, the beauty is gone and the lovely world is spoiled.

The Holy Land is a beautiful country, with mountains and hills and green fields and flowers and fine great springs. Here are lovely hills about Samaria. Here is the beautiful plain of Esdraelon, which we looked down upon from Mount Carmel, covered with grain and other crops. There were flowers on Mount Carmel, and flowering bushes fringed the Kishon River at its foot. Across the plain was Jezreel, to which Ahab drove when rain was coming, Elijah running before the chariot. From Jezreel one looked out upon the plain, and from the mountainside near by flowed the beautiful fountain where Gideon's men once drank, making a large brook to run down the green meadow to the Jordan. The Holy Land with these lovely hills and meadows, with grain in the fields and orchards on the hills, was a land to make one think of heaven. But this beauty could be spoiled when the people were not good, when they forgot the Lord and were selfish and cruel toward each other. This beautiful plain of Esdraelon has many times been a battlefield, where soldiers have fought with spears and chariots. Ahab and Jezebel, the evil king and queen who lived in Samaria and had a palace too in Jezreel, were out of tune with all the beauty; they were like a stain upon the picture. We learn of their selfishness in the story of Naboth's vineyard.

##### **Junior**

Who were Ahab and Jezebel? Over what kingdom did they rule? In what city did they live? From where had Jezebel come? What worship did Ahab, and especially Jezebel, encourage? What had they done to the prophets of the Lord? What had they tried to do to Elijah? What hardship had come upon all the land because of this evil? How long had it lasted? What sign had shown the people that the Lord was God, and not Baal? Where had Elijah fled and been strengthened by a new sense of the Lord's gentle but almighty power?

The city of Jezreel stood on the lower slopes of Mount Gilboa, looking out over the broad plain of Esdraelon, and down the green valley toward the Jordan. The home of Ahab and Jezebel was in the city of Samaria, but it seems that they had a palace also in Jezreel. Near by the palace was the vineyard of Naboth, which Ahab wanted, to make a garden for himself, but Naboth would not sell it nor take another in exchange. It was Jezebel who got the vineyard by ordering that wicked men (this is what "men of Belial" means) should speak falsely against him, and that Naboth should be killed.

We have learned before how Jezebel was the leader in encouraging the worship of Baal, and was the bitterest enemy of Elijah and the other prophets of the Lord. In our chapter also, where it speaks of Ahab's wickedness, it says that "Jezebel his wife stirred him up." She was the instigator of evil, and was bold in accomplishing it. As Ahab went to take possession of Naboth's vineyard, Elijah met him and told him from the Lord that both he and Jezebel would miserably die. In the place where dogs had licked the blood of Naboth they would lick Ahab's blood. Not all that was predicted came to pass in Elijah's day, for at the prophet's words the king humbled himself, and rent his clothes, put on sack-cloth, and fasted, as signs of grief. We shall soon learn about the death of Ahab and Jezebel, and how all that Elijah said came true; but today we read the story of Naboth's vineyard.

1. Show me Samaria on the map; and Jezreel.
2. Who were Ahab and Jezebel? What had they done?
3. Tell me about Naboth's vineyard: who wanted it, and how they took it.
4. What other lessons about vineyards do you remember?
5. Who met Ahab as he went to take possession of the vineyard? With what words?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Our lesson is about a vineyard; what does a vineyard represent? There is a beautiful parable of a vineyard in Isa. 5:1-7. There is a parable in Ps. 80 about a vine brought out of Egypt. The Lord spoke a parable about a vineyard let out to husbandmen, in Matt. 21:33-41; and another parable about laborers hired to work in a vineyard, in Matt. 20:1-16. The vine brought out of Egypt meant the children of Israel, and in Isaiah it is plainly said, "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant." But Israel and Judah represent the Lord's church in the world and in every soul, and so does the vineyard.

The church and spiritual life are represented by many different things, sometimes by a vineyard, and sometimes by a flock of sheep. Why is this? Each represents a particular element of the church and of spiritual life: the sheep represent its innocent affection, and the vineyard represents its intelligence, its ability to learn from the Lord what is true and good, to perceive the blessedness of it, and to bring forth the good uses which the truth teaches. This is the fruit which the Lord expects us all as husbandmen to render to Him. The vine out of Egypt is a beautiful type of spiritual intelligence and charity, with roots in the Egypt of natural knowledge. The hedges of the vineyard you recognize as literal precepts of order and habits of right living which are not-in themselves spiritual life but are a needed protection for spiritual life. How surely the wild beasts of evil passion and self-indulgence break in if the hedges are neglected. In connection with this warning of the Psalm, read Eccles. 10:8, "Whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him." (E. 518, 654; A. 5113)

Ahab desired Naboth's vineyard, and Jezebel got the vineyard by falsely accusing Naboth and causing his death. We see in general that this represents injury and destruction brought upon the

church and spiritual life by falsity and evil. Ahab the king stands especially for what is false ruling in the thought, and Jezebel the wicked wife, for the delight in evil pleasures which stirs up the false thought and makes it bold to gain its ends. Ahab desired the vineyard, to make it a garden of herbs. Herbs, even in a good sense, represent more natural and external thoughts than are represented by the vine; suggesting a deterioration of intelligence; and the herbs of Ahab's garden would seem to represent what is even worse, false thoughts connected with evil life. A false principle ruling in the mind desires to take possession of the intelligence, and to pervert it to its own purposes. But the delight in evil pleasures is behind the false thinking. It is this which gives it strength and it is this delight in evil, which most quickly and most surely destroys the spiritual intelligence and makes one stupid in things of heavenly life. The wicked queen Jezebel stirred Ahab up to this wickedness, as the love of evil pleasures drives the mind to evil and makes it its slave. Compare Herod and Herodias in the killing of John the Baptist. (Matt. 14:1-12; E. 160; R. 132)

Read what is said of Jezebel, of her serving Baal, of her slaying the prophets of the Lord, and her trying to slay Elijah, also of her treachery in relation to Naboth's vineyard, in R. 132. The same number explains Elijah's prediction and the horrible death of Jezebel. It was predicted that dogs would lick the blood of Ahab, and eat the flesh of Jezebel. In a good sense (as in Matt. 15:27-28) dogs represent a simple but earnest desire for the good things of heaven. But in an evil sense, as here, they represent the enjoyment of evil and of defiling what is innocent and good. The soul will miserably perish if the love of selfish pleasure is allowed to have its way till conscience is destroyed. Compare the punishment of Jezebel in Rev. 2:20-23. (A.9231)

## Lesson 62

### 1 Kings 22:1-28: Micaiah the Prophet

#### THE STORY

##### Junior

Show me on the map where the Assyrian kingdom was, with its center at Nineveh, and its provinces reaching far on every side. Show me the smaller and nearer neighbor of Israel, Syria, and Damascus its great city. At the time of our story, there were now leagues of friendship, and now wars, among the three kingdoms, Israel, Judah, and Syria. There was the war of Asa, king of Judah, with Israel, in which he had the help of Ben-hadad, king of Syria. (1 Kings 15:16-20) Then there was the war in which Ben-hadad, a son of the other king of the same name, in the days of Ahab, besieged Samaria but was driven away. And again the Syrians came the following year and were defeated, but Ahab spared the king's life. (1 Kings 20)

After this, as we learn in our new lesson, there were three years without war between Syria and Israel. It would seem, however, that Ben-hadad had not fully kept his promise to Ahab, to return to him the cities which his father had taken from Israel (1 Kings 20:34), for we learn that he still held the city of Ramoth, in the land of Gilead, beyond Jordan, which was one of the cities belonging to the tribe of Gad. (Joshua 20:8) What other city of Gilead did we learn of in the days

when Saul was king? (1 Sam. 11) You will find Jabesh marked on the map, to the north, and Ramoth to the south of the brook Jabbok, but the position of Ramoth is not surely known.

Peace had lasted three years when Ahab proposed to take back Ramoth from the Syrians. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, was with him at the time, and he agreed to go with him to the war, with men and horses. Jehoshaphat was a good king. You see this in his wish to have a prophet of the Lord consulted before going to war. It is also said, in verse 43, that he walked in all the ways of Asa his father, doing right in the eyes of the Lord. Look back to 1 Kings 15:9-24, to see what is said of Asa. It makes us feel sorry, to see Jehoshaphat in league with Ahab and going to war with him; it is a good king in league with one not good.

As we read of four hundred prophets, we remember how a hundred prophets had been saved from Jezebel, hidden by fifty in a cave (1 Kings 18:13); and presently we hear again of companies of prophets in Bethel and Jericho. (2 Kings 2:1-7) The prophets told Ahab to go, and that he would succeed; but they spoke from a lying spirit. At last one prophet was brought, Micaiah, whom Ahab hated. (Why?) Even he at first said to Ahab, "Go, and prosper." But this was not his real message. When he spoke from the Spirit of the Lord, he said, "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd." You can imagine what this prophecy meant, and in our next lesson we shall learn how it was fulfilled. With this warning sounding in their ears the kings set out to do what Ahab had set his heart on doing.

1. Who was Ahab? Who was Jehoshaphat? What did they attempt together?
2. What advice did the prophets give? Why?
3. Who spoke the true message? What was it?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Israel and Judah still represent the heavenly understanding and will; though now they represent these not in their beauty and strength, but weakened and perverted. Here a good king of Judah is in league with a bad king of Israel. So a good intention, a kind feeling, may be led astray by false understanding. (A. 4292, 4750; E. 433)

The nations outside the Holy Land represent natural, worldly faculties and states. Syria is among those which represent natural intellectual powers, powers of thinking and knowing. There is Egypt, the memory of knowledge; Phoenicia and Philistia, the power of reaching out to impart and to gather knowledge, usually with no desire to make it useful; and Assyria, the rational power of arranging knowledge in its logical relations. Syria has its place with these, and represents knowledge of what is good and true, but according to worldly, and it may be perverted standards, and not according to the sure standard of the Lord's Word. The meaning of Syria is explained in A. 1232, 1234, 4112. Two other numbers are especially full and helpful: A. 4720, which explains the story of the Syrian army sent to take Elisha, and smitten with blindness; and E. 475, which explains the story of Naaman and his healing.

The heavenly understanding is strong and able to resist the false standards of the world, in proportion to its faithful reliance upon the Lord's Word. It is weak and unable to cope with worldly learning, when its attitude toward the Lord's Word is such as Ahab's was toward the prophets. There is no strength in consulting the Lord's Word just to hear what we like to hear, and to find confirmation of our own ideas and purposes. We ought with open hearts to desire to hear the message just as the Lord would give it. The lying spirit which it is said the Lord sent to speak through the prophets, reminds us of the wonderful way in which the Lord permits His Word to be turned to confirm whatever one pleases to confirm; for this is a part of His providence to preserve our freedom, not violently preventing our thinking and doing what we are determined to think and do. (T. 260)

Micaiah saw the Lord sitting upon His throne and all the host of heaven on His right and left. Compare the appearance of the Lord to Isaiah (Isa. 6) and to John (Rev. 4). We are not to think that the Lord sits on a throne in heaven, like an earthly king. But the throne which the prophets saw represented the Lord's rule in the power of His Divine truth, especially His rule in heaven, where His truth is perfectly obeyed. (Isa. 66:1; Ps. 103:19) The host of heaven on His right hand and left are the angels as they live in the strength of love and truth from Him. More abstractly, they are all the activities of the Lord's love and wisdom in His providence over angels and human beings. (A. 5313)

The horns which one of the prophets made remind us how often some representative action was joined with the prophets' message. Horns, we know, represent the power of truth from the good within it, or the power of falsity from the evil that prompts it, which seems to be the meaning in the present case. (A.2832) See L. 15.

## **Lesson 63**

### **1 Kings 22:29-53: Micaiah's Prophecy Fulfilled**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

As we left the story last week, two kings were starting with an army against the city of Ramoth-gilead, in the country east of Jordan, to try to take the city back from the Syrians who had captured it and kept it. Who were the two kings? The prophets had been asked about this war on which the two kings were starting. What had they said? What had Micaiah said, speaking truly from the Lord?

Let us read the story of the battle: the command which the king of Syria had given to his men; how Jehoshaphat was in danger; how Ahab was wounded by a chance arrow, and though he was stayed up in his chariot, died at evening. The word was passed through the army, "Every man to his city, and every man to his own country." It was this which had been shown to Micaiah, when he said, "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace." The prophecy which Elijah had spoken, that dogs should lick Ahab's blood (1 Kings 21:19), was in part fulfilled

when the king's chariot and armor were washed in the pool of Samaria, where the dogs lapped. See also 2 Kings 9:24-26.

Who was Jehoshaphat who was with Ahab in this battle at Ramoth-gilead? He was the king of Judah, and his home was in Jerusalem. For eighteen years these two kings were ruling in their two kingdoms side by side. (1 Kings 16:29; 22:41-42) Jehoshaphat was the son of Asa. Read about Asa in 1 Kings 15:9-24. He was faithful to the Lord; he destroyed the idols and put away evil doers; but worship still continued in high places, besides at the Lord's temple, and in other ways we see that though Asa was a good king he was weak.

Jehoshaphat was like his father and was a good king. We have already seen how he insisted that the Lord's message should be heard before they went to battle. But high places were still used for worship. It is also said that ships which he built as Solomon had done on the Red Sea, were broken and never went on their voyage for gold. Do you remember about Solomon's ships? Other things are told about Jehoshaphat in 2 Chron. 17-20, which add to the picture of his strength and riches; but while these are interesting as things that were remembered about the king, they are not a part of the Lord's Word, and do not contain a spiritual lesson.

Besides reviewing recent lessons, we must often during the year review the whole Old-Testament story. Draw a line on the blackboard, for the thread of the story. Divide it into sections for the general divisions of the story: 1 Abraham to Joseph; 2 bondage and journey to Canaan; 3 the conquest; 4 the judges; 5 the first three kings; 6 the divided kingdom. Name an incident here and there in the story, or a person, or read a striking verse, and let the children tell in which section of the line, and in what part of the section, to make a mark to represent it.

Crossing the Red Sea. Crossing the Jordan. Buying the cave in Hebron. Spying out the land. Building the tabernacle. Building the temple. Water from the rock. Gideon's soldiers drinking. David pursued by Saul. Golden calf at Sinai. Golden calves at Bethel and Dan. Lot. Goliath. Balaam. Samson. Caleb. Ben-hadad. Jonathan. Benjamin. Aaron. "Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth." "Thou shalt not kill." "There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." "Be strong and of a good courage." "The God that answereth by fire, let Him be God." "She came to prove him with hard questions." "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." "A ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven." "But I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts." "Tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks." "The Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers."

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The story of the battle in which Jehoshaphat was safe, but Ahab was not protected by his disguise, is interesting to consider. We may see in it the lesson that the Lord's protection attends a good and innocent purpose even when it is led astray by false thinking.

The washing of Ahab's chariot in the pool of Samaria represents the examination of the thought by the standard of the Lord's truth, to free it of all that belongs to the false, misleading spirit. The condemnation of that false spirit, as belonging to the vile love of evil pleasures, is represented by

the licking of the blood of Ahab by the dogs; for dogs in a bad sense represent that love. On the meaning of washing, see A. 3147; chariot, A. 8215; Samaria, A. 4720; dogs, A. 7784, 9231.

We read of the ivory house which Ahab made. Solomon's throne of ivory and gold represents the truth and goodness of a perfect rule. The teeth, which open and examine the food, represent the fixed standards of right by which we test what is offered for our acceptance. The tusks of the elephant, from which ivory comes, represent a strong development of such principles of right, by which examination is made and fraud is exposed and condemned. A house represents a person's own mind, as in Matt. 12:44. The building of an ivory house represents the development of the rational mind. (E. 253, 1146)

There is something sad in this story of Jehoshaphat, a good king who represents a good motive in the heart, leagued with Ahab, a bad king who represents false understanding which gives its power to the excusing of evil pleasure. We may think of Asa and Jehoshaphat, good kings of Judah who made league with Ben-hadad and with Ahab, as representing a good motive, but weak because it lacks a strong, true understanding with which to join itself in a genuinely good and useful life. The weakness of a good purpose from this cause was represented by Ahab's being lame in his feet. It would seem to be represented in this chapter by there being no king in Edom in those days; for a king represents strong, guiding truth, and Edom in a good sense represents goodness on the plane of natural life. It is represented also by the breaking of Jehoshaphat's ships so that they never sail for gold; for ships represent an intellectual power, which here is too weak to lead to the highest power. (A. 8314; E. 514)

## **Lesson 1**

### **2 Kings 1: Elijah's Reproof**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

This story gives us a picture of Elijah which we must fix in our minds and remember. Ahaziah, a son of Ahab, was now the king in Samaria. He was sick; he had fallen through a lattice in an upper chamber in his palace and was hurt. It was probably a lattice window. You may have seen pictures of such windows in Cairo in Egypt. They did not use glass in their windows, but lattice work, which was often beautifully carved. The windows of upper rooms often projected from the wall, like our bay windows, and in this way had more view and gave more air. There was such a lattice window in the king's house in Samaria.

Ahaziah fell through the lattice and was hurt. He wished to know whether he would get well; but instead of asking the Lord or sending to the Lord's prophets, he sent to "Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron." Do you remember the name Ekron, one of the five Philistine cities to which the ark was taken when it was in the Philistine country? Baal-zebub, "the lord of flies," was worshiped in Ekron, and Ahaziah sent messengers to ask the idol if he should recover. As they were going, a man met them. He was dressed in a rough hairy mantle with a leather belt. He spoke sternly to the messengers. He asked them why they went to inquire of Baal-zebub, as if there were no God

in Israel, and he sent them back to the king to tell him that he should die. Who was this man who stopped the king's messengers and rebuked them and sent them back with this message? It was Elijah. When Ahaziah asked the messengers, "What manner of man was he, which came up to meet you and told you these words?" they answered, "He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins." The king knew, and he said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite." Other prophets wore rough mantles (Zech. 13:4), but the hairy mantle belonged especially to Elijah. When they spoke of his mantle, the king knew that it was he.

The king was angry. If he could, he would take Elijah and kill him. He sent a captain with fifty men to take him, and they found Elijah sitting on the top of a hill, perhaps near where he met the messengers of the king on the way between Samaria and Ekron. They called to him to come down, but instead he called fire from heaven and destroyed the captain and his men. The king sent another captain and fifty men, and again fire came down and destroyed them. Do you remember once before when fire had fallen in answer to a prayer of Elijah? The king sent still again the third time a captain and fifty men. This third captain was afraid, knowing what had happened to the other captains and their men. He fell on his knees before Elijah and prayed that he would spare his life and the life of his men. The angel of the Lord now told Elijah not to be afraid to go with the captain to the king. He went and told Ahaziah that he should die, and the prophet's word came true.

## **Junior**

The first verse of our chapter says that Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab. Who was Ahab? Who ruled after him? See the last verses of I Kings 22. There is something interesting to tell you about this rebellion, but the story comes up more fully in the third chapter, and we will wait.

We must get with the little children the picture of Elijah which this story gives us. As we hear his stern words to the messengers and the king, rebuking them for forgetting the Lord and going to an idol, and as we hear their description of the man with his hairy mantle and his leather girdle, we are reminded strongly of John the Baptist, whom we read of in the Gospels, the stern hardy man of the desert, who came to prepare people for the Lord, preaching repentance and boldly rebuking their sins. (Matt. 3:4) What does the Gospel say of John's raiment? A cloak of camel's hair and a leather girdle. Even this reminds us of Elijah. There was a real likeness between these men.

Someone look back to the story of the ark in the Philistine country. (I Sam. 5) It tells us of the idol Dagon in one of the Philistine cities, and it tells us too of Ekron. Find Ekron on the map, and see the journey which the messengers of Ahaziah were taking from Samaria to Ekron.

Find the reference in the Gospel to Beelzebub, the name Baal-zebub, "lord of flies," in a slightly different spelling. (Matt. 12:24) You see from the way the name is used in the Gospel that it is associated with no good thing, but with evil. "Beelzebub the prince of the devils."

There is another interesting reference to this story in the Gospel. Someone find it in Luke 9:51-56. It was when the Lord and the disciples were going to Jerusalem and the Samaritans of a certain village would not receive Him because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem. "And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to

come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" How did the Lord answer them? In the old time, the Lord's power was sometimes shown in severe external ways. When He came, He taught people to know Him more truly, showing them His love in works of kindness, just as He opened the stern precepts of the old time in the Sermon on the Mount and taught the Christian law and blessings.

Elijah and John the Baptist. The last words of the Old Testament predict that Elijah the prophet will come to prepare people for the coming of the Lord. (Mal. 4:5-6) In fulfillment of the promise, John the Baptist came. But when they asked John if he were Elias, he said, "I am not." (John 1:21) The Lord speaking of John said, "This is Elias, which was for to come." (Matt. 11:14; 17:10-13) John was speaking literally; he was not the man Elijah come again. The Lord was speaking of John's mission, of his bold message of repentance, which was the same as the message of Elijah. The angel promising John's coming to the father Zacharias said, "He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias," and went on almost in the very words of Malachi. (Luke 1:17) The mission of these two brave servants of the Lord was the same. They were types of the letter of the Word, rebuking evil and calling people to repentance.

As you read about the fire coming down from heaven, you will think of the day on Mount Carmel, when the fire consumed the sacrifice. You will remember also in the Gospel (Luke 9:54) how some of the Lord's disciples spoke to Him of this fire that came from heaven at the word of Elijah. But the Lord came into the world to show His power in works of gentleness and love.

1. Messengers were going from Samaria to Ekron. Where were these two places? Who had sent them? What did they want in Ekron?
2. Who met the messengers by the way? Why did he rebuke them? What word did he send to him who sent them?
3. Why did Ahaziah fail to take Elijah?
4. What sign of Divine power was given at the word of Elijah? When have we learned before of such a sign?
5. How is this story referred to in the Gospels?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The rough hairy cloak of Elijah and of John is an interesting study. It was in keeping with their message, not delicate and spiritual, but stern and even harsh. Garments of the mind are not our deepest motives, but the outer thoughts and words and manners in which affections clothe themselves, and these with John and Elijah were severe. The camel's hair is especially a type of stern literal thought, for a camel represents such power of thinking. That the rough mantle was significant is plain from the Lord's words about John's clothing: "What went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see?" (Matt. 11:8) The rough mantle was like the letter of John's message and of all the Word. The soft clothing is its spiritual meaning, and they in kings' houses are especially the

angels, who understand that deeper meaning. We may have the same thought about Elijah's hairy mantle. We shall keep it in mind when we read that Elijah when taken up into heaven dropped his mantle to the earth, to be picked up and used by Elisha. There are golden girdles in the Scripture, and linen girdles: why a rough leather girdle for John? (A. 9372, 2576: R. 166)

Ahaziah was sick. A king, and especially a king of Israel, should represent a strong spiritual understanding ruling the life well. But wicked kings like Ahab and Ahaziah represent thought justifying and excusing evil. "Then intelligence may be spoken of as sick, and may be said to have fallen. Ahaziah fell through a lattice. We are taught that a grating represents the external, sensual part of the mind, which guards the way to the understanding and will, and as it were sifts what enters in. The nerves of the senses are such a network on the surface of the body. (A. 9726) Ahaziah's fall would seem to represent weakening of intelligence through trusting in natural appearances. We shall think again of this when we read how Jezebel was thrown from a window to her death. (2 Kings 9:30, 33: A. 655, 3391) Looking to the Philistines for help represents dependence on an intellectual power not associated with good life, for this is the meaning of the Philistines. In Dagon the fish-god we see a picture of such thought of a low natural kind, and in Baal-zebub, the "lord of flies," a picture of thought of the most superficial kind, for such is the meaning of fishes and of insects. (E. 740: A. 7441) Baal-zebub was the god of Ekron, one of the Philistine cities: and Philistia, as we know, represents intellectual power not joined with goodness and usefulness, but with evil pleasure. (A. 1197, 3412) Will the heavenly intelligence be restored to health by looking in this direction? Will it not rather complete its own destruction? This is the meaning of Elijah's message that, because Ahaziah looked to Baal-zebub, god of Ekron, instead of to the Lord, he would surely die.

The fire from heaven which consumed Elijah's sacrifice represents love from the Lord with those who truly worship Him. Love of evil and anger against the Lord is an evil fire that, if allowed to burn, destroys ourselves. It is the fire of hell. Evil love destroying the soul is represented by the fire which destroyed Sodom, and by the fire which consumed the men sent to take Elijah. To save people from such destroying love was the very purpose of the Lord's coming. He would not let His disciples call down fire upon those who opposed Him, but said. "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." (Luke 9:56: A. 2443, 2448)

## **Lesson 2**

### **2 Kings 2: Elijah Taken Up**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We have learned about the prophet Elijah. Especially you remember him with all the people and the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel, when the fire from heaven kindled his offering and the people said, "The Lord, He is the God." The faithful Elisha was now with Elijah as his servant, and he was to be prophet after him. He was known as the one who poured water on the hands of Elijah. (2 Kings 3:11) This was a servant's duty when the master washed his hands, for in the East they do not wash in a basin but in running water.

We learn today how faithfully Elisha went with his master as the time drew near when the Lord would take away Elijah into heaven. They went on together from one place to another, from Gilgal in the hills near the middle of the land to Bethel and to Jericho. At each place, Elijah asked Elisha to stay, but he would not, and they went on together across the meadows to the Jordan. How did they cross the river? "Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground." Does it remind you of a day long before when the Jordan was divided by the power of the ark for people to pass over? Then the power was with the ark, and now it was with the prophet's mantle.

As they walked on, Elisha asked that a double portion of his master's spirit might be upon him. He did not ask to be a greater prophet than Elijah, but to have a large, a double gift, such as a father gave to his oldest son. It was promised if he should see Elijah when he was taken from him. He did see him, for "it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder: and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it." He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and it had the same power in his hands that it had had in the hands of Elijah. Listen and we will read this part of the story. (2 Kings 2:1-8)

### **Junior**

As you read of the faithful Elisha going with Elijah from place to place, please take your map and follow the journey. Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho were all places where companies of prophets lived. (See 2 Kings 4:38.) Gilgal was not the town of this name which we knew in the days of Joshua and Samuel, in the Jordan valley near Jericho, but a place to the north of Bethel. Bethel we know, the place of Jacob's vision of the ladder; and since the days of Solomon it had been a place of idol worship for the people of the northern kingdom. Jericho we also know in the edge of the broad meadow of Jordan. The two went on together from place to place, the faithful servant unwilling to leave his master, knowing all the while what was soon to happen.

Compare the parting of the Jordan in this story with the parting when the tribes of Israel entered the land. In both cases it was the power of the Lord's Word that divided the river: His power with the commandments, and His power with the prophet who spoke His word. Get clearly the grand picture of the horses and chariot of fire that were seen by Elisha when Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven, his rough mantle falling to the earth, to be picked up by Elisha.

Two other short stories of Elisha follow in this chapter. There is a beautiful spring at Jericho called "Elisha's fountain," and you learn why as you read this story. Compare the healing of the bitter water in Gen. 15:23-25. The people of Jericho called the situation of the city pleasant. Cliffs sheltered the city on the west, and it looked out eastward across the meadows of the Jordan to the purple hills beyond. In those days, these meadows were tilled with gardens; the name Jericho means a "fragrant place." The situation was pleasant, "but the water is naught, and the ground barren," causing the trees to drop their fruit. The story tells you how Elisha healed the water.

Elisha went from Jericho to Bethel, climbing up into the hills by the way that he and Elijah had come down.

Little children are spoken of who came out of Bethel and mocked Elisha. It does not mean little children, but boys who laughed and jeered at the prophet, calling him "bald head." Bears out of

the wood killed many of them. It seems a hard punishment for what they had done, but it pictures the harm to our souls if we are irreverent to the Lord and His Word. "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain."

From Bethel Elisha went on to Mt. Carmel, perhaps to the place of Elijah's sacrifice. It seems to have been a place where he often went. (2 Kings 4:23) From there, he returned to Samaria, Ahab's city, where he had a home. (2 Kings 5:3, 9)

1. Where were Elijah and Elisha when they were parted and Elijah was taken into heaven? What did Elisha see?
2. What fell from Elijah when he was taken up? How was the power of the prophet's mantle shown?
3. How was water healed at Jericho?
4. What happened to the children who called the prophet "bald head"? What was the meaning of this punishment?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Compare with the vision in this chapter another vision of horses and chariots of fire in 2 Kings 6:17.

The horses and chariot of fire, and the prophet's mantle. Do they have the Bible in heaven? Do we take it with us when we go to heaven? They have the Bible, but not its letter which is made up of things of this world. That is represented by Elijah's mantle which fell from him as he was taken up. But in heaven they have a spiritual understanding of the Bible and a perception of the Lord's love in it. These are represented by the horses and chariot of fire that Elisha saw: for horses represent a spiritual understanding and fire represents love. Even while we live in this world the power of heavenly truth and love is with us in the Bible to protect us, like the horses and chariots of fire which filled the mountain round about Elisha. These visions of the horses and chariots of fire should help us to remember the protecting power that is in the Lord's Word. (A. 2762, 5321) Elisha received a large portion of Elijah's spirit when he had seen the horses and chariot of fire. Having seen something of the inner glory of the Lord's Word and of its heavenly meaning, we return to the letter with a fuller sense of its power.

Get help on the parting of the Jordan by the power of Elijah's mantle from the parting of the Jordan before the ark. Both stories show the power of the Lord's Word in its letter, to overcome what is false and to introduce to a good life. (A. 4255, E. 395)

The water of Jericho was bad; it made the trees drop their fruit unripe. Such water is like truth that is unfruitful because it is not faithfully obeyed. The cure is to make a new beginning of faithful obedience. This is represented by the new cruse of salt with which the prophet healed the water; for salt which helps food and drink to unite and to nourish the body represents the union of truth with goodness in life. (A. 9325, 10300)

We have learned that Elijah's hairy mantle represented the letter of the Lord's Word. So also did the long hair that many of the prophets wore, and especially the long hair of Samson. This was the cause of reverence for long hair. To mock the prophet and call him "bald head" represents ridiculing the Lord's Word in its letter, and denying that it is holy. We cannot do this without danger to our souls, without danger of destroying the beginnings of heavenly life. Bears represent thoughts of the Word so unenlightened as to be destructive. (A. 3301: R. 573; E. 781)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Horses and Chariots of Fire

When we read in the Word about people who have gone up to heaven as Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven; as the angel seen by Manoah and his wife, the parents of Samson, ascended in the flame of the altar (Judges 13:20), and as the Lord Himself was seen forty days after His resurrection to ascend into heaven where a cloud received Him out of the sight of the apostles - such ascensions were always seen with the eyes of the spirit of the beholders, not with the eyes of the material body. The horses and chariot of fire that were seen when Elijah went up into heaven, then, were not in the natural, but in the spiritual world.

Swedenborg tells us in the largest work he wrote, the Arcana Coelestia, and also in the very smallest he wrote - consisting of a few pages - on the White Horse, that he also has seen horses and chariots of fire in the spiritual world. Before we read what he says on this subject, we want to remember that in the spiritual world differently from the natural world, the surroundings of people are always in correspondence with their character. By this I mean that the scenery, the trees, bushes and flowers, the birds and animals, the houses, the sky and the clouds, the atmosphere, the very ground upon which they walk, always show very accurately what they love, what they think, and what they do. So that you can tell at a distance from the objects you see what kind of people they are whom you are approaching. If they are people who are very curious to know things, calves appear grazing and sporting in a meadow. If they are people who are very keen in seeing the truth, eagles are soaring in the sky. If they are people who are great lovers of liberty, there are deer in beautiful parks.

The reason why animals and plants and other objects that are mentioned in the Word mean spiritual things, and represent them, is because such objects appear in the spiritual world, representing spiritual and heavenly things. There is no other reason. Therefore, when the Lord revealed to people the long-lost science of correspondences, through Emanuel Swedenborg, He introduced Swedenborg into the spiritual world so that he lived consciously in both worlds, the spiritual and the natural at the same time, for many years, and he described many of the sights he witnessed in the spiritual world.

So he tells us many interesting things about horses there. He says that where the intelligent and wise people live in the spiritual world, there you always see horses and carriages. The horses are beautiful and spirited, of various sizes and appearance. The harness they wear is often mounted with silver and gold. The carriages are also of various sizes and shapes. Some look like the ancient chariots, carved in the shape of eagles, whales, stags with antlers, unicorns, etc. The horses all represent the understanding: that is, they represent how people learn the truths the angels teach them from the Lord, and how they receive them. The most beautiful horses are white, like those

described in the book of Revelation (19:11, 14). This represents the true understanding of the Lord's Word. Carriages and chariots represent the teaching or doctrine of truth.

When in the world of spirits, people have been instructed by angels in the truths of the heavenly doctrine, then they are ready to ascend into heaven because then they have heavenly intelligence, and they are taken up into heaven in a chariot of fire drawn by shining horses. The chariot of fire represents the heavenly doctrine which teaches about love for the Lord and the neighbor.

After we know about such occurrences in the other life, is it not easy to understand why Elijah, who represented the Word and therefore people who love the Word, was taken up into heaven in this way?

Unless we knew this, it would seem very strange that Elisha should call Elijah a "chariot," and "horses," for we read "And Elisha saw, and cried, 'My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!'"

But when we realize that Elijah represented the Lord as the Word, and that "chariot" means teaching from the Word, and "horsemen" means the understanding of the Word, then we can clearly see why he was called "the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof," for the Lord teaches us by His Word, and thus enables us to understand all things relating to Himself and the Word.

You have doubtless studied Greek and Roman mythology in school. Do you know that those mythologies are full of correspondences which were learned from the Ancient Church - from the Egyptians and Phoenicians and other nations who belonged to that church? You know that they described the sun, by the god Helios, and sometimes by Phoebus Apollo. This god represented Wisdom and Intelligence to them, and therefore you see him, in pictures and sculptures, sitting in a splendid chariot drawn by four horses.

So Neptune, the god of the ocean, is also depicted with horses because the sea, being a great collection of water, signifies knowledges and sciences of truth. These belong to the intellect, and this is represented by the horses. In fact, sciences arise from the intellect, and to represent this origin, the Ancients told a story about the winged horse Pegasus, who with his hoof burst open a fountain at which sat the nine Muses, who represent the different sciences.

## **Lesson 3**

### **2 Kings 3: Israel and Judah Subdue Moah**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Asa had died, who had been king many years in Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat, his son, was now king. (1 Kings 15:24) A message came to Jehoshaphat from Jehoram, who was king of Israel, living in Samaria, a son of Ahab, whom you remember in the stories of Elijah and Elisha. What did the king of Israel want of the king of Judah? He asked him to make war with him against the king of

Moab. Why? Because the king of Moab had been paying each year a large tax of sheep or fleeces of wool to the kings of Israel, and he now refused to do so. (Moab was a pasture country where they raised many sheep.) The king of Judah said, "I will go." (Have you found Moab on the map?) "Which way shall we go?" The king of Israel seems to have asked this question. "The way through the wilderness of Edom," was the answer. So their armies went together, and the king of Edom went with them. There was not water, and they were thirsty.

"Is there not here a prophet of the Lord?" the king of Judah asked, and a man of Israel answered, "Here is Elisha, the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah." It was our friend Elisha, who was Elijah's servant and the prophet after him. From the Spirit of the Lord he promised water and also victory over Moab. In the morning, the water came from the way of Edom, a great plenty. The Moabites also, who were guarding the border of their country, saw the water in the sunrise light and it looked to them red like blood. They thought their enemies had been fighting among themselves and that they would have an easy victory. But the armies of Israel and Judah and Edom, refreshed by the water, drove back the men of Moab and spoiled their country. By the help of Elisha the prophet it was a victory for Israel and Judah.

## **Junior**

When Ahab died, his son Ahaziah became king of Israel. He had reigned but two years when he died from the effects of a fall. Then his brother, another son of Ahab whose name was Jehoram, became king. Jehoshaphat was still king in Judah, though his son, another Jehoram, was perhaps reigning with him. (2 Kings 1:17) Jehoram, king of Israel, was not a good king. He was better than Ahab and Jezebel, for he put away the image or pillar of Baal which Ahab had made; but he still followed the worship of idols which Jeroboam had set up.

Can you show me the land of Moab on the map? It lies on the eastern side of the Dead Sea, and from the land of Judah, you see the blue hills of Moab across the water. We learned about Moab when the children of Israel passed that way to come into the land of Canaan. It was said at that time that the Amorites had lately driven Moab southward, so that the brook Arnon which runs into the Dead Sea at about the middle of its length was their northern boundary. (Num. 21:26) This seems to have been their home through the rest of the story, east of the Dead Sea and south of the Arnon. The country of Moab is a fine pasture land, with deep gorges in which brooks run, and large green uplands. There are many trees and flowers.

Who were the Moabites? They were descendants of Lot, the nephew of Abraham, and so were related to Israel. For that reason the children of Israel on their journey were not allowed to fight with them. Afterward, David had war with Moab and conquered the country. (2 Sam. 8:2) Now at the time of our story Mesha was king of Moab, and through many years he struggled against Israel. The story of his wars is preserved carved on a stone, which was found in the ruins of a city in Moab, and is called the "Moabite Stone." In this inscription, Mesha boasts of successes against Omri, Ahab's father. Our story tells us that he rebelled at Ahab's death, and refused to give the large tribute that had been paid each year from the flocks; for you remember that Moab was a pasture country and its wealth was in its flocks.

Jehoram undertook to subdue again the land of Moab. He asked Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to go with him, as Ahab had done when he went against Ramoth-gilead. Jehoshaphat agreed to go and answered in almost the same words with which he had answered Ahab. Jehoram asked advice of

the older king in regard to the way by which they should go to Moab, and they took the way around the southern end of the Dead Sea, through the land of Edom. The king of Edom also joined them. The country is called the wilderness of Edom. It is a mountain country and parts of it are very wild and barren. They found no water as they journeyed. Jehoshaphat asked for a prophet of the Lord. You remember that he had done the same when he went to war with Ahab. There was a prophet near at hand. It was no longer the prophet Elijah, for he had been taken into heaven, but Elisha who had taken up Elijah's mantle and was prophet in his place.

Notice what Elisha said to Jehoshaphat in the 14th verse. (1 Kings 22:43) Elisha called for a minstrel, and as the minstrel played, the hand of the Lord came upon the prophet and he spoke his message. This will remind you of the story of Saul and David. Elisha promised water; he promised also that they would prosper in the war with Moab. The water came "by the way of Edom," perhaps running down the mountain valley from showers that had fallen far away, and the country was filled with water. The army of Israel and Judah was refreshed. The water was also the means of giving them victory over Moab; for the Moabites saw the water colored red by the sunrise light, and called it blood, and thought that Israel and Judah had been fighting with each other. They came expecting to find spoil, but the Israelites drove them back and went on smiting them as they chased them into their own country.

They also spoiled the land, stopping up the wells of water and cutting down the good trees and throwing stones upon the fields. One large strong city they did not overthrow, although they surrounded it. The city is called Kir-haraseth, probably the same city which is called Kir of Moab in another place, near the middle of the country. The king of Moab tried with chosen men to cut through the besieging host but could not. Then he offered his eldest son as a sacrifice to his idols, and made the offering on the wall where the Israelites could see it. After this, they turned away and left the country. Perhaps this sign of the extreme distress in which the king of Moab was, showed that it was needless to carry the war further.

1. What two sons of Ahab were kings of Israel?
2. Where was Moab? Who were the Moabites? Why was there war between Moab and Israel?
3. What good king was with Jehoram in this war? What other king was with them?
4. What is said in the story about water and blood?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Edom and Moab were both related to Israel. Both in a good sense represented goodness of an external kind, Moab such goodness with no truth, and Edom such goodness with truth adjoined. Notice in our story that water came by the way of Edom. (A. 3322) This is the meaning of Moab and Edom when they are friendly to Israel. The help of external ways of innocence and goodness is represented by Moab's tribute of sheep and wool. (A. 3519, end) As an enemy of Israel and withholding its tribute, Moab represents external states become evil and not helping the spiritual life. It needs then to be conquered by the spiritual life, and partly or wholly condemned. Note David's treatment of the Moabites. (2 Sam. 5:2) In our present lesson, the condemnation of the

false principles and evil developments of such life is represented by stopping the wells and casting stones upon the fields. Consider the league of Israel and Judah and Edom against Moab.

Notice Elisha's regard for the presence of Jehoshaphat (verse 14). For the sake of one or of a few righteous, the Lord could give His help.

The lack of water by Israel and Judah represents the need for clear knowledge to correct the evils of life which Moab represents. Water came at Elisha's word, as the truth comes to us from the Lord through His Word. But the water looked like blood to the Moabites, which means that truth is turned to falsity by those who are in evil. Remember the water of Egypt turned to blood. (A. 731 7, 7326)

Molech was the god of Ammon, and Chemosh was the god of Moab, whom Mesha also mentions on the Moabite Stone, to whom they sacrificed sons and daughters. Sons and daughters represent births of truth and good, and Chemosh represents falsities and Molech the filthy loves by which they are destroyed. See A. 2468, a long and interesting number about Moab.

## Lesson 4

### 2 Kings 4: Elisha at Shunem

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

All the time as we are reading the story of Elisha we have in mind that it is a sort of prophecy of the Lord's life. By and by, He would live in this same country. He would walk over these same paths of Galilee and visit some of these same towns. He would heal the sick and raise the dead and bless the little children and bring a blessing to every home where people were willing to receive Him. We learn today about two homes to which Elisha came and brought a blessing.

The first was the home of a poor widow. The father, who had been one of the prophets, had died. They were in debt, and the one to whom they owed the money was about to take the woman's sons as bond-servants till the debt should be paid by their service. In those days, people who owed money were treated very harshly. We see this also in one of the Lord's parables:

"Forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made." (Matt. 18:25) The poor woman cried to Elisha for help. He asked, "What hast thou in the house?" There was nothing but a pot of oil. He told her what she must do; and with the Lord's blessing, the oil was the means of paying the debt, and gave her more besides, on which she and her children could live. Listen and we will read this story. (2 Kings 4: 1-7)

The other home to which Elisha brought a blessing as in Shunem. This little town lay at the foot of the mountain Little Hermon, with gardens and orchards about it, looking out toward the west over the great plain of Esraelon. Elisha passed Shunem in his journeys through the land, and there was a home there where he was made welcome, the home of a woman who was important in the town and who lived there in comfort with her husband. She loved to have the prophet stop

as he went by, and they built for him a little room on the wall, on the roof of the house, cool and quiet, and put for him there a bed, a table, a seat, and a stand for a lamp. The flat housetops are much used in Eastern countries, and the upper rooms are the most comfortable. So Elisha stopped in this home in Shunem as often as he passed that way and there came a blessing; a son was born who brought happiness to the house.

This was not all the blessing which came by Elisha to this home in Shunem. After a time, the boy, the woman's son, was taken sick and died. He was with his father and the men in the field. We think of the broad open meadows near the village, and it was perhaps the hot sunshine of the early summer days which hurt the boy's head. A Psalm speaks of the danger from the sun in that hot climate: "The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the noon by night." (Ps. 121:6) They took the lad from the field to his mother and she held him on her lap till noon; but he died, and she laid him on the bed in the prophet's chamber while she made haste to find and bring the man of God. She rode upon an ass, a servant running at her side to drive the ass, across the green plain to Mount Carmel, which she could see in the distance from her home. She found Elisha there. He went with her to her home, and as he prayed and stretched himself upon the child, life came again. This was a picture of the day when the Lord would come to these same towns and would raise some who had died. Listen again and we will read this story. (2 Kings 4:8-37)

There are two little stories about Elisha at the end of the chapter which we will read when there is time.

## **Junior**

The "sons of the prophets." (Verse 1) So the prophets were called who lived together in companies in several places, as in Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho. Read the beautiful story of the pot of oil.

Study next and then read together the long story of the Shunammite. Find Shunem on the map and notice its relation to the roads by which Elisha may have traveled, to the harvest fields, to Mount Carmel, to the Jordan. In what other story have we learned of a room upon the housetop? (1 Sam. 9:25) Note the resemblance of two incidents in this chapter to incidents in the story of Elijah.

Baal-shalisha, from which the man came with a present to Elisha, was probably near to the hills of Ephraim. (1 Sam. 9:4) The present was a sort of offering. This was in the early summer when the barley is harvested and the wheat is beginning to ripen. The loaves of barley bread were no doubt the common thin round loaves; and the wheat was in the ears, which are so good roasted by the fire and even eaten uncooked, as the disciples ate them, rubbing them in their hands.

In reading this story of Elisha, please keep in mind, as I have asked the little children to do, that the prophet is a type of the Lord. The story of the prophet is a foreshadowing of the Lord's own life and miracles and of the blessings which He brought to the homes of the people. Remember the Lord's reference to the ministry of Elijah and Elisha as a picture of His own. (Luke 4:24-27) You will think especially of miracles of the Lord when you read about raising the child to life and about feeding a hundred men with twenty loaves of barley and ears of corn.

1. What story do you associate with Shunem?

2. Tell me about the death of the woman's son, and how he was restored to life. Of what other stories does this remind you?
3. How was the poisoned pottage made good?
4. What is told about first fruits? Of what other stories does this remind you?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The widow's pot of oil. What in spiritual life does oil represent, which takes away friction between things that rub, and softens and heals and burns with warm light? Remember how love among brethren is said in the Psalm to be like oil upon Aaron's head. We may have little true knowledge. In our ignorance we are as a widow whose husband, the prophet, is dead. But have we yet a little oil, a little love? The story tells us what to do. The woman's sons who helped her in drawing out the oil represent such power of understanding as we have, doing its best to make our love useful. We are to borrow empty vessels of all our neighbors. We are to look everywhere in our relations with everybody for opportunities to be kind and helpful. We must not neglect opportunities because they are empty, because they do not seem to have any return to us for what we give, but we must welcome them and fill each opportunity full. The good love is from the Lord, and as we draw it out at His command, He blesses it and gives us more. The power of evil which threatened to enslave us is lessened, and life becomes happy and satisfying. The oil flowed as long as there was a vessel to be filled. It paid the debt and the widow and her children lived upon the rest. (A. 9995, 10261)

The second story tells about building a chamber for the prophet that he might come in and stay. The house is a type of our own mind, and the different chambers of the house are the different states of mind in which we are in our labor, our rest, and our recreation. The housetop represents interior, heavenly states in which we rise above natural cares and pleasures and come nearer to the Lord. We build a chamber on the wall when above and within our care for natural things we reserve a quiet place for the Lord and His teachings. And we must furnish the chamber. We must not expect the Lord to dwell with us in an empty, vacant mind; it must be furnished with true thoughts and kind affections which the Lord can enjoy and use. No matter how plain and poor our natural house and circumstances may be, we can build upon the wall this upper chamber for the Lord, and can make it beautiful if we will. The Lord tells us that He stands knocking at the door. If we make the chamber ready, He will come in and make His home with us. (A. 5694, 7353)

Consider the blessing which came to the home where the prophet was received. A blessing will come to every mind which makes a place for the Lord and His Word. (See John 15:7.) The Shunammite did not care to be spoken for to the king, nor to leave her home. The Lord's presence with us may not bring a change of natural circumstances or position. What the Lord does give is a new life from above, the heavenly life of which He spoke to Nicodemus. (John 3:3) The beginning of this new life in us is represented by the birth of the child in the home in Shunem. (A. 3860, 3868)

But the child was taken sick in the field, and at noon he died. What can it mean? It tells of the languishing of our heavenly life through the excitement of selfish and evil loves. (E. 401) The woman's earnest efforts to find and bring Elisha suggest our duty earnestly and persistently to turn to the Lord, not only on Sunday or at other usual times, but whenever and wherever we feel that we have failed and need His help. The saddling of the ass and the riding are representative of our earnest use of our power of thought and understanding to find the Lord and to bring Him again into our lives. Then how wonderfully the prophet's stretching himself upon the child, "his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands," represents the Lord's coming near to us with sympathy in every weakness and need to give us new life. Through His forgiveness and His saving power, our languishing life revives, and it should be enjoyed with new gratitude and humility. (E. 899)

We often think of instruction which we give or receive as mental food. The boiling of pottage by the prophets represents the preparing of instruction by teachers in the church. The casting in of wild and poisonous fruit represents the mingling with instruction of some things which are false and are not helpful to spiritual life. How often this happens through ignorance or otherwise, in the preparation of spiritual food. Still, errors may not be dangerous if there is present a desire to find what is good, and to lead others to good. Goodness and the truth which comes with goodness are the meal which heals the poisoned pottage. (A. 3316, 8408, 10105; E. 618)

The miracle of the pottage tells how false thoughts are overcome and made harmless. The miracle of the barley loaves and ears of wheat tells of the great increase by the Lord's blessing of the beginnings of what is really true and good. Grains represent the knowledge of one's duty and the pleasure in doing one's duty, which make life satisfying. Barley is a coarser grain than wheat and is earlier ripened: it represents the knowledge and satisfaction of duty done in the motive of love to one another. The nobler wheat represents the knowledge and satisfaction of duty done from love to the Lord. We have not gone far in the cultivation of these heavenly motives. What we can offer of them is only our first fruits. If we are told that they are to become the main satisfaction of life for ourselves and for the world, it seems hard to believe. Yet with the Lord's blessing, this will be so: He taught it in the miracle done by Elisha, and in His own miracles of feeding the multitudes. (E. 430, 617)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Oil and Vessels

The oil about which we read in today's story is the best and most wonderful oil on earth: namely, olive-oil. This is pressed out of the fruit of a tree which grows only in warm countries, as in Palestine and adjacent lands: in the south of Europe: and also in the United States, in the southern portion of California.

I wish I could tell you about this wonderful tree, the olive-tree, or, as it is also called in the Scriptures, the "tree of oil," and also tell you the stories that are told about it in the word, but we cannot stop for this at present. Today we have time only to learn about the oil that is pressed from its fruit.

It is very difficult to buy olive-oil that is pure, except where the olive-trees grow. Most of the olive-oil that we buy for the table is not pure but is mixed with other oils. Still, if you will get some of this, you will have a fair idea of what pure olive-oil is like. You will notice that it has a beautiful golden color, slightly tinged with a soft green; it has a delicate aroma, a very pleasant taste, and is very smooth to the touch. And you cannot imagine all the different uses it is put to.

It is used as food. We read in the Word that the holy bread was generally made of flour mixed with oil. It was also spread upon bread like butter. It was burnt in lamps, making a beautiful soft light. It is used as medicine, both internally and outwardly: you may remember the story of the good Samaritan who poured oil and wine into the wounds of the man who had been set upon by the robbers. (Luke 10) It is used in softening the skin and the hair. It is used to prevent friction in machinery. It is used as a preservative in bottles of wine, floating on the top of the wine so that no air can get at it. It is used to make soap. And it has other uses.

But the most important use which it performed was in anointing. What was that? The oil was poured on people or things for a holy purpose. You may remember that Jacob poured oil on the stone which he had used as a pillow, the time that he had the lovely dream of the ladder that reached heaven. (Gen. 28:18) You will also remember that kings and priests were anointed, and that the Lord Himself when He was in the world was anointed. (John 11:2; 12:3) Anointing oil for the priests and for the Lord was made of olive-oil mixed with expensive perfumes.

Since oil is so very useful, it is valuable. In ancient times, kings had regular oil cellars, where the oil was stored, and they were looked upon as part of their wealth. To have a great quantity of oil was as good as having gold, and so the widow in our story was enriched by having the great quantity of oil given her by Elisha's miracle.

We can understand that oil, being so very useful and valuable, and being the very life of the tree from which it comes, corresponds to something very useful and valuable, which is the very life of humanity and performs spiritual uses corresponding to the natural uses to which the material oil is put.

This valuable, precious, useful, vital thing is love and the goodness which belongs to love. Most especially love to the Lord. Just as oil is food for the body, so love feeds the soul. As oil in lamps gives a soft light, so love yields the light of truth for the mind. When we have no love, we have no light, just like the foolish virgins in the Lord's parable. (Matt. 25) As oil heals wounds and relieves pain and restores to health, so love heals the hurts of the spirit and helps to comfort and refresh people who suffer spiritual distress. As oil relieves friction, so love prevents people from growing hot against each other. As oil preserves, so love keeps evil from attacking and destroying the spiritual-minded person. As oil made into soap cleanses, so love helps to purify the mind, etc.

Because oil corresponds to love, and this good love is holy, therefore whenever any person or thing was to represent something holy, the person or thing was anointed with oil. The stone which Jacob used as a pillow when the dream of the Lord came to him became holy by his anointing it with oil. The weapons of war, shields and spears, because they represented the truths with which we fight against our spiritual enemies, were anointed with oil; they then represented truths which are holy only when they are used from a good love. When the altars and their vessels, and the tent of the congregation and all the articles in it were to be used for the purposes of holy worship, they were anointed with oil. And so were the priests and their garments, and the

prophets, and finally the kings, In consequence, the kings were called “the anointed.” The Hebrew word for anointed is “Messiah.” The Greek word is “Christ.” The Lord's name, therefore, means “the Anointed One.” He was anointed, that is, filled with Divine Love. Beside these holy uses, it was a common custom in ancient times for people to anoint themselves and others in order thereby to express the gladness of their minds and also their good will to one another.

Do not forget, then, that “oil” signifies good, and the delight and pleasure we feel when we love and do what is good; and that the holy oil, or “oil of holiness,” which was prepared for the purpose of anointing whatever was used in worship, signified the Divine Good of the Divine Love; that is, the goodness that is in the Lord.

But we need something else beside good. The widow had a little oil, but she had it in a vessel. And her oil did not multiply until she had borrowed more vessels to hold it. Without vessels, the oil would have been of no use to her: it would have been spilled on the ground. Now what do the vessels represent? They represent truths. It is truth that holds good as a vessel holds oil. Did you ever think of that?

Can people love good unless they have the truth which tells them what good is, and you do the good thing of loving the Lord if you do not know Him? Can you do the good thing of helping poor people if you do not know them, and if you do not know that they are poor, and how you can relieve their poverty? Can you do the good thing of loving the neighbor unless you know the truth that you must shun the evil that would hurt the neighbor? We must have truth to hold our goodness. And, therefore, the Lord provides that we shall have truths. He gives us His Word and His Doctrines for the purpose.

Now, can you “borrow” truths as the widow borrowed vessels? How can you “borrow” truths? When you borrow a jug or a pitcher, you ask it of someone who has it. So you “borrow” truths by asking questions, by learning truths, from others. And we must learn many truths, just as the widow was told to borrow vessels “not a few.” The more truths we learn from the Lord's Word, the more good we can receive from Him. Those who have few truths can have but little good.

But the vessels must be “empty.” What does that mean? Do you know what it means to put yourself into a thing? If you know many things, and feel proud and puffed up and vain about your knowledges, then you put yourself into them, and then the Lord cannot be in them. The Lord alone is good, and He can fill with the good of love only the vessels of truth that are empty of self.

If, then, you want to become a really good person, that is, a useful person - one who will be very useful all through life in this world and then in heaven forever - you must learn many truths from the Lord's Word and Doctrines, and keep your self out of them.

## **Lesson 5**

### **2 Kings 5: Naaman Healed**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Who was now the Lord's prophet in the land of Israel? Elijah? No, Elisha. His home was in Samaria, where the king of Israel lived. The king at this time was a son of Ahab.

There came one day to Samaria a great man in his chariot with servants. It was Naaman the Syrian. He came from Damascus, the great city of Syria where the king of Syria lived, and he brought a letter from the king of Syria to the king of Israel, asking him to cure Naaman of his leprosy; for a little maid of Israel, who waited on Naaman's wife, had told them of the prophet in Samaria who could heal him. We often read of leprosy in the Bible. It was a disease chiefly of the skin. Sometimes leprosy was very dreadful, but Naaman's leprosy was probably the kind which made the skin white or discolored in some part of the body.

The king of Israel was frightened when he read the letter, for he knew that he could not cure Naaman's leprosy, and he thought the king of Syria by asking something that he could not do was trying to make a quarrel with him. The king rent his clothes, which was a sign of grief. But Elisha heard that the king had rent his clothes. The king should send Naaman to him. So we see the great man with his chariot and his servants coming to the door of Elisha's house. Naaman thought that the prophet would come out to him and strike his hand over the leprous place, and with some great sign of power make him well. But Elisha did not come out at all. He only sent word to Naaman, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times." Naaman was angry and said, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" These were beautiful rivers of his own country.

At first he was angry and would not go as Elisha told him to, but afterward he went and dipped himself in Jordan seven times and was healed. He was made sound and well as a little child. Listen while we read the story; and you will hear also what Gehazi did, who was Elisha's servant.

##### **Junior**

"Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed. saving Naaman the Syrian." (Luke 4:25-27) The Lord said this to the people of Nazareth when He was rejected by them and was received only by Gentile people. This treatment of the Lord had been pictured in the treatment of the prophet long before. Do we know about Elijah and the widow? We learn today about Elisha and Naaman.

Naaman was captain of the host of the king of Syria. Syria was the country to the northeast of Naaman, and its great city was Damascus where the king of Syria lived. The king of Syria at this

time was Ben-hadad, the second of the name. He often had war with Israel, and it was in one of his invasions of the land that the little maid whom we read of in our story was taken away captive.

Naaman was a leper. You hear much about leprosy in both the Old Testament and the Gospels. It was chiefly a disease of the skin, as it seems to have been in Naaman's case, but sometimes it penetrated more deeply. Among the Jews, leprosy was considered very dreadful and unclean, and very severe rules about it were given in the law because it pictures a state of life which is very evil. Lepers were not allowed to live in the town, and if they saw others coming near them, they must cry out, "Unclean, unclean." to warn them away. (Lev. 13 and 14) When the Lord was on earth, He laid His hands upon the lepers with Divine kindness and made them clean. (Matt. 8:2-3) It was the Lord's power with Elisha and with the Jordan that healed Naaman.

In verse 5, we read that the king of Syria sent a letter by Naaman to the king of Israel, asking him to have Naaman healed. The king was not now Ahab, who had died, nor his son Ahaziah, who had also died from effects of a fall, but another son, Jehoram.

Naaman brought a rich present to give in return for his healing. A talent of silver was a weight worth between one and two thousand dollars. The piece or shekel of gold was a weight worth perhaps ten dollars.

In verse 8, you read that the king rent his clothes. Do you remember reading in other places of this sign of grief? Remember Jacob's grief when he thought that Joseph was killed (Gen. 37:34) and the pretended grief of the high priest when he heard the Lord's words which he said were blasphemy. (Matt. 26:65)

Naaman said, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" Damascus is a most interesting old city. Two streams, the Abana and Pharpar, rise in the mountains near Mt. Hermon and run out into the plain, carrying greenness wherever they go, and making a beautiful garden spot in the desert. The Abana, now called the Barada, which means "cold," is a very beautiful stream. The greater part of its water bursts out at one great spring at the foot of a rocky slope, and is at once a river of clear beryl color some thirty feet wide and three feet deep. It is joined by a smaller stream from higher up the gorge, and goes rushing down to give life to Damascus. The water is led about in little canals through the gardens and orchards, so that the city is bowered in fresh green, most refreshing to the eyes of weary travelers. Naaman remembered with pride his city and the beautiful river from the mountains that gives it life. But though the rivers of Damascus might seem more beautiful than the Jordan, they had not the same power to heal, for the Jordan was the river of the Holy Land and it represented the Lord's teaching of what is true and right, which has power to make life clean and sound which no other teaching has.

We read in verse 17 that Naaman took home earth to make an altar, for he thought that Canaan was the Lord's land and that offerings made on other earth would not be acceptable to Him. "Rimmon," which means "most high," was the name given by the Syrians to the god that they worshiped.

When we read how Elisha knew all that Gehazi did and what was in his heart, we remember that the Lord sees still more clearly all that we do or think: nothing is hidden from Him.

1. Where is Damascus? Who was king there? What had his relations been with Israel?

2. Who was Naaman? How is he mentioned in the New Testament?
3. How was Naaman healed? Where must he wash and how many times?
4. What is the little thing which the Lord requires of us, so small a thing that we may be in danger of despising it, and so of losing His blessing?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Let someone show us what is meant by washing, and then particularly what is meant by washing in the Jordan. Suppose we bring in a child from the street both physically and spiritually unclean. To cleanse him physically we wash him with water. What do we do to cleanse him spiritually? We teach him the difference between right and wrong, and help him to separate the wrong things from his life. This is spiritual washing, and the instruction or the truth in regard to right and wrong is the spiritual water. But the water of the Jordan has a special meaning. The Jordan runs at the entrance of the Holy Land, which represents heaven and a heavenly life, and the river represents the Lord's own teaching of right and wrong, such as is given in the Ten Commandments. This is the truth that has power. It was for this reason that John the Baptist baptized in the Jordan when he preached repentance. It was for the same reason that Naaman was commanded to wash in the Jordan. (R. 378; A. 4255)

If the Jordan, the river of the Holy Land, represents the Lord's teaching of right and wrong, what do the rivers of Damascus represent? Syria and Damascus, outside the Holy Land, stand in the Scriptures for an intellectual power, but a power based upon the learning of the world. The rivers of Damascus represent truth not from the Lord but from natural prudence and intelligence. It is often easier and pleasanter to cleanse one's life according to the opinions and standards of the world, but these have not the power of the Lord's commandments to search out and make right the deep things of the heart. The rivers of Damascus are attractive, but they have not the cleansing power of the Jordan. (A. 4112, 4720)

Let someone make a study of the meaning of leprosy of which we read so much in the Scriptures. Leprosy is often said to represent profanation, a willful mixing of good and evil. That kind of leprosy in which the skin was dead although it might be of unnatural whiteness represents life which may seem outwardly fair but is insincere and hypocritical. So life will be if it is cleansed by standards of the world, and not made deeply living by keeping the Lord's commandments. Do you see that there was spiritual leprosy in Gehazi, Elisha's servant, which was truly pictured in the disease which came upon his body? (A. 6963; P. 231)

It was the little maid of Israel living captive in Damascus who turned the thought of Naaman to the Lord's prophet for healing. There is a little child of Israel captive with everyone who is living a natural and worldly life—the innocence of heaven which has been given to all of us by the Lord. This reminds us when it can of heaven and the Lord, and leads us to Him for healing and to make life genuine. (E. 475)

What is meant by washing seven times in Jordan? Can we overcome a wrong habit by remembering the Lord's commandments once? We must do it patiently again and again, many

times, until we come to the heavenly state when it is easy to do right. Remember how the ark was carried around Jericho seven days, and seven times on the seventh day, and how the Lord tells us to forgive seventy times seven. (A. 716: E. 257)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Baptism

We have seen several times that there is a very close connection between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Indeed, the one is not complete without the other. The interesting story, which tells us that Naaman was healed of his leprosy by washing seven times in the Jordan pursuant to Elisha's command, represented Baptism, which, as you know, was instituted by the Lord in the New Testament. In studying the details of Naaman's story, we learn to understand what Baptism means.

Leprosy is a very loathsome disease. You will find it described fully in Leviticus, chapters thirteen and fourteen. It corresponds to the falsification and profanation of truth. When a person has learned the truth of the Word and so knows what the Lord requires of her, and believes in the truth, and begins to live according to it, and then afterwards lives a bad life, and twists the truth so as to make it sound as if it favored her evil life, this is called profanation. It is worse, far worse, than doing wrong and never believing in the truth. It is just like treason. There is no citizen worse than he who pretends to love his country and, while pretending to be fighting for it, betrays it to the enemy.

As leprosy represents such a profound evil as profanation, it likewise represents evil and falsity of any and every kind. People can be saved from every evil, and this is represented by Naaman's being cured of leprosy, and it is also represented by Baptism.

Naaman learned that to be healed he must go to the land of Israel and indeed to the prophet of Jehovah there - Elisha. So, in order to be healed of any evil, we must go to the Church of the Lord, and indeed to the Word, for Elisha represented the Word. Then Naaman had to go to the river Jordan and wash seven times. Now the Jordan was one of the boundaries of the land of Canaan; indeed, it was the first boundary which the children of Israel crossed when they entered the land, and therefore it represented the first boundary of the Church.

What does that mean: "the first boundary of the Church"? What is it that we must first come to and pass through before we can be in the Church? Why, we first come to know about it. The first knowledges that we learn about the Lord, about His Word, about heaven, about how we must live, all these knowledges we first come to and pass through before we can be in the Church. Such knowledges are therefore the first boundary of the Church. Besides, the Jordan was a river of water, and water also represents truth. The truth we learn in the letter of the Word, the truths that we learn at home, in Sunday school, and in church, from the Word of the Lord, all these are represented by the waters of the river Jordan.

The way to become cured of bad habits of thought and will and speech and deed is to apply these truths, just as Naaman washed his body in the Jordan, and just as John the Baptist baptized people in the same river, and just as a baby is baptized with water in Church. The Jordan runs in a

low bed - the lowest place, except the Dead Sea, in the land of Canaan. And so we generally have the baptismal font in church in the lowest place in the church building - not high up where the altar is, nor where the pulpit is, but on the floor of the church, and sometimes near the door, to show that Baptism represents the entrance into the Church, and that we enter the Church low down, at "the first boundary" by learning to know the truths that the Lord has given on the lowest plane of His Word, the literal sense, and by living according to them.

Naaman was told to wash seven times because the number seven signifies what is full and complete, and also what is holy. The Divine truths which are to clean and purify our souls are holy, and we must use them over and over again, until we are fully and completely clean.

Getting rid of false ideas and of evil desires by applying the Lord's truths to our thoughts and life is called being reformed and regenerated. Do you know why? Because just as our bodies are fashioned or shaped or formed in such a very wonderful way that they can do numberless ingenious things, so our minds are fashioned and shaped and formed (but of spiritual and not material substances) so that they can think and love in numberless ways. If your body is deformed, if you have a stiff finger, or a crippled leg, you cannot do your work well. Indeed, you may do harm. If you are tongue-tied, or have some other imperfection of the organs of speech, you cannot speak beautifully. Your stiff finger may be healed, so may your crippled leg, so may your tongue, by being put back into the orderly form, by being "re-formed." Now, when we are deformed spiritually, by having done wrong, in disobedience to the Lord, we can be cured, and this healing consists in reforming us by the truth of the Lord. Regeneration - or "rebirth" - has a similar meaning. The Lord said that we must be born again. When a baby is being born, he or she is being formed by the Lord into a human being. So when a person is reborn, he or she is formed by the Lord into an angel. It is a wonderful process, and the Arcana Coelestia and others of the Writings of the Church tell us a great deal about this wonderful process. The angels take the greatest delight in studying this subject, and I know you will also when you are older. Meanwhile, remember that just as people cannot form themselves and cannot bear themselves (the Lord creates and shapes and forms them), so they cannot regenerate themselves, any more than Naaman could heal himself. But Naaman had to do something; he had to go to the Jordan and wash seven times, and then the Lord healed him. So we must do something; we must learn the truths of the Lord's Word, and live obediently and gladly according to them, and then the Lord reforms and regenerates us.

## **Lesson 6**

### **2 Kings 6:1-23: Elisha Defended**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Elisha was once with one of the companies of prophets. They lived in companies in several towns. The home of this company of prophets was too small. They did not have room and needed to build a larger home to live in. They would go to the Jordan where many trees were growing by the river and cut beams to build a larger house. Elisha was with them. As one was cutting, the axe

head slipped from the handle and fell into the water. He cried to Elisha, "Alas, my master, for it was borrowed." What did Elisha do? For the Lord showed him how to help. Read verses 6 and 7.

Another story about Elisha. There was often war in those days between Israel and the people of Syria and Damascus. From time to time, bands of Syrian soldiers made their way into the land of Israel, bands like the one that had once carried away the little maid who waited on Naaman's wife. But in some way, the places where the Syrians hid themselves to make an attack were known, not only once or twice, but many times. Was some one of the Syrians telling the king's secrets to the king of Israel? The king thought so, but no, it was Elisha the prophet who showed the king of Israel the secrets of the Syrians. The king of Syria learned where Elisha was and sent horses and chariots and an army of soldiers to take him. They came by night, and in the morning when Elisha and his servant had risen early what did they see? And what happened? Read verses 15-17. What does the Psalm say that we are learning? "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." (Ps. 91:11) Another Psalm says, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." (Ps. 34:7)

And what did Elisha do? There came no fire from heaven that day, as once when soldiers were sent to take Elijah. Read how the Syrian soldiers were stricken with blindness, how they were led to Samaria, given food, and sent home to their master. (Verses 18-23)

## **Junior**

We have heard of companies of prophets living in several towns of Canaan, who were visited from time to time by Elijah and Elisha. What had once happened when Elisha visited the prophets at Gilgal? One of these companies, we are not told which, or where they were living, found its quarters too small and wished to build larger quarters. Elisha was with them, and they went to the Jordan to cut beams for the new building. The Jordan runs in a sunken channel that winds through broad meadows. In many parts of this sunken channel, there is a heavy growth of trees, often standing at the very water's edge so that the overhanging branches are swept by the stream. Read verses 1-7, about the trouble one of the men was in as he was cutting wood, and the miracle that was done by Elisha.

The king of Syria warred against Israel. There had been war between Syria and Israel off and on for many years. Later in the chapter, we find that Ben-hadad was still king of Syria and that he gathered all his host and besieged Samaria. (Verse 24) No doubt the same king is meant in our story, and the king of Israel was Jehoram, Ahab's son. The warfare at this time was not between great armies, but small bands of Syrians were making inroads and plundering the land. (2 Kings 5:2; 6:23)

The Syrians found, time after time, that their plans were discovered and that the king of Israel was told where they were lying in wait. It was Elisha who knew from the Lord, and who told the king of Israel. The king of Syria sent men to take Elisha. They found him at Dothan and surrounded the hill on which the town stood, by night, with armed men and horses and chariots. Do you remember the name Dothan in the story of Joseph? And can you find it on the map, some ten miles north of Samaria?

We can imagine the fear of Elisha's servant when in the morning he saw the city surrounded by the Syrians. "Alas, my master!" he cried. "how shall we do?" Elisha was not afraid: and at his

prayer, "the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." This reminds us of the chariot of fire and horses of fire that Elisha saw when Elijah was taken up into heaven. (2 Kings 2:11) When we are faithful to the Lord and trying to do our duty, if our spiritual eyes should be opened we would always see that angels are with us, protecting and helping us. We do not see them with us, but if we are trying to do right, it is always true, as Elisha said to his servant, that "they that be with us are more than they that be with them." We need not fear, for all heaven is on our side. We are reminded, too, of the promise in Ps. 91, and in Ps. 34:7, that angels are our strong helpers.

Do you remember what had happened to companies of men who had been sent to take Elijah: how fire came down from heaven and destroyed them? (2 Kings 1:9-15) They had been sent by Ahaziah king of Israel. The Syrians were less to blame who tried to take Elisha, and they were not so severely treated. At Elisha's prayer, they were smitten with blindness. He led them to Samaria, and when their eyes again were opened, they were in the midst of Samaria, in the power of Israel. The king of Israel was eager to smite and kill the Syrians. But read Elisha's answer to him, and what he told the king to do. (Verses 18-23)

1. Tell me the story of the axe head.
2. Why did the king of Syria send men to take Elisha? Where did they find him?
3. How was Elisha defended? Have we any such protection?
4. What came upon the Syrians? Where were they led? How were they treated?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Cutting with an axe or other tool represents the work of shaping something in the mind, and often with pride in one's own intellectual power. Read again I Kings 6:7, how the temple "was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building." Stones represent sure, fixed truth, and we must take truth as it is, as the Lord gives it to us, and not shape it to suit ourselves. Wood is warmer and softer than stone, and it represents goodness of life which grows with experience year by year. Cutting wood with an axe represents reasoning about goodness, often with the thought that we are good and deserving in our own strength. The axe head is the keen intellect which is engaged in such reasoning, and the handle of the axe is the purpose of use and kindness which should guide the thought. It may happen in our thinking, especially in argument with another, that the thought forgets its purpose of use and kindness. The axe head slips from the handle. It may then do harm to another by its sharpness and hardness. Read Deut. 19:5, and full and interesting explanations of the passage in A. 9011, where it is clearly shown that the slipping of the axe head from its handle represents a separation of intellectual power from a controlling motive of use and kindness. Then all real intelligence is gone. The piece of wood which Elisha threw into the water, which was the means of recovering the axe head, would seem to represent a new purpose of use and kindness, which is the means of restoring the power of thought and making it effective. (E. 61S, 1145; R. 411)

Horses, the noblest animals of travel, represent the power of spiritual understanding, and chariots represent forms of truth, or doctrines, by which the understanding is effective. The horses and chariots of fire associated with the prophets Elijah and Elisha represent the understanding of spiritual truth of the Lord's Word, giving power and glory to its letter. Recall especially the horses and chariot of fire which carried Elijah into heaven while he dropped his rough mantle to the earth. Notice the peculiar name applied both to Elijah and Elisha: "The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." (2 Kings 2:11-12; 13:14) It was because Elijah and Elisha stood for the Lord's Word and the power of its Divine truth and doctrine.

There is strength and comfort in the Lord's Word for us. That is why it is so necessary to read it and to learn some parts of it by heart. It is also by the Word, more than by any other means, that angels are brought near with their protecting presence. (A. 2762: E. 355)

We have learned that the Syrians represent a natural understanding according to standards of the world. The ignorance and falseness of this understanding when it sets itself against the Lord and His Word is represented by the blindness which came upon the Syrians who tried to take Elisha. The enlightenment of the understanding by instruction from the Lord's Word is represented by their following Elisha to Samaria and their receiving their sight. The kind treatment of the Syrians means that the natural understanding and all natural faculties when instructed from the Lord's Word may receive new strength and satisfaction and take their right place in relation to the spiritual life. (A. 4720)

## **Lesson 7**

### **2 Kings 7: Samaria Delivered**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

In the last chapter, verse 24, it was said that Ben-hadad, king of Syria, gathered all his host and went up and besieged Samaria. His army camped about the city on its hill and shut the people in. King Jehoram was there in his palace and Elisha the prophet in his house. No one could go out or in to bring food into the city, and there was great famine and suffering among the people. Jehoram felt that it was from the Lord, and he was angry with Elisha. He even sent a man to Elisha's house to kill him, but the prophet knew that he was coming and they held the door. The king also came to the prophet's house. (2 Kings 6:32: 7:17)

Then Elisha spoke from the Lord, and promised that instead of the want which there was that day in the city, the next day there would be great plenty. A measure of fine flour would be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel. The measure was about a peck, and a shekel was worth something more than fifty cents. This was a very little price compared with the great sums that people had been paying for almost worthless food. When Elisha gave this promise from the Lord, it seemed impossible that it could be. One of the king's captains who waited on him laughed at the prophet's words, saying that if the Lord should open the windows of heaven it could not be;

and Elisha said that the man should see the plenty but should not eat thereof. We must learn how it all came true.

There were four lepers outside the gate of Samaria. You know that lepers were not allowed to come near to other people, nor to come into the town. (Lev. 13:46; Num. 5:2-3) Today the lepers are often seen outside a city near the gate, begging from the passers-by. In this time of famine in Samaria, no one from the city gave the lepers food; they could not go inside; they would go to the Syrian camp: perhaps they would be kindly treated. They went in the evening, and as they came to the edge of the camp they found it deserted; no one was there; the tents were empty; the horses and asses were standing tied in their places. The Syrians had fled, "for the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host." They thought that the king of Israel had hired the Hittites to help him. These were an ancient people to the north of Canaan. One of their strong cities was Kadesh on the Orontes river. They thought they heard the Hittites coming from the north, and the kings of Egypt with their armies from the south.

The Syrians fled in great fright down the broad valley that leads from the neighborhood of Samaria to the Jordan. They left their camp as it was, for they had no thought but to get safely out of the country. The four lepers began to take the good things which they found in the camp, but then thought that they ought to tell the people in the city. They brought word to the porter at the gate, and in the night men went and told the king.

He could not believe that the enemy soldiers were gone. He thought they had left the camp to tempt the people of Israel out from the city and that then they would fall upon them, but he sent two chariots with a few of the men and horses to find out if it were really so. They followed the way that the Syrians had gone to the Jordan, and found garments and vessels scattered all the way along. When they brought back word, the people from Samaria helped themselves to the good things which were left in the Syrians' camp, and there was plenty again in the city. It came true as Elisha had said from the Lord: and as you read the story you will see how the word also came true which he had spoken about the king's captain who had disbelieved the promise.

1. Why was there famine in Samaria? What promise did Elisha give?
2. How did the promise come true? Where were wheat and barley found?
3. What drove the Syrians away? Who first learned that they had gone?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The Syrians hearing the noise of chariots and horses will remind you of the time when horses and chariots of fire were seen round about Elisha. It may remind you also of the time when David heard the sound of marching in the tops of the trees. (2 Sam. 5:24) As the eyes of Elisha's servant were opened to see horses and chariots of fire, so, we cannot doubt, the sound was from the other World. Both were expressive of the presence of heaven on the side of right. They especially stand for the heavenly and Divine power which comes with true understanding of the Lord's Word and true doctrine from it; for these are what horses and chariots on the side of the Lord's prophet and of Israel represent. (A. 2762, 5321)

The Syrians thought the sound that they heard was the Hittites and Egyptians coming to the aid of Israel. Was not this because the Hittites and Egyptians represent things which are awakened in ourselves by the influence of the Lord and heaven, and called to the aid of our spiritual understanding (Israel) in its conflict with the natural and false reasoning of the world (Syria)? The Hittites were remnants of an ancient nation and were among those of the nations of Canaan who preserved most of innocence. We learn that they represented remains of childlike knowledge and willingness to learn. (A. 1203, 2913) The Egyptians stand for memory and for the stores of knowledge gathered from nature and from the letter of the Word. (A. 1461, 1462; E. 654) These are called out by the influence of heaven and are the strength of spiritual understanding.

We read of famine and then of plenty in Samaria. Famine in the spiritual life is a lack of knowledge in regard to serving the Lord and one another, and of the satisfaction of living according to such knowledge. This famine comes when the mind is besieged by natural, worldly thoughts and reasonings. After these are dispersed, the heavenly satisfactions return, represented by the barley and wheat again plenty in Samaria. (R. 323; E. 356) Can you explain spiritually how food from the camp of the Syrians could satisfy hunger in Samaria? The treasures of the natural thought and mind may become truly useful and satisfying when they are taken possession of by spiritual life.

## Lesson 8

### 2 Kings 9:14-37: Jehu the Reformer

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

When Elijah was discouraged and fled to Horeb, the mount of God, the Lord gave him new courage and also told him several things to do. He told him to find Elisha, who would be prophet after him, and said also, "Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel." (1 Kings 19:16) The time had now come for Jehu to be anointed. He was a strong, rough man who was needed to destroy the wicked family of Ahab and Jezebel and the evil worship of Baal which they had encouraged. Jehu was now at Ramoth-gilead in the country beyond Jordan, fighting with the Syrians. Joram, the son of Ahab, who was now king of Israel, had also been in the war at Ramoth-gilead, but he had been wounded and had come back to Jezreel to be healed. Elisha was now the prophet, and it was for him to see that Jehu was anointed. He did not go himself, but sent a young man of the prophets to Ramoth-gilead. A king was anointed by pouring oil upon his head. You remember the anointing of Saul and of David by Samuel. So this prophet took from Elisha a vial of oil and went on his errand. The young prophet found Jehu, and called him from the company with whom he was sitting, and anointed him and told him that the family of Ahab and Jezebel would be destroyed.

Now we go back to Jezreel, where Naboth's vineyard once was, and where Ahab and Jezebel had a palace. Joram, Ahab's son, who was now king, was there, having come back from the war to be healed of his wound. You remember the beautiful green valley down which the brook runs from Gideon's spring, near Jezreel, to the Jordan. The watchman on the tower at Jezreel, looking down

this valley, spied Jehu in his chariot with his company driving up the valley. What could it mean? The king sent a messenger on horseback to ask, "Is it peace?" but he did not come back with an answer. He sent another, but he did not come. The company now drew nearer, and the watchman said, "The driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi, for he driveth furiously."

Then King Joram and his cousin, the king of Judah, who was visiting him at the time, went out each in his chariot, to meet Jehu. "Is it peace, Jehu?" he asked; but there was no peace, and they turned their chariots to flee. Jehu drew his bow with his full strength and Joram sank down in his chariot, shot through the heart; his body was cast into the field which once was Naboth's vineyard. The king of Judah fled on toward Jerusalem, but Jehu followed, and that king too was killed in his chariot. Then Jehu came to Jezreel, and as he entered the city Jezebel, who had been the cause of so much wickedness, was thrown from a window, and met the terrible death which Elijah had predicted. (1 Kings 21:23) So Jehu destroyed the family of Ahab and the priests of Baal, and Jehu and his sons were kings of Israel for many years.

## **Junior**

What prophet did we learn of long ago who took a horn of oil and anointed a king as the Lord told him to do? You remember how Samuel anointed both Saul and David. Now Elisha sent one of the prophets to anoint a king over Israel, to rule in place of Jezebel and the family of Ahab who had led the people into so much wickedness.

Jehu was at Ramoth-gilead in the country east of Jordan, the town where Ahab had met his death. The army of Israel was holding the city against the Syrians, for Hazael king of Syria was their enemy, as Ben-hadad who was king before him had been. Joram, Ahab's son, had been at Ramoth-gilead but had gone back to Jezreel to be healed of his wounds. Jehu was one of the chief captains with the army and was sitting with the other captains when the messenger of Elisha came. The messenger anointed him and told him that the Lord had made him king, and that he should destroy the wicked family of Ahab.

Jehu told the other captains, and they were his friends. They blew the trumpets and said, "Jehu is king." Then before anyone could take word to Joram, Jehu rode in his chariot to Jezreel. You remember the broad green valley that leads from the great plain of Esdraelon, between Little Hermon and Mount Gilboa to the Jordan. It was up this valley that Jehu drove with all haste.

A watchman on the tower in Jezreel saw the company of Jehu coming and told Joram. Twice he sent a horseman to ask "Is it peace?" or "Is all well?" but they brought no answer and the chariot drove on. They knew that it was Jehu, but they did not know why he came. Then Joram went out to meet him, and Ahaziah king of Judah who was with Joram at the time, each in his own chariot. Both kings were killed, Joram by an arrow from Jehu's bow, and Ahaziah by men whom Jehu sent after him as he fled.

The "garden house" is thought to be the name of a place called elsewhere En-gannim and today Jenin, at the southern corner of the plain of Esdraelon, on the road that Ahaziah would take escaping toward Jerusalem. He was wounded in his chariot and died at Megiddo, another town near the southern edge of the great plain.

Meantime, Jehu had entered Jezreel. Jezebel heard that he was coming, and, dressed royally like a queen, she looked out from a high window near the gate where Jehu would enter. He saw her there, and at his word, her servants threw her down from the window, and she was trodden under foot by the men and horses marching in. When, soon after, Jehu sent to bury the body of Jezebel, it had been eaten by the dogs, which prowl about the cities in that land and eat whatever they can find.

Several prophecies are fulfilled in this story. Read again, in 1 Kings 19:15-17, what the Lord said to Elijah at Horeb. We learn about Hazael in 2 Kings 8 and about Jehu in this lesson. Other prophecies were spoken by the mouth of Elijah at the time when Ahab and Jezebel took the vineyard of Naboth at Jezreel, and caused Naboth's death. (1 Kings 21:17-24) For the fulfillment see 1 Kings 22:38 and our present chapter.

1. When is the anointing of Jehu first mentioned? Where was he anointed? By whom?
2. Tell me about Jehu's coming to Jezreel.
3. What was the fate of Joram? of Ahaziah? of Jezebel?
4. What do we know about Naboth's field?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The destroying of evil people like Ahab and Jezebel represents in Scripture the condemning and putting out of evil things from the heart and life. Some outward evils of life can be corrected by truth of a natural, worldly kind; deeper evils by truth that is deeper and more spiritual; and the root of evil can be overcome only by the Lord's own truth, with the power of the Lord in it. Is not this meant by the command to Elijah to anoint Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha, and by the saying, "Him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay"? (1 Kings 19:17)

The bodies of Joram and Jezebel were not given burial, but the one was cast out, and the other was trodden under foot and was said to be "as dung upon the face of the field." This treatment of the bodies pictures the utter condemnation and rejection of the evil things which the people represent. For when burial is mentioned in the Word, it means to the angels resurrection and eternal life. This would imply that something of good was present that could be saved and brought into heaven. But the treatment of the bodies of Joram and Jezebel means that they represent what has nothing good in it and must be utterly rejected. (E. 659; R. 506; A. 2916)

The fate of Ahab and Jezebel and their family is connected with the wrong that they did in taking Naboth's vineyard. The taking of Naboth's vineyard represented the destruction of spiritual intelligence through an evil life, and this same thing carried to its completion ends in spiritual death. Dogs here are the delight in vile and evil pleasures which Jezebel represents. (A. 7784, 9231; R. 132; E. 160)

As a good king of Israel represents spiritual truth and intelligence ruling in the soul, a wicked king like Ahab represents false thought and reasoning, and his wife Jezebel who stirred him up to

evil represents the delight in evil pleasures, which prompts the false, excusing thoughts. What a power, but what a dangerous power this delight in evil pleasures may exercise in the life. Jezebel's being thrown from the window suggests the degrading of the mind by such evil delight, and especially the loss of all clear light and true understanding, for this is the window of the mind. (E. 159, 160; A. 3391)

The licking of Ahab's blood by the dogs, and their eating of Jezebel's body is the last horrible touch in the natural picture. Dogs sometimes represent a simple, kindly affection; but here they represent a love of what is utterly vile and evil. This is what people will come to if they indulge the delight in evil pleasures, which Jezebel represents. (A. 7784, 9231)

## Lesson 9

### 2 Kings 10:11-36: Jehonadab

#### THE STORY

##### Junior

Tell me about Jehu's coming to Jezreel. Where did he come from? Why did he come? What happened at his coming? We remember how king Joram, Ahab's son, and Jezebel, Ahab's wife, were killed. Others of Ahab's family were in Samaria: Jehu wrote letters from Jezreel to Samaria, and these all were killed - seventy sons (perhaps sons and grandsons) of Ahab. The prediction spoken by the prophet who anointed Jehu king was being fulfilled.

Look on the map and see the way that Jehu took in his journey across the plain and through the hills from Jezreel to Samaria. He could make the journey in a day. Two things happened by the way. He was near a shearing house, a place where shepherds sheared their sheep. The pit or cistern of the shearing house was the pool where the sheep were washed. Near this place Jehu met a company of travelers: they were brethren of Ahaziah the king of Judah whom Jehu had just met at Jezreel, and who had been killed by Jehu's men. The travelers seem not to have known what had happened but were on their way to visit the family of Joram and of Jezebel. The kings of Israel and of Judah were related, for Ahaziah's mother Athaliah was a daughter of Ahab. (2 Kings 8:18, 26) We shall soon learn more about Athaliah. This partly accounts for the friendly visits, and also for Jehu's killing Ahaziah and his brethren, for they were a part of the family of Ahab.

Another man met Jehu on his journey from Jezreel to Samaria, who was kindly treated and taken up into his chariot as a sign of friendship. He went with Jehu to help him: it was Jehonadab the son of Rechab. Later on in the history (Jer. 35), we read about this Jehonadab or Jonadab, how he commanded his people not to drink wine, and not to build houses, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyards, but to live a wandering life in tents. They faithfully kept this charge, and the blessing of the Lord was upon them. It is said in 1 Chron. 2:55 that the Rechabites were of the descendants of Moses' father-in-law, the priest of Midian, who with his family had joined the children of Israel on their journey through the desert, and had made their home among them in the land of Canaan. What we learn in Jeremiah leads us to think of the family of Jehonadab as good, faithful people

and to think of Jehonadab as a man of influence, an important help to Jehu in his work of putting an end to the evil worship of Baal.

Jehu came with Jehonadab to Samaria. He proclaimed a great meeting and sacrifice to Baal, which brought the priests and worshipers of Baal together not only from the city of Samaria but from all the land of Israel. Then when they were all gathered in the temple they were killed at Jehu's command. The images or pillars which were brought forth and burnt were made of wood. The image of Baal and the temple itself which were broken down were probably of stone. "Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel."

Still the worship of the calves remained which Jeroboam (Who was he?) had set up at Bethel and Dan. And Hazael the king of Syria was still the enemy of Israel and took away from them the country on the east of Jordan. The Arnon is the brook that runs into the Dead Sea in the middle of its eastern side, and it was the southern boundary of the land which Israel claimed. South of the Arnon was Moab. Gilead was the middle district east of Jordan, and Bashan stretched away to the north. This was the rich pasture land which had been given to Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh. Israel and Syria had often fought for it, and now the Syrians took it away.

1. From what place did Jehu come to Jezreel? To what place did he go from Jezreel?
2. What two things happened on this journey?
3. What family did Jehu destroy?
4. What idolatry did he destroy? But what other idolatry did he follow?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

How can a story like this, in which so many persons are killed, be a part of the Lord's Word? What can it describe in the regenerating life? The overcoming of something false and evil, in obedience to the Lord. The wicked king of Israel is the type of what is false, and the wicked king of Judah of what is evil. The families of these kings were killed, representing the thorough overcoming of the false and evil thing in all its developments and branches. We may notice that it speaks of Ahab's sons, and of Ahaziah's brethren; for sons represent developments of truth or falsity, and brethren forms of good or evil. (A. 489, 3815, 4750)

We recognize in Jehu the type of a strong reforming spirit; his chariot and his bow and his furious driving all suggest a bold use of truth in the correction of evil. The house of Ahab and Jezebel, against which the power of Jehu was especially directed, represents the life of evil pleasures and the false thoughts and excuses justifying evil pleasure, which need correction in this strong, bold spirit. The Jehu spirit may not be deep and spiritual, but it is prompt and thorough and not afraid of pain or sacrifice. Jehonadab, whose heart was with Jehu, and who rode with him in his chariot, must represent a kindred spirit, helpful in the same work of reformation. We may see a suggestion of John the Baptist in the command to drink no wine, which Jehonadab gave to his people. If Jehu stands especially for the power of truth and reason in reform, perhaps Jehonadab

(of the family of the Kenites) may stand for the perception of right which belongs to a child and to one of good natural heart. (A. 6827)

Jehu's strength was also turned against the evil worship of Baal, and it is said that he destroyed Baal out of Israel. The idol Baal was associated with the sun, and the sun in an evil sense is a type of self-love ruling in the heart. This may help us to understand and to remember, that the worship of Baal represents a life given up to the loves of self and the world and to their evil pleasures. (R, 132; E. 160, 324) The vestments given to Baal's worshipers by Jehu (compare the wedding garments in the Lord's parable) must represent the outward evil life which is the expression of self-love. This love and life, this Baal worship, can lead only to spiritual death.

The Jehu spirit, while it is bold and strong, is too natural and external to do perfect work. This is represented by Jehu's continuing to worship the idol calves of Jeroboam, and by the encroachment of Hazael king of Syria upon his power. The Syrians represent intellectual power of a merely worldly kind. Calves represent an affection for what is good and pleasant in natural life, and the worship of the calves represents a regard for mere forms of truth and goodness, without care for the spirit which makes them genuinely good. (A. 1186, 3249, 9391; E. 391 near end)

## Lesson 10

### 2 Kings 11: Queen Athaliah

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Joash was made king in Jerusalem when he was a little boy seven years old. His grandmother Athaliah had been queen. She was a very bad queen and had killed the children of the king's family who might be made king in her place. But an aunt who was wife of the priest Jehoiada (2 Chron. 22:11) saved little Joash and kept him in hiding in the temple so that he was not killed. Now after six years, the good priest Jehoiada planned to make Joash king. It was on a Sabbath day, when the guards who kept the temple were changed. He kept the old guard when the new guard came in, so that the guard was double in strength. He placed the men to protect the temple from any attack from the palace in case Queen Athaliah or her men should try to break in. Others he drew up in a line to protect the space before the temple. Then Jehoiada brought out the little boy Joash and set him by a pillar before the temple where the kings were usually crowned. There he crowned him king and put a copy of the Lord's law in his hand. Trumpets were blown, and the people clapped their hands and shouted, "God save the king!" The Queen Athaliah heard the noise, and coming into the temple she saw what it meant. The guards followed her and killed her outside the temple courts. So little Joash was made king, and the good priest Jehoiada was his teacher and taught him how to serve the Lord and to be a good king.

##### Junior

You remember the worship of Baal which the evil Queen Jezebel, wife of Ahab, supported in the northern kingdom, which was so bravely opposed by Elijah and Elisha. You remember how Jehu,

having been anointed king, came driving furiously up from the Jordan to Jezreel and killed the two kings, Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah, who went out from Jezreel in their chariots to meet him. (2 Kings 9:16-29) This Ahaziah was the one whose death we read of in the first verse of our chapter. We should know, too, that the wicked Athaliah was a daughter of Ahab and Jezebel and a promoter of the same Baal worship. When Ahaziah was killed, this wicked queen killed the children of the royal family, so that there would be no one to claim the kingdom and she could rule herself; and she did rule over the land for six years.

But something had been done which Athaliah did not know of: when the other children were killed, one little boy, a baby not more than a year old, was saved. His name was Joash. At first, he was hidden with his nurse in the "bedchamber," which seems to mean a room where beds were stored away. Afterward "he was with her hid in the house of the Lord six years." The temple that Solomon built was still standing. There were rooms connected with it besides the holy chambers where the ark and lamp and table were. Jehoiada was the priest in those days, in charge of the temple, and he was the faithful friend and protector of the little Joash.

The child was now seven years old and he was to be brought out of his hiding-place and crowned king. It was the faithful priest Jehoiada who arranged all this, and did everything to protect Joash from harm from Athaliah or any of those who took her part. Read how he called the captains of the temple guard together and told them his purpose and what they must do. The time chosen was the Sabbath day, when it seems the guard was changed. The men who were going off duty were kept, as the new men came on, and so a double force was at hand to protect the little king.

Three companies of men were to watch the palace and its gates, to guard against any attack that might be made by the queen or her soldiers. "So shall ye keep the watch of the house (the palace), that it (the guard protecting Joash) be not broken down." Besides the companies that watched the palace from which danger might be most expected, two other companies were to stand about Joash before the temple. Jehoiada gave King David's spears and shields from the temple to the men. These may have been spears and shields which David had taken from conquered people and brought to the temple as a sort of offering to the Lord.

Recall the porch across the east front of the building, and the laver and altar of burnt offering and the two bronze pillars of beautiful work in the court before the temple door. The lines of armed men reached across before the altar and to the corner of the temple building on either side, making safe the space before the temple door into which Joash was led out. He stood by the pillar "as the manner was." He stood in the place where the kings usually stood to be crowned, perhaps by one of the two bronze pillars. The priest Jehoiada put the crown on the head of Joash, and gave him the Testimony, and he was anointed. The Testimony is a name often given to the commandments, and it would seem here to mean a scroll with the law of Moses or some part of the law written upon it. It would be a sign that the king would be guided in his ruling by the Lord's law. (See Deut. 17: 14-20.)

There was blowing of trumpets and clapping of hands, and the people shouted, "Live the king!" Remember when Solomon was anointed how they blew the trumpet, and the people rejoiced with music and shouting, so that the city rang again. (1 Kings 1:40, 45) Athaliah heard the noise and came into the temple courts. She saw the young king standing by the pillar and knew the meaning of it all. They let her escape from the temple court so that she might not be killed on holy ground, but she was slain beside the palace. Solemn promises were made that the king and people would

be faithful to the Lord and to each other. The temple and images of Baal were destroyed, and Joash was set on the throne of the kings. "All the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet." Read the chapter.

The one who saved Joash was his father's sister, and wife of the priest Jehoiada. (2 Chron. 22:11) The wickedness of Athaliah reminds you of the wickedness of her mother Jezebel. In connection with the Testimony given to the king (verse 12), read Deut. 17:14-20. The death of Athaliah reminds you of the death of her mother Jezebel. (2 Kings 9:30-37) The covenant (verse 17) was between the king and people and the Lord, and between the people and the king.

1. Who was Jezebel? Who was Athaliah?
2. What did Athaliah do in her cruelty and ambition? Of what does this remind you in the Gospel story?
3. How was Joash saved? Where did he live for seven years? Who was Jehoiada?
4. Tell me how Joash was made king.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The story of Athaliah reminds us how cruel selfishness is, hating, and if it can, destroying whatever stands in the way of its own pleasure or ambition. (N. 71) Athaliah was a daughter of Jezebel and, like her, followed the worship of Baal. She must represent something of that self-love and enjoyment in evil pleasure which Jezebel represents. The queen of Israel stands especially for that evil delight in its power of perverting the understanding, and the queen of Judah for that delight taking possession of the will and crowding out and destroying all motives and all principles of life that would oppose the evil pleasure. This is represented especially by Athaliah's destroying the children who might disturb her power. (R. 132; E. 159, 160)

The little child Joash was saved and was hidden in the house of the Lord. So the Lord saves innocent and holy things of childhood and hides them near to Himself in the secret chambers of the soul, and, all unconsciously to us, protects them while selfish and evil things are active. By and by, it may be possible to bring forth the innocence from its hiding-place and make it a power in the life. The seven years that Joash was hidden in the temple suggest the peaceful period of childhood's innocence, and also the full and perfect protection which the Lord gives to the things of childhood in us all, until they can be brought out into the life. (A. 571, 5135)

The men who guarded Joash were armed with King David's spears and shields. Our David is the Lord, and David's spears and shields are the Divine truths of the Lord's Word which forbid evil and protect us from it. Childlike qualities, when they come out into the life from the secret chambers where the Lord and the angels have kept them safe, need these spears and shields of King David to protect them. They need teachings from the Lord's Word in regard to what is true and right, and they need a rational understanding of true principles of life to give them power in resisting evil and in leading the life into ways of happiness and peace. Every child that is crowned king needs the protection of King David's spears and shields. (Ps. 91:4; E. 205, 283, 734)

## **Lesson 11**

### **2 Kings 12: The Temple Repaired**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

One thing that Joash (spelled also Jehoash) did was to give orders to repair the temple. There was delay in getting the money and in doing the work till Jehoiada the priest took a chest and bored a hole in the lid and set it beside the altar. I will read you about getting the money and paying it out to the carpenters and builders, the masons and hewers of stone, who repaired the temple. The people were honest and no reckoning was made of the money. (2 Kings 12:9-13) Two things we have to remember: how the little Joash was made king and how he repaired the temple.

##### **Junior**

Who was the child who was hidden in the temple, and when he was seven years old was made king? Joash, and his name is written also in the longer form, Jehoash. Who was the good priest who took care of him and anointed him king? Joash was a good king, especially while the priest Jehoiada lived and instructed him. [The teachers will be interested to read about this king in 2 Chron. 24. But the account in Chronicles is considerably different from the story in Kings, and tells a good deal which is not required as a part of the sacred picture.] Places of worship on hilltops away from the temple still remained. People had worshiped in these high places from very old times, and although it had been commanded when the temple should be built to worship only there (Deut. 12:1-7), old high places still continued, even under good kings who were faithful to the Lord. (1 Kings 15:14; 22:43; 2 Kings 14:4)

When was the temple built, and by what king? What materials were used? Tell me about the cutting and bringing of the timber. Draw me a plan of the temple, with its courts and chambers. What was in the temple? What part of the worship was done in the court before the door and what part in the holy chamber? The temple was not now as strong and beautiful as when Solomon built it and dedicated it to the Lord. It had been neglected and perhaps had also been willfully robbed and injured.

Joash wished to repair it. He must get money for the work. At first, he told the priests to gather money: that which people gave for buying holy things for the temple, the money which was paid in connection with certain vows and was estimated by the priests according to the age and ability of the person making the vow (Lev. 27:2-8), and money which was given freely as a grateful offering.

But still the work of repairing was neglected. So Jehoiada took a chest and bored a hole in the lid of it and set it beside the altar, and money that the people brought to the temple was put into it till they had all that was needed. There was still left for the priest's own use "the trespass money and sin money," money that was paid for offerings of repentance when one had done wrong and wished to be forgiven. A part of such offerings was given to the Lord, and the rest was for the priests. (Lev. 5; 14:13) The money in the chest was taken by the king's scribe and the high priest

and was "told" or counted, or perhaps rather weighed, for it is doubtful if the Jews yet had money that was coined. It was then given to honest people to buy timber and stone, and to hire carpenters and builders and masons to repair the temple—the stonework and the woodwork that had been made in the days of Solomon.

The Syrians were the old enemies of the northern kingdom, Israel, and they now threatened Judah and Jerusalem. One king of Syria who fought with Israel was Ben-hadad, and another was Hazael. It is Hazael that we read of in our story. He took the city of Gath. Gath, you remember, was one of the great cities of the Philistines, in the edge of the hills of Judah. Hazael's army must have passed through the land of Israel in order to reach this city. It was coming next against Jerusalem. But Joash took all the gold and treasure from the temple and sent to Hazael to keep him from coming. Among the treasure that he sent were vessels and other precious things of gold and silver which different kings before him had dedicated as grateful offerings to the Lord. So the Syrians went away and did not harm Jerusalem. Joash soon was killed by some of his own people, in Millo, which was a fortress in Jerusalem.

We must remember Joash as a good king. When we read 2 Kings 22, we shall compare the story of Joash with the story of Josiah, who also was made king as a child and who also repaired the temple.

1. Who was the priest who instructed Joash and helped him to do right?
2. What did Joash do for the temple? Why was this needed?
3. How was the money gathered for the work? How was it spent?
4. Who was Hazael? How have we heard of him before?
5. Where was Gath? What have we heard about that city?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Joash did right all the days that Jehoiada the priest instructed him. We all are kings in our little kingdoms when we use our power of thought and reason to rule our lives in right and orderly ways. But our reason should always look to the Lord for guidance and instruction or it cannot rule wisely. Young men and women, as they begin to establish their kingdoms and to rule their lives, should remember that they are weak and ignorant, and that they need to be instructed by the Lord. The lesson is taught in Ps. 119:9, 97-100, and other verses. It is taught also in the story of the young Joash instructed by the priest Jehoiada. The priest instructing the king especially represents the guiding and enlightening of the understanding by a heavenly affection: for in ourselves such affection and understanding are the priest and king. (A. 9809; E. 31)

Compare this story of the repairing of the temple by Joash with the account in 2 Kings 22 of repairing done at a later time by King Josiah. Notice in what ways the two stories are alike. Both Joash and Josiah began to reign as children; in both cases there were honest workmen with whom no reckoning was made.

The building of the temple was a picture of the building of a character after the heavenly pattern, in which the Lord can dwell. This temple of character may be neglected and become weakened and defaced and be in need of repair. We need to renew our hold upon the great truths of heavenly life, and to renew and improve our understanding of them. We need stones and timbers for strengthening the house. The fact that the workmen dealt faithfully so that no reckoning was made with them, suggests that no selfish motive can have a place in the work of repairing and strengthening the temple of character. Compare in the parable of laborers in the vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16) those who bargained for their pay and those who accepted trustfully what was given them. There is also a beautiful thought in the fact that both the kings who repaired the temple entered upon their rule as children. It suggests that the childlike spirit in us is the one which makes us heavenly. The innocent and holy things of childhood when they are brought out in after years are the things which make character strong and beautiful. The gathering of money for the work from the little offerings dropped into the chest beside the altar perhaps suggests that the repairing, the strengthening and beautifying of heavenly character is accomplished by the little unnoticed remembrances of the Lord from day to day in all the things we do and say. (A. 4926)

## **Lesson 12**

### **2 Kings 13: Death of Elisha**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Years passed, and Elisha was soon to die. Elisha was sick, and the king, Joash, came to see him. We must read about the visit, and Elisha's last words and prediction to the king. (2 Kings 13:14-19)

##### **Junior**

Joash was still king of Judah living in Jerusalem—the one who had been saved from the cruelty of Athaliah and had been made king when seven years old, the same one who had repaired the temple. A son of Jehu was now king in Samaria in his father's place. Jehu, you remember, had killed Jezebel and the family of Ahab, and had put away the worship of Baal. However, Jehu had still worshiped the calves set up by Jeroboam at Bethel and Dan. So did this son of Jehu, Jehoahaz, who was king at the time that our story begins; and so did his son Joash or Jehoash who is king in the latter part of the lesson.

Suppose you write these names (and one more) in a column with the word Israel above it: Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II. Put the word Judah over another column and write there: Joash, and under it Amaziah, the name of the son who followed him. Make a third column for the kings of Syria. The Syrian king in the days of Jehu and of Jehoahaz was Hazael, and after him was Ben-hadad III. You will remember that we learned of other Ben-hadads. How were these three kingdoms getting on among themselves? What were their kings doing?

Where did the Syrians live? What was their large city? They had at times taken from Israel the country east of Jordan and invaded the western country, going as far as Gath and threatening

Jerusalem. In the days of Jehoahaz, they greatly oppressed Israel, taking towns away from them and allowing them to have only a small army - fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen. Jehoahaz prayed to the Lord because of this oppression from Syria, and deliverance came by the hand of his son Jehoash who followed him as king.

First, a sign of deliverance was given by the prophet Elisha. Elisha was sick and soon to die, and Jehoash came to see him. The king wept and said, "O my father, my father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." Where have we heard these words before? Elisha himself used them when he saw Elijah taken up into heaven. (2 Kings 2:12) This ends the story of Elijah and Elisha, the two great prophets of the Lord who so bravely did the Lord's work in the kingdom of Israel, rebuking the sins of the kings and of the people, and doing miracles by the Lord's power. They were types of the Lord, Who would years afterward walk over these same paths, doing Divine works.

We ought to take a little time to recall what we have learned about Elijah, from the Lord's first sending him to Ahab, his hiding by the Cherith and at Zarephath, his sacrifice on Mt. Carmel, his flight to Horeb, his rebuke to Ahab in Naboth's vineyard, his rebuke of Ahaziah for sending to an idol of Ekron, his being taken into heaven by a whirlwind.

In the same way, recall the story of Elisha, what we have learned of him from his first call by Elijah when he was plowing in the field, his seeing Elijah when he was taken up, healing the spring at Jericho, the widow's pot of oil, Elisha at the home in Shunem, the healing of Naaman, Elisha defended by the horses and chariots of fire, and other incidents which you may remember, the visit of the king to Elisha, and his death.

Read about the sign that was given by the king's bow and arrows, which gave promise of three victories over Syria. The first was at Aphek, perhaps the same place where years before Ben-hadad had been beaten by Ahab (1 Kings 20), in the eastern border of the great plain of Esdraelon. We are not told where the other two victories were gained. But the result of them was that the cities which Hazael had taken away from Jehoahaz were taken back by Jehoash from Ben-hadad.

Elisha was sick when the sign with the arrows was given and the promise of victories over Syria. Soon after that he died. One other thing is told us about his sepulcher which was no doubt a cave in the rock closed by a stone, like the sepulcher of Lazarus at Bethany, and like the sepulcher of the Lord. It was some time after Elisha's death, in the spring. Plundering bands of Moabites were in the land to carry off the early fruits and grains which were ripening in the fields. You will learn what happened as we read the story.

What became of the kingdom of Israel after Elijah and Elisha were gone? Four of Jehu's family were kings after him. One of them was named Jeroboam, and is called Jeroboam II. When have we known this name before? In a worldly way, he was a prosperous king and had a long reign of forty-one years, but he did not lead the people to the Lord, and the end of the kingdom of Israel was near.

We have a picture of Israel in the days of Jeroboam II in the prophecy of Amos, for at that time Amos was sent by the Lord from his home in Judah to rebuke the idol worship at Bethel and the oppression of the poor by the rich who were living in luxury in Samaria. Read Amos 1:1; 6:1-6;

7:7-15; 8. It was at this time also that the prophet Jonah lived. (2 Kings 14:25) One more lesson will tell us how the kingdom of Israel came to its end.

1. Tell me about the sign that was given at Elisha's bedside. What did the sign mean?
2. How were the sign and promise fulfilled?
3. What did the king of Israel call Elisha?
4. What miracle afterwards was done at Elisha's sepulcher?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

"The chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." Why should the Lord's prophet be described in this way? It was for the same reason that a chariot of fire and horses of fire were seen when Elijah was taken into heaven (compare the words spoken by Elisha at that time: 2 Kings 2:12), and that at another time the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. The prophet stands for the Lord's Word. Horses represent the power of spiritual thought and understanding from the Word, and the fire is the love within it—the truth and love which everywhere shine in the Word for angels. When horses and chariots are associated with the prophet, they represent the power of Divine truth from the Lord's Word, and doctrine from the Word. The going of the king to the prophet and his exclamation represent a turning of the mind to the Lord's Word with acknowledgment of the Divine truth as the source of strength. (A. 2762, 3321; E. 355)

A sign was given with the bow and arrows. Weapons of attack and defense represent truth used to expose and condemn evil and to protect good life. The bow is like a general principle of truth and the arrows like the many applications of the principle to particular wrongs. (A. 6421) We shoot with the prophet's hands upon our hands when we apply in this way the truth of the Lord's commandments, with a sense of His presence and guidance.

To smite with the arrows three times upon the ground is to make but a little effort to use the Lord's truth in subduing and correcting the natural life. It represents rather the intellectual condemnation of a wrong while five or six times represents a more patient effort to correct the life. Five expresses fewness, but also something of the fullness which is expressed by ten. To smite five times is to resist all we can, with the acknowledgment that our best effort is but little. Six especially represents patience in experiences of temptation which makes victory complete. (A. 2686, 2709)

A natural reason for opening the window eastward may have been that the arrow might fly toward Syria. But does it not suggest the deeper thought, of opening the window of the soul toward the Lord, with prayer for His help in resisting wrong" (A. 101, 9668; E. 422)

The return of life to a man when his body touched the bones of Elisha teaches us of the power of the Lord's Word to give heavenly life to us, and to restore that life when it has been neglected and dies. The invasion of the Moabites, which caused the body to be thrown hastily into the prophet's sepulcher, suggests the attack of some outward evil which so often is the means of awakening us

from careless indifference and forgetfulness, and of turning us to the Lord and to His Word for help. (A. 2916, 3812; E. 659)

Read the prophet Amos and Summary Exposition of Prophets and Psalms upon that prophecy.

## Lesson 13

### 2 Kings 14: Israel Against Judah

#### THE STORY

##### Junior

Have you kept the lists that you made of the kings of Israel and Judah? If not, we will write them again. Israel: Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II, and add now the name of Zachariah, Jeroboam's son. Judah: Joash, Amaziah, and add Azariah his son.

Our story today tells first about Judah. You remember Joash who was made king as a little boy. Do you remember how his life ended, how he was killed by some of his servants in Millo, a fortress in Jerusalem? (2 Kings 12:20-21) That helps you to understand verse 5 of our lesson. The law of Moses spoken of in verse 6 you will find in Deut. 24:16.

Amaziah made war on Edom, the country lying south of the Dead Sea on the east of the valley which is called in our story, "the valley of salt." The Dead Sea is very salty, and there is salt upon the shores. He took Selah, the rock, or the rock city, probably the city in the mountains of Edom which was afterwards called Petra, with temples cut in the cliffs. Amaziah seems to have been made proud by the victory over Edom, and he sent a message to Jehoash king of Israel to meet him in battle.

Jehoash had also gained victories over Syria. He treated Amaziah's message with scorn, and sent an answer in which he compared Israel to a great cedar of Lebanon, and Judah to a thistle which a passing beast trod down. The battle was fought. It was in Bethshemesh where the Philistine meadow reaches up by a sunny valley into the hills of Judah. You remember the region in the story of Samson and of the sending back of the ark by the Philistines. Judah was beaten, and king Amaziah was taken captive. The conquerors came to Jerusalem and broke down a large part of the north wall of the city, and took all the precious things from the house of the Lord, and hostages. The last word means that they took persons to keep as prisoners until Judah did things that they agreed to do. Amaziah lived some years after this, but his power was gone. At last, when there was a plot to kill him, he fled to Lachish, a strong city in the Philistine country, on the way to Gaza, but he was killed there.

The son Azariah, a young man, who followed him as king, did something to bring back the power of Judah, rebuilding Elath the seaport at the head of the Red Sea south of Edom. This was near the place where Solomon had built ships that sailed to Arabia and other shores, for gold and treasures. (1 Kings 9:26-28) Jehoshaphat, who was king of Judah in the days of Ahab, built ships at this same port to go for gold, but they were broken and went not. (I Kings 22:48) Azariah rebuilt Elath, but it was held by Judah only a short time. (2 Kings 10:6)

Who was Jeroboam I, and what evil thing did he begin in Israel? Now there was another king of the same name. He worshiped the idols which the first Jeroboam had set up, but in the forty years of his reign, the Lord gave him victories and he enlarged the borders of Israel.

The country that he gained seems to have been mostly on the east of Jordan, reaching on the south to the Dead Sea and on the north beyond Damascus up to the valley between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains, to the pass at the north of the Lebanon mountains, from the sea. It was called "the entering of Hamath," the way which leads to the city of that name on the Orontes river. This was spoken of as recovering what belonged to Judah, remembering the days when the kingdom of David and Solomon included Damascus and all this country.

This success for Israel was foretold by Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gathhepher. This is the same prophet that we read of in the Book of Jonah who was sent to prophesy against Nineveh. He came in the days after Elijah and Elisha, and his home was a village of Israel not far from Nazareth. The prophets Hosea and Amos also prophesied in the days of Jeroboam II. (Hos. 1:1; Amos 1:1)

Let me read you a few lines here and there from the stories we have had, and see if you can tell me in what story the words belong, or who spoke them. (1) "The barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail." (2) "The Lord, He is the God: the Lord, He is the God." (3) "And after the fire a still small voice." (4) "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." (5) "Go, barrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbors, even empty vessels; borrow not a few." (6) "A little chamber on the wall." (7) "If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" (8) "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." (9) "The driving is like the driving of Jehu." (10) "They reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they had delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen: for they dealt faithfully." (11) "Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times."

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

An important truth is contained in the law about the father and the children in Deut. 24:16, and it is taught again in Ezek. 18. No one is to blame for wrong done by another. The wrong that parents have done is not inherited by their children, but only a tendency or disposition to the same wrong: and the children are not to blame unless they choose the evil way, knowing that it is evil. Often in the old days a person's family or companions were made to share the punishment for the person's sin. We can understand now that this is not just, for in this world good and evil people are together, and people may be innocent while their friend or child may be to blame. (A. 5764) The saying of the commandment, that the Lord visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, etc., may remind us that tendencies to evil, and sometimes the effects of evil, are passed on by inheritance. But in the commandment, the Lord is not speaking of natural parents and children, but is telling of His opposition to and His effort to restrain evil and falsity in all their developments, and to multiply goodness and truth to the greatest possible extent. (A. 10623: T. 521; E. 532 end)

Judah defied Israel. It is a picture of the will bent on carrying out its own purpose and defying truth and reason. A strong spiritual intelligence is represented by the noble cedar of Lebanon. A perverted understanding and one finally destroyed by the passion of an evil will is represented by the thistle trodden down by the wild beast. Compare the "cedars of Lebanon" and the "fire out of the bramble" in Jotham's parable. (Judges 9:13) The discarding of truth and reason and the protection which they bring is also represented by the breaking down of the wall of Jerusalem; for this wall represents truth protecting the deeper things of heavenly life. (A. 9277; E. 635 end)

## Lesson 14

### 2 Kings 115:12-31; 16: Assyrian Invaders

#### THE STORY

##### Junior

These were troubled days in Israel and in Judah. It had been promised to Jehu because he destroyed the family of Ahab, that his children of the fourth generation should sit on the throne of Israel. (2 Kings 10:30) This promise was fulfilled: Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II, Zachariah. After this came a time of trouble and many changes. If you read 2 Kings 15:12-31, you find the names of several kings who reigned for short times in Israel. Notice especially the mention of Pul the king of Assyria, in verse 19, and Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, in verse 29. Probably the same king is meant. The great nation from beyond the Euphrates is appearing on the scene and will soon bring the kingdom of Israel to an end. In verses 19 and 20, we find the king of Israel paying the king of Assyria a great sum of money "to confirm the kingdom in his hand." In verse 29, we find the king of Assyria taking a part of the kingdom of Israel and carrying captives away. This was the beginning of the end.

Reading on in chapter 16, we find the king of Assyria mentioned in connection with Ahaz king of Judah. He seems to be his friend, for he comes to help the king of Judah against his enemies the Syrians. But this very friendship was the means of bringing trouble to Judah. While Tiglath-pileser, the king of Assyria, was in Damascus, Ahaz went there to meet him, and saw an altar there which pleased him so much that he ordered Urijah the priest at Jerusalem to make one like it. How wrong this was! The Lord had commanded that the altars of the heathen should be destroyed. (Deut. 7:5; 12:3; Judges 2:2) Yet here Ahaz had an altar made like the heathen altar at Damascus, the very country that fought against Judah, and tried to destroy it: and then he made it the chief altar in Jerusalem, placing the altar that Solomon had dedicated to the north of it, and the north means the place of darkness. So he disobeyed the Lord, and showed that he loved idols better.

Do you remember how the temple was planned? What was in the most holy place? What in the holy place? What was in the court? Ahaz now spoiled the beautiful bases on which the lavers rested, and took the lavers away, and he took also the twelve brass oxen away and placed the great brass sea on stones. (1 Kings 7:23-39) And he also spoiled the beautiful covered passageway, perhaps it was a colonnade, through which the king went to the temple on the

Sabbath day. And all this was the consequence of his not trusting in the Lord, but in the king of Assyria.

1. For how many generations did the descendants of Jehu rule?
2. What did the king of Assyria do when Menahem was king of Israel? What when Peka was king?
3. What did the king of Assyria do for Ahaz king of Judah?
4. How was this the means of bringing harm to Judah?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

Assyria stands for reason. When you hear people reasoning in apparently a very logical way against belief in the Word of God, or against belief in Jesus Christ as God, against a belief in the life hereafter, then you have the king of Assyria with his army marching against Israel. To the extent to which people allow their faith to be weakened and taken away by such reasoning, the Assyrian invades their spiritual Canaan and carries off first the silver (knowledge), then the people in Gilead and in the north (the more external and natural goodness and truth of the church), and finally all the people. It is important, therefore, to have a strong, intelligent, living faith undisturbed by false reasoning. (A. 1187: E. 654)

Assyria is directly the enemy of Israel - false reasoning destroying a true heavenly intelligence. But it is indirectly the enemy of Judah also. It leads to the substitution of other ideals than those which the Lord has taught us to love and worship. Natural and selfish ambitions borrowed from the ways of the world displace true worship of the Lord; so we copy the altar of Damascus. (What in particular is meant by removing the Lord's altar to the north side?) We neglect the duty of repentance and obedience to the Lord's commandments; so we remove the lavers from their bases and the great laver from its brazen oxen. And then also we lack the Divine protection that would lead us to a holy life in our Heavenly Father's home, for such protection is represented by "the covert" or "covered way" for the Sabbath. (A. 10042, 10235)

## **Lesson 15**

### **2 Kings 17:6-41: Israel Taken Captive**

## **THE STORY**

### **Primary**

Do you remember the golden calves which the first King Jeroboam set up for the people to worship at Bethel and at Dan? Do you remember who were king and queen of Israel in the time of Elijah, and how they led the people of Israel away from the Lord to worship Baal? There were other wicked kings after Ahab, and very few among the people were left who thought of the Lord

or cared for Him. He had brought them out of Egypt and had led them and cared for them all these years, but they disobeyed Him and worshiped images and the sun and moon and stars and did many wicked things that they learned from the nations about them, even sacrificing their children and burning them in the fire.

Then the Assyrians came from the north. They were a strong people, whose great city was Nineveh on the Tigris River far away. At first they came and made the kings of Israel pay tribute. But at last they took the strong city of Samaria after besieging it three years, and carried the people of Israel away as captives, and they never were brought back to their homes. How sad to be taken away from the land and the homes they loved, perhaps to be separated from family and friends, and to live with strangers in a strange land! And all because they would not remember the Lord and obey Him.

And the king of Assyria brought strange people to live in the towns which the people of Israel had left. They came from several different countries and brought their idols with them. These people had trouble, for lions came and killed some of them. They thought it was because they did not know how to worship the God of the land; for they thought each country had its own god. So the king of Assyria sent back one of the priests of Israel to teach these people how to worship the Lord. He taught them, but they only added this to their other worships; they still worshiped their idols and the Lord as one more god. Years afterward, the people of Jerusalem would not acknowledge these people of Samaria as their brethren: as it was said, "the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans," and even today there is no friendship between them. We will read the story.

## **Junior**

We have learned how the people of Israel left the Lord to worship Baal. The idolatry and the wickedness increased, as our chapter sadly tells us. Read verses 8 to 23. The "high places" were raised places where there were altars to idols. "From the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city" seems to mean "everywhere, in the loneliest and the most thickly settled places." The tower was for those who watched the docks or the crops in the lonely country. "Groves" were rude wooden images. The "molten images, even two calves" (verse 16) seem to mean particularly the two golden calves that were set up at Bethel and Dan by Jeroboam, the first king of the northern tribes, when they separated from Judah after the days of Solomon. He did it to keep the people from going to Jerusalem and the temple. You read of this in I Kings 12:20 33. It was often referred to as "the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." (See verses 21, 22 of our chapter.) "The host of heaven" are the sun, moon, and stars, which were so often worshiped. Causing their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire means the sacrificing and burning of children as offerings, especially to the idol Molech. (See verse 31 of our chapter.) The "divinations and enchantments" were lots and signs to which they looked for guidance instead of to the Lord.

The people of Israel were doing very wrong, and when they did wrong they were not safe from their enemies. Then the Lord seemed to them to be angry.

And what was the enemy whose power was now growing and threatening Israel? It was Assyria. In the Book of Jonah you read about Assyria and its great city Nineveh. Please find it on the map. The danger from Assyria was growing. First we read how the king of Assyria came and was bought off with a large present. (2 Kings 15:19-20) Then how the Assyrians took a part of the

land of Israel and carried the people captive. (2 Kings 15:29) Afterward, the Assyrians imposed a yearly tribute. (Verse 3 of our chapter) But after a time the king of Israel, looking for help from Egypt, refused to pay the tribute. Then Samaria was besieged three years and taken. Tyre was also taken after five years' siege. We read of these things on the Assyrian monuments as well as in the Bible. The people of Israel were taken captive, and strangers were brought to live in the cities of Samaria.

Some of the captives were placed "in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan" (Revised Version), which probably means the region west of Nineveh, about the river Khabour, a branch of the Euphrates. Others were placed in the cities of the Medes, which were farther away, to the east of the Tigris River. So the kingdom of Israel came to an end.

Of the strangers who were brought to the land of Israel some were from Babylon on the lower Euphrates. The other places named were perhaps also along the Euphrates, except Hamath, which was the old Hittite city on the Orontes, to the north of Canaan. These strange people brought with them their idols and their heathen worships, and although they learned something about the Lord from a priest of Israel who was sent back to teach them, they kept their idol worships, and they were always regarded by the Jews as strangers. Long afterward when the Jews were rebuilding the temple they would not let these people have part in the work. (Ezra 4:1-4) In the Gospel days the feeling was the same. (John 4:9)

It is sad to think how the people of Israel forgot the Lord and worshiped idols. Do we ever do so? When we let something else stand first, before the Lord and what is right? And when we do so, we are in danger of being taken captive. "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin," the Lord said. (John 8:34) We know how a bad habit takes hold of us and makes us its slave. And at the same time it takes us far away from our home in the Holy Land. We are like the prodigal son, in a far country, far from heaven and our Father's house.

1. By what nation was Israel carried captive? To what lands?
2. Were the captives ever brought back? Who occupied their country?
3. What worship had these people?
4. Why was it that the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Let some one study further for us the subject of spiritual captivity and of banishment from the Holy Land. (A. 892, 905, 9164)

We must think more particularly of the meaning of this taking captive of Israel by Assyria. First, as to the meaning of Israel. There are in general two faculties of the mind, the will and the understanding. They are represented by the two kingdoms into which the land of Canaan was divided, Israel and Judah. Which faculty does Judah represent, where the Lord was born and where He laid down His life for humanity? And which does Israel represent, where the Lord lived as a youth and man and where so much of His work was done? Judah represents the will with its

affections, and Israel the understanding with its intelligence. Israel's captivity, therefore, represents especially the captivity of the understanding when it comes into states of darkness and stupidity through the influence of false beliefs and persuasions. By and by in the story we learn of the captivity of Judah, which represents the will coming under the dominion of evil. (A. 4292, 4750: E. 433)

And what does Assyria represent, the special enemy of Israel? Assyria often has a good meaning. It is compared to the noble cedar of Lebanon. (Ezek. 31:3-9) The name is also associated with one of the streams of Eden. (Gen. 2:14) Both the cedar and the streams of Eden represent intelligence of a noble kind, and we are taught that Assyria stands for the rational faculty. (A. 119) This is a good and noble faculty, but if it grows self-confident and is used to excuse evil, and to make the false appear true, it is the special enemy of the spiritual intelligence which is represented by Israel. "I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent." (Isa. 10:12-13) The places to which the people of Israel were led captive represent various states of darkness—some more of ignorance and some more of evil—to which the mind is led by false reasoning. (A. 1184-1190) By and by when we study the captivity of Judah we must learn the meaning of their great enemy, Babylon.

The idolatrous people who were brought in to occupy the land suggest the evil and false things which crowd in when truth is gone. (A. 9164) Perhaps in this giving of the Holy Land to heathen people there is also a foreshadowing of the Lord's turning to the Gentiles, and to the Samaritans descended from these very people, when He was rejected by the Jews. The lions which attacked the strangers represent the evil passions to which all are exposed who are not protected by true faith in the Lord. (E. 650; A. 9335)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Israel Taken Captive

Read the chapter carefully, for it tells you of the end of the kingdom of Israel, and of the people's being carried captive to Assyria never to return to their own country. Remember that the kingdom of Israel consisted of the ten tribes who, under the leadership of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, rebelled against the rule of Rehoboam the son of Solomon, whose kingdom henceforth is called the kingdom of Judah. The Jews were also taken captive, later, but they returned after seventy years—the ten tribes never returned. The country which had been inhabited by the ten tribes was peopled by emigrants sent there from various districts of the Assyrian empire, as told in the chapter.

The reason why the ten tribes were permitted by the Lord to be carried away is also told in this chapter, namely that they had become wholly idolatrous. Away back at the time when the Lord brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, while Moses was staying on Mount Sinai, all Israel set up a golden calf at the foot of the mount and worshiped it. (Exod. 32) Later, when passing through the land of Moab, they worshiped the idol of the Moabites. (Num. 25:2-3) In the times of the judges, they worshiped Baalim or Asherah. (Judges 3; 6) When Jeroboam separated the ten tribes from the tribe of Judah, he set up the golden calves in Bethel and Dan. (1 Kings 12:28-29) Ahab instituted the elaborate worship of Baal and Asherah (or the

grove) (1 Kings 16:30, 33) and so throughout their history, which you will find rehearsed in the chapter.

In spite of their continued idolatry, so long as they still kept some of the statutes which had been commanded them by Moses, they were suffered to remain in the land of Canaan. But when they departed altogether from these statutes, no longer keeping any of them, then they were carried away out of the land.

And now for the reason of this.

You can see that the Israelites and Jewish people were not a truly religious people, or, as we say in the New Church, they were not spiritual. Indeed, they did not constitute a Church. They merely represented the Church. Their worship was not true or genuine worship. It merely represented worship. You have probably seen representations on the stage. You may have seen a man represent a king. He had on a crown perhaps made of pasteboard and gilt paper. It was not a real crown, but it represented a crown. He was not a real king, he only represented a king. But while he was on the stage, he acted as though he were a king, and you thought of a king, and of what is regal while looking at him and hearing him. It is generally so with representations. While they are not the things they represent, they serve the purpose of having people think of the things they represent, and so they are of great use. Think of the many pictures there are. They represent things. The choicest are of such a nature as to help us to think of sublime and holy things and to love these. Indeed, we cannot do so without representatives.

The best representatives are those which fully correspond with the good and true things. To illustrate what I mean, let us go back to the king's crown. The crown represents wisdom, for it dresses the head. A king wears it to show that he needs to be wise to be a true king, and that he must love wisdom, and must use his wisdom to rule his people properly whom he loves. For this reason the crown is gold, for gold corresponds to love. A real crown therefore corresponds to and represents wisdom from love. The pasteboard crown merely represents, it does not correspond to wisdom from love because it is not of real gold but of make-believe gold.

So there are many things in worship that are truly representative because they also correspond. Others merely represent. For instance. If, when you feel humble, because you know that the Lord alone is good and that you cannot be true and good from yourself, but only from Him, then you naturally kneel before the Lord, and bow your head. This corresponds to the state of your heart, and represents it. But if you kneel down simply from habit, and do not feel or think that you need the Lord, then your kneeling represents a state of humility, but it does not correspond to it.

Although the children of Israel were not spiritual, they could be of use to heaven and to humanity by observing the representative worship that was instituted among them. There are a great many "laws, statutes and judgments" in the Old Testament, especially in the five books of Moses, which, if they would observe them, even though they were not spiritually-minded, would, at that time, bring them into communication with heaven.

For instance: when they sacrificed a lamb every morning and every evening, if they had a holy feeling at the time, good spirits could be with them. The good spirits would not think about the personal goodness of the worshipers, but they would be attracted by their feeling of holiness, even though it was only a feeling, and not the real thing. And then while the worshipers were

thinking of the lamb that they were sacrificing, the good spirits who were with them would think of innocence because a lamb corresponds to innocence. In this way, at that time, representative worship conjoined with heaven.

But when the Israelites paid no attention to the statutes in the books of Moses, but served idols which were forbidden, then there was nothing in such idol-worship to suggest heavenly things, and good spirits and angels could not be near.

Besides, the most Ancient Church had been in the land of Canaan, and as the people of that church knew that everything in nature corresponded to something heavenly, that everything had some heavenly association, so the whole land represented heaven. This was the reason why the children of Israel, whose worship was to represent the life of heaven, were told to go to the land of Canaan. But when their worship was no longer representative of heaven but rather of hell, then they were no longer permitted to be in the land of Canaan which represented heaven, but were carried away captive to Assyria.

## **Lesson 16**

### **2 Kings 18: Hezekiah in Danger**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The strong army of the Assyrians came to Jerusalem when Hezekiah was king. The Assyrians were the people who lived far away to the north, who had taken the people of Israel captive and led them away to live in a strange country. The Assyrians came now into the land of Judah and took some of the smaller towns, and they would have taken Jerusalem if the Lord had not saved the city. Hezekiah was a good king, and Isaiah was the prophet in Jerusalem in those days, who gave Hezekiah answers and encouragement from the Lord. Hezekiah "trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him."

The Lord also made Hezekiah successful in his wars. He stopped paying tribute to the great king of Assyria, so when the Assyrians had captured Samaria after a siege of three years and had taken the people of Israel captive, they came against Judah and Jerusalem. The Assyrian army was in the Philistine country making war on the strong city of Lachish. Hoping to keep them from Jerusalem, Hezekiah sent to them there all the gold and treasure which he found in the temple and the king's house, this time even cutting off the gold from the doors and pillars of the temple.

But the Assyrians did not keep away. The king of Assyria wanted more, and he sent officers and a large army up to Jerusalem. They came near to the city wall, and their speaker spoke in a loud voice and in the Jewish language so that the people gathered on the walls could understand. He boasted that the Assyrians were very strong, that they had destroyed other nations and their gods and that the Lord could not save Jerusalem. He laughed at the people for listening to Hezekiah and for trusting in the Lord. "But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for

the kings commandment was, saying, 'Answer him not.'" King Hezekiah must take his trouble to the Lord and hear the Lord's word by the prophet Isaiah.

## **Junior**

Ahaz, mentioned in verse 1, was not a good king. You can read in 2 Kings 16:10-20 of one thing that he did, displacing the Lord's altar before the temple by an altar made after the pattern of a heathen altar which he saw in Damascus. Now Hezekiah was king. Read verses 1-6 and learn whether Hezekiah was a good king. We shall also learn that he was guided by the Lord through Isaiah the prophet.

Do you remember the brazen serpent (verse 9), how it was made by Moses at the Lord's command on the wilderness journey and brought them help from the Lord? (Num. 21:4-9) This serpent of brass by which the Lord had performed so great a miracle, and which was very holy, had been kept for more than seven hundred years: but because the people made an idol of it, worshiping it and burning incense before it, it was no longer holy, and Hezekiah broke it in pieces as he broke other idols. He called it Nehushtan, which is usually understood to mean a piece of brass. "From the tower of the watchman to the fenced city" in verse 18 means in the open country and in the towns. This good king Hezekiah was successful in all that he undertook. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and conquered the Philistine country.

We know what the Assyrians had done to the kingdom of Israel, taking the people captive and bringing strange people to live in their country. We read the story in chapter 17. Judah also had rebelled against Assyria, refusing to pay tribute, and the Assyrians came down upon their country. Read in verses 13-16 of Hezekiah's attempt to buy off the king of Assyria and save Jerusalem. Find Lachish, a strongly fortified city in the Philistine country.

Sennacherib was not satisfied, and so a great army was sent from Lachish to Jerusalem. The chief men of the Assyrian army stood outside Jerusalem by an aqueduct that brought water to a reservoir in the city, and some of the chief men of the Jews came out to meet them. Rab-shakeh, the "chief cup-bearer" of the king of Assyria, then addressed them, trying to show how foolish Hezekiah was to fight against the king of Assyria; that he was not strong enough himself, nor could he rely on the king of Egypt, nor even on Jehovah. For Rab-shakeh seemed to think that all the high places and altars that Hezekiah had destroyed had been for the worship of Jehovah. While this talk was going on between the Assyrian and the Jewish nobles, the Jewish soldiers gathered on the city walls and listened. Rab-shakeh tried to influence them also, by talking in the Jewish language, but not one of them made any reply, for so Hezekiah had commanded them. Do you think that the Lord will let the Assyrians take the city?

1. Who was king of Judah when the kingdom of Israel came to an end? What kind of king was he?
2. What did Hezekiah do to the brazen serpent? Why?
3. Did the Assyrians who took Samaria take Jerusalem also?
4. What at first kept them from doing so?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

In very ancient times, people worshiped on mountains and high places, and also had in their places of worship objects and forms representing heavenly and divine things, and these were helpful to them in coming into holy states of worship. But later when the true spirit of worship was lost, people worshiped the objects and images as idols. The objects became symbols of false and evil states, and the high places became symbols of self-love. They were then forbidden and must be destroyed. (S. 22, 23; A. 2722, 3727, 10643)

As the serpent is one of the lowest animals, and brass represents natural goodness, the brazen serpent represented the lowest plane or degree of the Lord's Divine love.

The Lord's words to Nicodemus (John 3: 14-15) show that the brazen serpent of the wilderness was a symbol of Himself and His saving power. Serpents represent affections of the senses, and poisonous serpents represent the senses overcoming people and deadening their spiritual life. The Lord lifted up and glorified this plane of life in Himself, made it Divine, and He extends His saving power to us in such temptations. The power of healing for the Israelites and the saving power for us is the Lord's. To Him we must look, and to Him we must give thanks. There was no power in the brazen serpent itself, and therefore when it became an idol it was destroyed. (E. 581; A. 4911, 8624) We must be careful not to idolize people and things through whom and by which the Lord brings us great wisdom, love, power, help, and salvation: we must look upon them merely as the means through which we may come nearer to the Lord.

It may seem strange that the upright king Hezekiah should have had to submit to Assyria. But we must remember that the nation was full of wickedness. Had Hezekiah not been upright, the end of the Jewish church would have come very quickly. For his sake the time was extended.

We have found Assyria the special enemy of Israel, and shall presently find Babylon the special enemy of Judah. This contains a spiritual truth, for as the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah, represent the understanding and the will of a heavenly life, Assyria in a perverse sense represents a conceited self-intelligence which is destructive of spiritual intelligence, and Babylon represents a selfish love of ruling over others which is destructive of heavenly love. The preservation of Judah from the attack of Assyria suggests that the Lord may preserve some goodness of heart even though the understanding is far wrong.

When we reason from error or falsity about the Divine teachings of the Church which are meant to protect and defend our love for the Lord like a walled city, and when by such reasoning we change the doctrine, then the king of Assyria takes the fenced cities of Judah, and with the loss of these teachings we lose the truth and good that are represented by the silver and the gold which Hezekiah gave to the Assyrian king. (P. P.)

We learn presently in the story of Hezekiah's healing (2 Kings 20:1-11) that Hezekiah represents a goodness of a simple natural kind. (E. 811, 1029)

The rivers of Eden in Genesis and the river of the holy city in Revelation represent abundant truths from the Lord, guiding and refreshing the heavenly life. The springs and streams of Canaan have this same meaning, and even the pools of Jerusalem, with their collection of water for the

use of the citizens, represent the great reservoirs of Divine truth from which people of the Church drink the water of life. We have seen this meaning in the pool of Bethesda (John 5) and in the pool of Siloam. (John 9) The reference to the “upper pool” reminds us that even an upper and a lower pool in Jerusalem gave basis to the prophet Isaiah for a spiritual lesson. He said in rebuke, “Ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool (Is. 22:9); of which we read in E. 453: “The pools in Jerusalem signify truths such as are in the exterior and interior senses of the Word; the waters of the higher pool signify truths such as are in the interior sense, and the waters of the lower pool, truths such as are in the exterior sense which is the letter of the Word”; and in A. 4926: “The waters of the lower pool stand for the traditions by which they made infractions into the truths that are in the Word.” We reserve for our next lesson more that is interesting about the pools of Jerusalem, and Hezekiah’s work for the water supply of the city.

The arguments of Rab-shakeh are like the cunning arguments suggested by evil spirits, when people are in trouble, and in danger of losing their spiritual life, which consists in loving things heavenly. They accuse people of what is not true, and try to shake their confidence and faith in the Lord's presence and protection.

Rab-shakeh spoke of the king of Assyria as the great king, just as people speak of reason as being greater than religion. The Lord is in reality “the great king,” and all spiritual and heavenly truth from Him should rule supremely, the reason being subordinate. (T. 200; E. 45)

## **Lesson 17**

### **2 Kings 19: Hezekiah Delivered**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Hezekiah was king in Jerusalem. He was a good king, who tried to obey the Lord, and Isaiah was the prophet who gave him instruction and encouragement from the Lord. And at this time he needed instruction and encouragement, for the insulting words of the Assyrians outside the walls of Jerusalem were brought to him. He rent his clothes as a sign of grief, and put on coarse rough sackcloth, and went into the temple and prayed to the Lord. What else could he do? He sent officers and priests wearing sackcloth to Isaiah the prophet. Read Isaiah’s answer in verses 6 and 7.

But soon the Assyrians were again at the walls of Jerusalem, demanding more urgently that the city should give itself up to them. This time they brought a letter from the king of Assyria, boasting of his strength, that he had overcome other peoples and other gods and that not even the Lord could save them from him. When Hezekiah received the letter, he took it into the temple and “spread it before the Lord” and prayed. Again the Lord’s answer came by the prophet Isaiah. Again it was a promise that the Lord would protect Jerusalem and that the king of Assyria should not take the city. “By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord, for I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake and for my servant David’s sake.”

That night the deliverance came. In one night, a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the camp of the Assyrians died. So the king of Assyria left Jerusalem unhurt and went back to his home in Nineveh in the land of Assyria, and there when the king was worshiping in the temple of his idol he was killed by two of his sons. This deliverance was remembered by the people of Judith in story and song.

## Junior

We remember how Rab-shakeh, the Assyrian officer, spoke against Jehovah, the God of Israel, comparing Him to the idols worshiped by other nations whom the Assyrians had conquered. This unholy or blasphemous way of speaking about Jehovah grieved the officers whom Hezekiah had sent to meet Rab-shakeh so deeply that they returned to Hezekiah with their clothes torn; and when they had told Hezekiah, he likewise rent his clothes, and covered himself with the heavy, black, coarse and rough sackcloth, and sent messengers, covered in the same way, to Isaiah, to pray for the remnant who were left in Canaan.

Isaiah was a great prophet, and the first and largest prophetic book which we have in the Sacred Scripture was written by him. You will find this same story in his book, in chapter 37. Isaiah told the king's messengers not to be afraid of the blasphemy of the king of Assyria, for the Lord would punish him.

Do you remember where Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, was with his army, when he sent Rab-shakeh to Jerusalem? While Rab-shakeh was before Jerusalem, Sennacherib went from Lachish to Libnah, which was nearer to Jerusalem. There Rab-shakeh returned to his king. Sennacherib was afraid of the king of Ethiopia, who was also king of Egypt, of which Rab-shakeh had spoken contemptuously as a "bruised reed." He was anxious to take Jerusalem before help should come from Egypt, and he again sent messengers to Hezekiah, this time with a letter in which he repeated his blasphemy against Jehovah, enumerating a number of places whose kings had not been saved from him by their gods or idols. (2 Kings 18:33-35) Some of these places were those to which the Israelites had been carried captive, and others were those from which settlers had been brought to Samaria. (2 Kings 17:6, 24) This suggested that the fate of Israel might also be the fate of Judah.

The letter caused Hezekiah great distress. You know that the Lord says that if we call on Him in trouble He will answer. (Ps. 50: 15) So Hezekiah prayed to the Lord, and the Lord heard him and sent an answer through the prophet Isaiah. As you read the chapter, do you notice a change in the language or style when you come to Isaiah's prophecy? This is called the prophetic style, and is quite different from the historical style. Part of Isaiah's prophecy is against the king of Assyria, and part of it is addressed to the king of Judah.

The words of Isaiah between verses 20 and 32 are spoken as if to the Assyrians. They have been very boastful; the Lord has allowed them to have this power, and to destroy some cities (verse 25), but now the time for their own judgment is at hand. The sign in verse 29 means that the presence of the enemy in the country would prevent sowing of the fields two years, in which they would reap only what sprung up of itself. The third year they could plant and reap.

Read of the deliverance and of the return of Sennacherib to Assyria and of his death, in verses 35-37. It is said that the angel of the Lord smote the camp of the Assyrians. In those days, they

attributed every influence from the spiritual world to the Lord. This was an evil influence which was allowed by the Lord to break out upon them because of the wickedness which they were in. "When seventy thousand men perished by the pestilence, on account of the numbering of the people by David (2 Sam. 24) and when a hundred and eighty-five thousand were slain in one night in the camp of the Assyrians (2 Kings 19:35) these effects were wrought by the hells which were then opened. Similar effects would be produced at this day if they were opened. Therefore they are kept closely shut by the Lord." (A. 7879) What fate met Sennacherib in his own country? Can you find on the map Assyria and Nineveh and Armenia? Psalms 46, 47, 48, and 78 are believed to celebrate the great deliverance from the Assyrians. Read these Psalms through with this deliverance in mind. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

1. Why did Hezekiah rend his clothes? Why did he cover himself with sackcloth?
2. To whom did Hezekiah send messengers in his trouble? Who was Isaiah? What did he reply?
3. What help for Jerusalem did Sennacherib fear?
4. What did Hezekiah do when he received the letter? How did he receive an answer to his prayer?
5. What happened that night? What became of Sennacherib?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The protection and deliverance of the little kingdom of Judah from the great armies of Assyria, which had been sweeping all before them, pictures the protection of the spiritual life which trusts in the Lord and His Word from the power of proud self-intelligence; for Judah and Jerusalem represent the spiritual life, and the Assyrians the power of reasoning. The power represented by Assyria in its right use is a splendid power, called in the Scriptures a cedar of Lebanon; but when proud and self-confident, presuming to make natural reasoning supreme, it threatens the spiritual life. We may have no answer to make to the proud taunts of the Assyrians, in the world or in ourselves, as Hezekiah's men on the wall of Jerusalem made no reply to the taunts of Rab-shakeh. We must find strength in humbly praying to the Lord and receiving answers from His Word. How very expressive is Hezekiah's action in taking the letter to the temple and spreading it before the Lord. The comfort, the guidance, the encouragement that we need comes to us in the Lord's Word, perhaps in the pages of Isaiah. We are not told to contend with the Assyrians with their own weapons. Their weakness is in their pride and association with evil. The strength of the spiritual life is in its trust in the Lord and its association with heaven. In this thought, read the Psalms which have been suggested to the junior classes, and spiritual interpretations of them. Read Isa. 10:12-13. "I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria and the glory of his high looks, for he hath said, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent." Compare this with the spirit of Rab-shakeh's speech and of Sennacherib's letter. (A. 1186, 5044, 10227; E. 654)

Can you explain rending the garments and wearing sackcloth as signs of grief? They were associated in old times especially with grief because of violence done to truth, grief for the denial of truth, for blasphemy against the Lord and His Word. You see the reason for this when you remember that garments represent not the interior affections, but truth clothing and giving expression to affection. Angels' clothing is in keeping with their intelligence. (A. 4763; R. 492; H. 177-182)

What is blasphemy? Blasphemy consists in deriding, laughing at, or sneering at the Word and what the Word teaches, and dragging it in the mire. Those who praise and teach the Word as Divine truth and yet deny it at heart also blaspheme. Those blaspheme who transgress the second commandment, and if you will read the explanation of this commandment, as given in T. 297-299, in A. 8882, or in E. 959-964, you will understand better what is meant in the internal sense by Rab-shakeh's speech and by Sennacherib's letter.

The Lord's saying that the king of Assyria would fall by the sword in his own land, means that blasphemous arguments against the Divinity of Jesus and of the Word are destroyed by their own falsity.

As you read the Lord's message through Isaiah (verses 21 and on), notice the twofold expressions, "the virgin daughter of Zion . . . the daughter of Jerusalem," "reproached and blasphemed," "dismayed and confounded," "the grass of the field and the green herb of the grass," "rage . . . tumult," etc. Throughout the prophets, but especially in Isaiah, there are such twofold expressions, in order that the heavenly marriage of good and truth, which pervades the Word may be represented—one expression relating to good or the celestial, and the other to truth or the spiritual. (A. 2173) In other words, our Heavenly Father desires us to be true and good, intelligent and affectionate, wise and loving. It is not enough for us to know the truth—we must also live according to it; it is not enough even for us to be good—we must be good in the particular way that His truth teaches us. Good and truth must be married in us.

Hezekiah's spreading the letter before the Lord is very suggestive. It is what we should learn to do with every trouble. The words indicate the attitude of effective prayer. (A. 2535)

Notice the phrase "For my servant David's sake," in verse 34. Compare I Kings 11:12-13 and 15:4. In such references to David we recognize a reference to the Lord, and when David is called servant, to the Lord in His Humanity. "For mine own self" by the Divine power; "for my servant David's sake," by the Divine brought near for our help in the Divine Humanity. (E. 205; A. 2159, 3441)

The "city" represents the Church; and it is the Lord's special care to keep alive a church in which He shall be known and loved, both as to His Divine Itself ("for Mine own Self") and as to His Divine Human ("for My servant David's sake").

Otherwise, there would happen to the whole human race what happened to the camp of the Assyrians, for we are taught that the death of the Assyrians was caused "by the hells that were then opened. It would be so at the present day if they were opened; wherefore the Lord keeps them tightly closed." (A. 7879)

The destruction of the Assyrians and other instances of destruction and of plagues in the Old Testament give a vivid sense of the power of hell which would break in upon us but for the

protection of the Lord. We should realize our dependence upon this protection for the freedom in which we live. We should be continually grateful to the Lord for the protection, and should not ourselves carelessly invite influences of evil which, like a trickling of water through a dike, may admit the flood which is ready to destroy us. (A. 7879)

## Lesson 18

### 2 Kings 20: Hezekiah and Isaiah

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

We learned about the prophets Elijah and Elisha in Israel in the days of Ahab. Now we learn about another prophet, Isaiah. He lived in Jerusalem, and the king there at the time of our story was Hezekiah. We can learn about Isaiah in the Book of Kings where we have read the story of Elijah and Elisha; and we also learn much more about Isaiah and many of the words that he spoke from the Lord in the book of the Bible that has his name.

The same enemy which conquered Israel and took the people captive had also threatened Judah and Jerusalem. The king of Assyria sent messengers to Jerusalem who spoke very proudly and insultingly, asking them to give the city up to the Assyrians, and King Hezekiah and the people were greatly frightened. But the prophet Isaiah encouraged the king from the Lord and made him strong, and the Assyrians did not take Jerusalem.

Now King Hezekiah was very sick, and the prophet Isaiah came to him again. At first Isaiah told the king that he would die. Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord and wept. Turning his face to the wall was like bowing down to the ground. This and his prayer and weeping were signs that he was humble before the Lord. Isaiah had not gone far, only into the middle court, or it may mean to the middle part of the city, when the Lord sent him back to tell the king that He would add fifteen years to his life. The prophet also told them to put figs upon the boil to heal the king. Figs were often used as a healing poultice.

Hezekiah asked for a sign that the Lord would heal him, and he was given a choice. There was a dial in the king's palace, perhaps a flight of steps with a column or pole placed so that as the shadow lengthened or shortened it fell higher or lower upon the steps. So by the place of the shadow they could tell the time of day. Should the shadow go forward ten steps, or should it go back ten steps? Hezekiah asked that it might go backward, and the Lord made it do so, as if to lengthen the day. It was a sign that the king's life and the life of his kingdom would be lengthened.

There was another time when the prophet Isaiah was sent to King Hezekiah. Messengers had come to Hezekiah from Babylon, a city far away, and he showed them all his treasures. Isaiah told him that he should not have done so; that some day Babylon would be an enemy of Judah, and the people of Babylon would carry away the treasures of Jerusalem and take its people captive. Let us read about Hezekiah and Isaiah. (2 Kings 20)

## **Junior**

It is said of Hezekiah, "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him." (2 Kings 18:5) We have already learned how in the time of danger from the Assyrians he turned to the Lord, and how the prophet Isaiah strengthened him.

Both Isaiah and Micah were prophets in Jerusalem in these days. We learn more of these prophets in the books called by their names. Read sometime in Isaiah 6 how Isaiah was called to be a prophet of the Lord. Now we know a little about Hezekiah and Isaiah, the two important people in our story.

Notice the mention of Hezekiah in Isa. 1:1. It is interesting to find a part of this story that is told in the Book of Kings told in almost the same words in Isa. 36; 37; 38; 39. Compare especially Isa. 38 and 39 with our present chapter, 2 Kings 20. Isaiah adds the grateful writing of Hezekiah when he had been sick and was healed. Read also 2 Chron. 32.

There are three interesting subjects in our chapter. First, read verses 1-7 about Hezekiah's sickness and healing. "The middle court," verse 4, perhaps should be "the middle part of the city." In any case, the prophet had not gone far. The prophecy of what would come to Hezekiah was changed when the king was penitent and prayed. We read of similar things in other places in the Bible. For example, the predicted destruction of Nineveh did not come when the people repented. (Jonah 3) Read carefully Ezek. 33:13-15. Such words remind us that what the Lord can do for us depends upon our attitude toward Him, and upon our doing our part ourselves. Read what I have said to the little children about the dial of Ahaz. The going backward of the shadow on the steps, lengthening the day, represented the lengthening of Hezekiah's life. It also represented the lengthening of the life of the Jewish Church through the presence in it of some good people like Hezekiah.

Another part of the story begins at verse 12. Babylon was the great city far away to the east on the Euphrates River. At this time, Assyria and Babylon were enemies of each other. The king of Babylon was glad to send a friendly message to Hezekiah and a present, to make a league with him against Assyria. But the Lord had protected Hezekiah from the Assyrians when they threatened Jerusalem, and he ought not now to make friends with these people from far away and to look for help from them. This was the beginning of trouble, for as Isaiah told the king, Babylon would become the enemy of Judah and some day would take the people captive.

The chapter tells (verse 20) about work that Hezekiah did for the water supply of Jerusalem, at the time when the country and city were threatened by the Assyrians. Read more about this in 2 Chron. 32:1-4, 30. Hezekiah called out the people, and they covered springs throughout the country so that the Assyrians should not have the use of them. He also covered the spring of Gihon, called now the Virgin's Fountain, in the Kidron Valley, and led the water by a tunnel cut through the rock under the city to the pool of Siloam, which was then within the city walls. This was to keep the water from an attacking army and to bring it inside the city. It was a crooked tunnel, about seventeen hundred feet long and about six feet in height. There is on the wall of this tunnel an interesting inscription which is believed to have been written there by Hezekiah's men. This is a translation of the inscription: "The boring through [is completed]. And this is the story of the boring through: while yet [they plied] the drill, each toward his fellow, and while yet there

were three cubits to be bored through, there was heard the voice of one calling unto another, for there was a crevice in the rock on the right hand. And on the day of the boring through the stone-cutters struck, each to meet his fellow, drill upon drill: and the waters flowed from the source to the pool for a thousand and two hundred cubits, and a hundred cubits was the height of the rock above the heads of the stone-cutters."

The "pool of Hezekiah" in Jerusalem is modern, but it serves to remind us of the good king who did so much for Jerusalem and for the water supply of the city.

I have not tried in these notes to tell the story but only to give a few thoughts which may help you as you read the story for yourselves.

1. Who was Hezekiah? Was he a good king?
2. In what great trouble had he trusted the Lord, and the Lord had saved him?
3. Who was the Lord's prophet, who helped the king at that time and now when he was sick?
4. What sign was given that the king's life would be lengthened?
5. What did Hezekiah do for the water supply of Jerusalem?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Throughout this story we must keep in mind the meaning of Assyria. In a good sense, Assyria represents a noble power of rational understanding, compared to a cedar of Lebanon. But in a bad sense, it represents a proud spirit of trust in one's own intelligence. This is fatal to spiritual intelligence (Israel), and is an enemy of good love (Judah). (A. 10227; R. 96)

This same nation, Assyria, which destroyed the kingdom of Israel also exacted tribute from Judah and threatened to destroy it. A false reason and understanding are opposed to goodness in the will and in life, but they may not absolutely destroy it. In spite of ignorance and false teaching, there may still be some simple goodness. This is represented by the continuance of Judah as a nation for one hundred and fifty years after Israel was taken captive, and by the deliverance of Hezekiah king of Judah from the Assyrians. (A. 4292, 4750; E. 433; R. 96)

The spiritual lesson of our story about Hezekiah's sickness and recovery is in line with this general thought. The sickness of the king which brought him near to death represents the languishing of spiritual life in people of that day and at all times when spiritual idolatries prevail and spiritual Assyrians threaten the soul. If this condition continues, spiritual death must follow. But this need not be. Recovery is possible and a lengthening of life if people are truly humble before the Lord and earnestly apply themselves, in obedience to the Lord, to such simple good deeds as they have power to do. The humility of soul is represented by Hezekiah's turning to the wall and by his prayers and tears. The simple good life is represented by the figs which healed his sore; for the sweet nourishing figs, the fruit of a low, spreading tree, represent works of natural goodness. Where such humility and such goodness are there is something of heavenly life, and the false reasoning of the spiritual Assyrian does not destroy the soul. Love and goodness are the

heavenly sunshine. When these languish, as they did in the days of Ahaz, the shadow falls upon life's dial. If these revive through humility and good life, the shadow is turned backward on the dial and the day of sunshine is prolonged. (E. 403, 706)

The reception of messengers from Babylon by Hezekiah was the beginning of the end. This was the enemy that would carry Judah captive as Assyria had carried Israel. Babylon throughout the Scriptures, from the tower of Babel in Genesis to Babylon in the Revelation, represents the evil of self-love, and of desire to rule over others even by the use of holy things. In answer to Isaiah's question about the messengers, Hezekiah said, "They are come from a far country, even from Babylon." A far country. It means that the evil of self-love which they represented is far removed from heavenly life of which Judah and Jerusalem are the type. Remember the same words in the parable of the prodigal son. Turning to a life of self-indulgence, he took his journey into a far country. We have seen that something of good may exist in spite of false reasoning, but if self-love comes in and appropriates the treasures of the soul, all good in time is destroyed. You see why the prophet rebuked the king, for receiving these messengers from Babylon and showing them his treasures. (A. 1307; E. 811, 1029)

We know how often the waters of the Holy Land, its springs and streams, stand for truth received from the Lord in a heavenly life, cleansing that life and making it fruitful. The rivers of Eden have the same meaning, and the river of water of life in the Holy City. Even the springs and pools of Jerusalem, naturally a poor and meager supply, become in the Scriptures types of this heavenly truth. We may see in what Hezekiah did for the water supply of Jerusalem a suggestion of the desire of a good motive in heart for the truth which shows how to do good, and of the power of such a motive to receive and hold such truth. Remember, however, Isaiah's rebuke for gathering the waters of the lower pool. (Isa. 22:9) The pool and conduit of Hezekiah seem to represent not an interior perception, but truth of a simple literal kind, such as alone is possible in a state of little spiritual life. (E. 453; A. 3096, 4926)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Hezekiah and Isaiah

Our last talk was on the subject of representatives, and we learned that the Israelites were not a church but that they represented what happens in a spiritual church. So long as they could in any way represent the Church, they remained in the land of Canaan because it represented heaven, but when their worship became altogether idolatrous, so that it no longer was of such a nature as to represent heavenly things, they were forced to leave the Holy Land. As we learned in our last lesson, the ten tribes that comprised the kingdom of Israel were carried away to Assyria and Babylon. The time was coming when the kingdom of Judah, over which the descendants of David reigned, would also have to leave.

The kings of Judah represented the Divine truth, because they represented the Lord who is King of kings. He governs people by means of Divine truth. And so these kings also represented the Divine truth. Do you remember how the Lord Himself suffered when He was on earth? After people had recognized that He was king, escorting Him into Jerusalem with hosannas "to the son of David," He suffered cruelly, being finally crucified, and His title was placed on the cross, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews." What He suffered represented the way Divine truth was

treated by the Jews. In a similar manner Hezekiah, king of the Jews, suffered sickness, thereby representing what the Divine truth was suffering at the time. The truth was given to the Jews in the Word, but they did not treat it rightly; they made fun of it; they spoiled it: and destroyed it.

When people do not live according to the Divine truth, then it suffers pain and distress, just as the Lord suffered on the cross, and as Hezekiah suffered on his sick bed. Hezekiah's sickness was so great that he was near to death. Then he prayed that he might recover, and this represented repentance on the part of his people.

You know what repentance is. It means not only to be sorry that one has done wrong, and hurt the truth by not living according to it, but it means in addition to this, actually to live a better life, to live in accordance with the teaching of the Divine truth. Such repentance was very beautifully represented in Hezekiah's case. After he had prayed, as people do when they repent, Isaiah told the king's attendants to take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and the king recovered.

How does this represent true repentance?

The fig-tree represents the natural person, that is to say, a person in the world who does what is right as the natural or literal sense of the Word teaches. The fruit of the fig-tree represents the good that such a person does when he or she lives in obedience to the commandments of the letter of the Word.

Isaiah commanded the lump of figs to be taken. Isaiah was a prophet like Elijah and Elisha, and therefore represented the teaching of the Word. His commanding what they should do, and their doing it, of course represents that people who are spiritually "sick" or have done wrong, should stop it, and that they should do good in accordance with the teaching of the Lord.

Then, when Hezekiah was well, he was happy because he could "go up" to the house of the Lord. The temple was built on a mountain, because the heavens where the angels live are on mountains, and to "go up to the house of the Lord" therefore means to become more heavenly like the angels, and so to go up into the house which the Lord prepares for every good person in heaven.

For, as you will remember, the Lord said, "In My Father's house are many mansions." (John 14:2) We are all, by a good life, building houses for ourselves, or rather the Lord builds the house to be in exact correspondence with each person's character. And this is the house into which we go up as we get well of our spiritual sickness and do what is good in the sight of the Lord.

Impress upon your memory the story of Isaiah's coming to Hezekiah at this time. This Isaiah was a great prophet, and the first of the great prophetic books of the Old Testament is named after him because it was written by him. Look up the thirty-eighth chapter in that book, and you will find the some story about Hezekiah.

## **Lesson 19**

### **2 Kings 21: Manasseh's Sin**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Some of the kings in Jerusalem were good kings and "did right in the sight of the Lord," and some were bad kings and "did evil in the sight of the Lord." Joash, who was made king as a little boy, was a good king, while the good priest Jehoiada advised him. Hezekiah was a good king. He listened to the words of the prophet Isaiah. But after Hezekiah there were two bad kings, Manasseh and Amon, son and grandson of Hezekiah. A "good king" means especially that the king worshiped the Lord and required the people to worship Him. You remember the beautiful temple of the Lord that Solomon built in Jerusalem, with its most holy chamber where was the ark holding the commandments, the holy chamber where were the incense altar and the lamp and table, and the court before the temple where were the laver for water and the altar on which the fire was always burning, where sacrifices to the Lord were offered. A good king made sure that the temple was cared for and was repaired when it needed repair, and that the worship of the Lord was faithfully performed each morning and evening and at other times. A good king also forbade the people to worship images for gods, as the Lord also had commanded in the first of the Ten Commandments. He destroyed idols which the people had set up to worship, as the people of the nations around them did. And some good kings destroyed the places of worship on hills and other high places, telling the people to come to the Lord's temple at Jerusalem. These were things that Hezekiah and other good kings did.

But now when we read the story of Manasseh, Hezekiah's son who was king after him, you will see why he is called a bad king. He was made king when twelve years old. We wish that some good priest like Jehoiada or some prophet like Isaiah had taught him and helped him to be a good king. But he built again high places which Hezekiah had destroyed, and worshiped the idols of the other nations with evil rites such as they used. He even made altars in the temple courts for worship of the sun and moon and stars, and set up a carved image in the temple. He even offered his son as a burnt offering, as you remember the king of Moab had done. Then prophets of the Lord spoke, rebuking all this evil and predicting that Jerusalem and Judah would be destroyed, "as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down." What a sad picture of disobedience to the Lord and of neglect and abuse of His beautiful temple! And the same sad condition continued under Amon, Manasseh's son who was king after him. Then came another good king.

##### **Junior**

Read what I have said to the primary children about the good kings and the bad kings. The good kings tried to be faithful to the Lord, to care for the temple and its worship, and to stop the worship of idols. The bad kings encouraged the worship of idols, in high places throughout the land and even in the courts of the Lord's temple. Hezekiah was a good king. His son Manasseh was a bad king. Read of the evil things that he did (verses 2-7). The worship of Baal was the worship which Elijah had so bravely opposed. Remember the sacrifice on Mt. Carmel. (I Kings 18)

Worship of the host of heaven means worship of the sun, moon, and stars. Causing a child to pass through the fire usually means offering the child as a sacrifice. We remember the king of Moab's offering his son to Chemosh. (2 Kings 3:27) The Lord had taught Abraham that such a sacrifice is not pleasing to Him. (Gen. 22:9-13) See also Micah 6:6-8. The words in verse 6 refer to various ways of being guided by drawing lots and by signs. Dealing with familiar spirits and wizards means seeking answers through persons who claimed to talk with spirits. All these things are mentioned and forbidden in Deut. 18:10-11. "A graven image of the grove" means a carved image of the goddess Ashera, or of some emblem of the goddess. It is hard to see how such things could have been allowed in the beautiful temple of the Lord. With verse 7, read the words of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple. (I Kings 8:27-29) So Manasseh led the people to follow the worship of the nations about them and to be even worse than those nations.

Manasseh also broke the commandment not to kill, for he killed innocent people, no doubt many of the prophets. He and his people were the most wicked that had thus far lived in Judah. Of all the kings of Judah down to Ahaz it is said, when they died, that they were buried in the city of David their father. As you read this and the following chapters, notice what is said about the burial of these last kings of Judah.

When the Jews kept the commandments they prospered, but when they were disobedient they were unsuccessful. And as they were now so very wicked, they were about to lose their city and their land, and to be carried away into the land of their enemies, who, as you know from what Isaiah had told Hezekiah, were the Babylonians.

And this the Lord told them by the prophets. These prophets said that the Lord would stretch the line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab over Jerusalem, and wipe them like a dish. When a house is being built, cords or lines are stretched where the walls are to be, so that the masons may get them straight, and as the walls go up, they are tested by a plummet or plumline, to see that they are true, all just like the pattern of the builder. But see what the building of Samaria and Ahab had come to. So it would be with Jerusalem. And as all that may be left in a dish is wiped out with a cloth, so all the good left in Jerusalem would be wiped out. The picture of the dish wiped and turned upside down is a strong figure. Verse 16 seems to mean the slaying by Manasseh of prophets and others faithful to the Lord. What a sad and evil record for a king of Judah! And Amon who was king after him for two years was no better than he. We shall be glad in our next lesson to learn of another good king.

1. Was Manasseh a good king or an evil one? What did he do? What did he place in the temple?
2. What other wicked things did he do? Do any people at the present day deal with "familiar spirits"?
3. In what way was the destruction of Jerusalem predicted?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

What a catalog of sins is given in this chapter—so many idols, so much wrong-doing! There were the high places which represented the love and pride of self. There was Baal who represented the worship of self and the world, with all its apparently pleasant but really bad delights. There was worship of the sun and moon and stars, which in a good sense represent the Lord's love and wisdom and the knowledge of heavenly things, but in an evil sense when worshiped they represent love of self and untrue and evil thoughts. (Deut. 17:2-5; A. 2441; E. 401; H. 122)

The temple courts represented the outward life of the two great loves of the kingdom of heaven: love of the Lord and love of the neighbor, which distinguish heaven into two vast kingdoms, called, respectively, the celestial kingdom and the spiritual kingdom. This outward life is twofold (1) loving good for the sake of good, represented by the inner court; and (2) loving truth for its own sake, represented by the outer court. (A. 9741) Then what does the setting up of altars to the host of the heavens in the courts mean? Why, to admit falsities into the domain of these holy loves, and thus to desecrate and profane them, by destroying them and making them appear as if they were not good.

The presence of these abominations in the temple of the Lord pictures selfishness of various kinds present and ruling in worship and religion, as the motive of getting personal honor or gain or power over others by means of religion and the church. The spirit of using religion for selfish gain was expressed in the money-changing and selling of cattle which the Lord found in the temple. He drove the traders and money-changers out and said, "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." (Matt. 21:13) Much the same condition was represented in the days when idols and their evil worship were in the temple. May there possibly be idols in our religion which if we will the Lord will help us to cast out? (E. 840)

All the evil practices recited in verse 6 were specifically forbidden in Deut. 18:10-11, and in the internal sense they signify various kinds of wickedness in which holy things are utilized for one's own mercenary advantage, and advancement to honor. (A. 9188) All these practices consisted in the abuse of correspondences in one form or another. Magic is nothing else. The effect is to make things appear different from what they are. And so they represent, on the spiritual plane, the practice of making truth to appear false, and falsity true. You may read of the modern forms of incantation in R. 462, and you will then see how widespread enchantments are even at the present day, entering into the newest and latest religions and philosophies.

To "consult familiar spirits" is like the modern practice of consulting spirits through spiritualistic mediums. It is wrong and dangerous to seek intercourse with spirits in such ways. (See H. 249; A. 9438.) The Lord teaches us through His Word. This is the true way to receive guidance from Him. (Luke 16:31)

## **Lesson 20**

### **2 Kings 22: The Law Found**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Did you ever see a book such as they had in Bible days? It was a long roll of parchment or some other material. The writing was in columns or pages side by side. The long roll had a stick at each end and was opened and shut by unrolling from one stick and rolling on the other.

Long ago, Moses had written down in such a book the words which the Lord gave him to teach the people, and the story of the Lord's care for them, and the book had been kept by the ark. After the temple was built in Jerusalem, the ark was kept there in the most holy chamber, and the sacred books also were kept in the temple. But in these days of which we are learning, long after the time of Solomon, the people forgot the Lord, and His temple was much neglected. Many of the kings were wicked kings, who brought idols into the temple and let the temple become filled with dirt and rubbish, and it was partly broken down. There were some good kings in Jerusalem like Hezekiah. We learn today of another good king, Josiah. He was only a child when he became king. Among other good things that he did he gave orders to clean and repair the temple of the Lord. This reminds us of Joash who was made king as a little boy, who also gave orders to repair the temple. Shaphan, the scribe who was reader and writer for the king, took the king's command to Hilkiah the high priest to count the silver that the keepers of the door had gathered of the people and to give it to the workmen to repair the temple. So the work began and was done faithfully.

While they were repairing the temple, the priest found "the Book of the Law." It was the sacred roll written by Moses which had been put for safe-keeping in the temple. But now it had been neglected and forgotten for many years. The priest gave the roll to the scribe, and the scribe brought it to the king and read it, or parts of it, to him. If you turn to Deut. 28:15, 37, 45 to the end, you may be reading some of the very words which Shaphan read to the king. They were warnings of the punishments which would come upon the people of Israel if they disobeyed the Lord. and they had disobeyed him in many ways and now for many years. The king was greatly troubled. He rent his clothes as a sign of grief.

When Hezekiah was in trouble he sent to Isaiah the prophet. Josiah sent to Huldah the prophetess. "The college" where her home was seems to mean some section of the city. She gave the king an answer from the Lord. The evil would come upon the people as it was written in the law but not in Josiah's time because his heart was tender and he humbled himself when he heard the words of the law.

We will read so much of the story today, and learn more about Josiah in the next chapter. Let us think whether we are taking such care as we ought of our Bibles. We must treat them reverently and read them and not let them lie forgotten and neglected in some corner.

## **Junior**

It was some sixty years since the good Hezekiah was king. A wicked son and grandson had been kings after Hezekiah (Manasseh and Amon), but now in the third generation comes Josiah, a good king. This king reminds you of Joash, whose story we find in 2 King 12. The names are something alike. Both kings began to reign as children, and both were good kings and repaired the temple of the Lord. In both cases, honest workmen did the work. A further picture of the neglect into which the temple fell in the days of the wicked kings is given in 2 Chron. 29:3-17.

As they were repairing the temple, they found "the Book of the Law." Who can describe to us an ancient book, so different from our modern books? You will think of such a book when you read in Jer. 36 how Baruk wrote the words of Jeremiah "in a roll of a book" which the king cut in pieces with his knife, and the words were written again in another book. You think of the same kind of book when you read in Luke 4 how the Lord in the synagogue at Nazareth read from the prophet Isaiah and closed the book and gave it to the keeper. The same kind of book is in mind when you read in Rev. 5:1 of the book written within and on the backside.

The book found in the temple was "the Book of the Law." This phrase usually means the Book of Moses, the first five books of our Bible. The roll certainly contained Deuteronomy and perhaps all the books of Moses. We know that Moses wrote in a book at the Lord's command, and that the book was kept by the Levites with the ark. (Deut. 3:24-26) We have evidence that the sacred writings were remembered and cared for by the good kings like Hezekiah. See Prov. 25:1, which speaks of Hezekiah's men as copying out the Proverbs of Solomon. But the Law was completely neglected and forgotten in the evil days. The passages which were read to the king seem to have been from Deuteronomy, perhaps especially Deut. 28. Similar passages occur in Lev. 26:14-29.

Who was the prophet to whom Hezekiah turned in his trouble? Isaiah. There were now other prophets in Jerusalem, among them Huldah the prophetess, to whom Josiah looked for instruction from the Lord. (See Jer.1:2; Zeph. 1:1.)

When we learned of the building of the temple, what did we think of this as describing in ourselves? What temple must we build? The temple of our own character, for this is a house for the Lord when we build it strong and beautiful, obeying His commandments. (See 1 Cor. 3:9-13.) Is our temple ever neglected? And at the same time is the law of the Lord lost sight of and forgotten? Have we ever a work to do which is pictured in this cleansing and repairing of the temple?

1. Two wicked kings followed Hezekiah, and then what good king? How old was he when he was made king?
2. Of what other king does Josiah remind us? In what ways?
3. What did Josiah do for the temple? How was the work paid for? Why was there no reckoning with the workmen?
4. What was found in the temple?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

In speaking to the younger classes of "the Book of the Law" found in the temple, I have referred to Deut. 31:24-26, where it speaks of Moses finishing the writing of the Book of the Law and giving the roll to the Levites to put by the ark for safe-keeping. You will be interested to read of this writing of the law by Moses and of the finding of it in the temple in A. 9396; E. 700; L. 9.

Who can see a deeper meaning in the saying about the good king Josiah, that he turned not aside to the right hand or to the left? You know what deeper thought is associated with the right and left. It is equivalent to saying that he did not go astray from what was good or what was true. (A. 10061; E. 600)

Take up the thought suggested to the younger classes, that the building of the temple represents the building of a heavenly character. We developed this thought when we studied the plan of the temple and the materials used in its construction. Now the duty set before us is the duty of repairing this temple of character when through neglect it has become unclean and broken down. This must be done by thorough repentance and by learning from the Lord what is right, and faithfully doing it.

There is a beautiful thought in the statement that both the people of Joash and those of Josiah worked honestly in repairing the temple, so that no reckoning was made with them. We are reminded of the workers called at the later hours of the day in the Lord's parable of laborers in the vineyard. They were content with the promise. "Whosoever is right, that shall ye receive." Bargaining and reckoning for pay suggest working from selfish motives, or at least from natural motives, with a sense of accomplishing the result ourselves. In the building of heavenly character, or in the repairing of character through repentance, there must be no selfish motive, no thought of merit or gain. We must do the best we can for the Lord's sake and leave the results and rewards to Him. It is the Lord's work. When we think of the temple as representing the temple of character, do you see that the neglect of the temple and the losing of "the Book of the Law" go together, and that the cleansing and repairing of the temple and the finding of "the Book of the Law" are inseparable? (A. 4926)

When the long lost book was read to the king, he rent his clothes. This was an expression of grief, and in the old days it was especially an expression of grief when truth had been neglected or perverted, for garments which clothe the body represent forms of truth which clothe the deeper things of affection. In the old days, when they had a perception of the meaning of these things, they rent their clothes when truth had been neglected or destroyed. Compare Jer. 36:24, where, in speaking of the king's cutting and burning of the roll, it is said that "they were not afraid, nor rent their garments." They did not care that the Divine Word was destroyed. (A. 4763)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Josiah and the Law

The times about which we have been reading for several lessons were very sad, for they witnessed the passing away of the representative Church among the children of Israel. But the present story tells of a bright and beautiful change in this history. Josiah, the boy king, was one of the very best kings of Judah.

How far the people had gone away from the Lord, we see from the fact that they no longer read or knew "The Law," as the five books of Moses were called. That is, they did not read the Word.

These five books had been written by Moses when the children of Israel were in the wilderness, and were sacredly placed by the ark containing the two tables of stone upon which were written the Ten Commandments. The ark was kept in the holy of holies of the tabernacle, wherever the tabernacle was set up during the wandering in the wilderness and later when they were settled in the land of Canaan. But it seems that after the temple had been built by Solomon, and the tabernacle was no longer used, "The Law" was taken out of the holy of holies and kept in the temple. Later, when the people had become idol-worshippers, and cared little or nothing for the Law given by Moses so that it was forgotten, the temple was neglected, cracks appeared in its walls, and it was generally out of repair.

But under good king Josiah it was repaired, and while this was going on, a great treasure was discovered, "the Book of the Law" was found and taken to the young king, who learned from it what had been forgotten, namely that this Law promised rewards for the keeping of its commandments, and terrible punishments for not keeping them. The very things that the people were then doing would be punished by the destruction of the holy city, making it desolate and a curse. (Deut. 29:27)

When Josiah heard the Law, he was very greatly grieved, and showed his great grief, by rending or tearing his garments, and weeping.

And this was also representative, like everything else that the Israelitish and Jewish people did. And now we will learn how and why it was representative.

A garment corresponds to truth. The Psalms say of the Lord, that He covereth Himself "with light as with a garment." (Ps. 104:2) And we know that light means truth. Therefore, He once showed Himself when on earth to three disciples on a high mountain, with His face shining as the sun, and His raiment white as the light. (Matt. 17:2)

And as He has made the angels to look like Him, He has given them garments that look like His. We know, from the angels seen in the Lord's tomb, that they also have white and shining garments. Swedenborg tells us that he has always seen angels dressed in this way. Indeed, he tells us that the most intelligent angels have garments that look like flame; other angels have garments that sparkle like diamonds; others have garments that are white like light. The garments of some angels are a shining crimson, those of others, a shining beautiful sky-blue. Others are of other shining colors. They are all exactly in accordance with the truths that the angel possess. You see, therefore, that you can have the most beautiful clothes in heaven if you want to. But you have to

work for them while here. You must learn the truths of the Word, and love them, and keep them bright and shining by living according to them.

Spirits who are still in the world of spirits do not yet have such bright and shining garments as the angels. Those of them who have the truth have beautiful garments but not so lustrous. The white is more like the white of our linen or cotton. It does not shine. But the devils and satans in hell have ugly and ragged clothes because they have no truths, but only falsities.

The ministers or priests in heaven wear special garments because it is their duty to preach truth; and so some of our New Church ministers also wear special white garments when they conduct the worship of the Lord and preach because they wish to show thereby that they have learned the truths of heaven from the Lord, in the heavenly Doctrines, and preach these truths.

The priests in the Israelitish and Jewish Church had white linen garments; the high priest had especially beautiful ones which are carefully described in the Word of the Old Testament. (Exod. 39) They all represented different kinds of truth in the Word of the Lord.

But what about the Divine truth in the days of Josiah? Did they possess it? Alas! when Josiah read the Law, he discovered that they did not, that they had lost it. And so he tore his garments, thereby representing that Divine truth had long been lost. Not only the very book of the Law, but the Divine truth it taught had for a long time been blotted out of their hearts and their lives. Was it then not fitting, to represent this loss, and the great grief over it, by rending the royal garments?

You will remember from our last lesson about true repentance? Wherein does it consist?

Josiah was truly repentant. He did not stop in his repentance merely with showing his sorrow by weeping and tearing his clothes: that was only the beginning of his repentance. He followed this up by doing. He called all the people together, and read the Law to them so that all could hear it. Next he made a covenant; that is, he promised the Lord to obey the Law; and then he carried out his promise by stopping the priests of the idols from continuing their worship, and by destroying the idols. How different he was from Ahab! He listened to the voice of the Lord, and himself did what in Israel the prophet Elijah had done. It is all told in the next chapter. (2 Kings 23)

## **Lesson 21**

### **2 Kings 23: Josiah's Reforms**

#### **THE STORY**

#### **Primary**

After the repairing of the temple by the good king, Josiah, and the finding of the book of the Law, the king wished all the people to hear the book and to do as it taught. He gathered the people in the temple courts and read the book to them. And the king and the people promised to keep the Lord's commandments. Read verses 1-3. They did what they could to destroy the altars and images of the idols, in the temple and throughout the kingdom. Some of the images which were of

wood they took down into the Kidron valley and burnt. They destroyed places in the Valley of Hinnom, where children had been sacrificed.

Josiah also gave commandment to keep the Passover as it was commanded in the Law. (Deut. 16:1-8) The Passover was to be kept each year in memory of the coming of the people out of Egypt. A feast was eaten in the evening with a lamb and unleavened bread. Josiah and his people kept it more faithfully than it had been kept for very many years.

"Surely there was not holden such a Passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah; but in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, wherein this Passover was holden to the Lord in Jerusalem." (Verses 21-23)

Josiah was killed in battle when he went out to try to stop a big Egyptian army passing through the country. (Verses 28-30)

## **Junior**

Under good king Josiah, the beautiful temple at Jerusalem had been repaired, and the book of the law had been found. The next thing was to promise the Lord to obey the Law, and then actually do so. King Josiah therefore called all the elders and people together to the temple, and read them the law, and there they made a covenant with the Lord. Last week, Josiah's history reminded us of King Joash. And here there is another event in which the two reigns were alike, for Joash had also made a covenant with the Lord, standing by the pillar before the temple. (2 Kings 11:14-17) King Josiah and the people solemnly promised to do what the book of the Law taught them. And as this teaches that idols must not be worshiped, the king commanded the vessels made for Baal, and for "the grove" and for the sun and moon and stars to be brought out of the temple and burnt outside of Jerusalem in the Kidron valley, and the ashes to be carried far away to Bethel. For "the grove" here better translations read Asherah, the goddess worshiped with Baal. The same in verse 6 and verse 7. Throughout all the kingdom of Judah, from Geba north of Jerusalem to Beer-sheba in the south, everything relating to idol worship was put away.

Long ago, when Jeroboam established the worship of golden calves at Dan and Bethel, as he was worshiping in Bethel, a prophet came out of Judah and foretold that a child should be born of David's house who would defile the altar. (1 Kings 13) Now, after several hundred years, this prophecy came true. Josiah destroyed the altar and the high place and the grove which Jeroboam had made at Bethel, and burned the bones of dead men on the altar. He also saw the grave where the prophet who had prophesied these things was buried. Josiah had made a thorough end of idolatry in Judah, and he now did the same in the cities of Samaria, and then returned to Jerusalem.

Do you remember when the Passover was instituted, and why? How was the Passover kept? When the wicked kings of Judah profaned the temple with idols and idol altars and idolatrous practices, they no longer were faithful in the keeping of the Passover. But under Josiah a great change was made. All the people kept the Passover as it had not been kept since the time of Moses. (Deut. 16:1-8; Exod. 12)

We read in the same chapter of Josiah's death. The king of Egypt was marching with his great army, to the Euphrates, against the king of Assyria, passing through the Holy Land. Josiah was no

doubt in league with Assyria, and he tried to stop the Egyptians at Megiddo, where the army passed from the hills of Samaria, into the plain of Esdraelon, to the east of Mt. Carmel. The story is told in Kings in a few words: "King Josiah went against him, and he slew him at Megiddo when he had seen him." Read also 2 Chron. 35:20-25.

1. Was Josiah satisfied with the reading of the Law?
2. What did he remove and destroy from the temple?
3. What did he destroy at Bethel?
4. What long neglected feast did Josiah keep?
5. How was Josiah killed?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The story of repairing the temple is a story of repairing the faults of character into which we have fallen through willfulness and neglect. The duty of repentance and removal of evil things from the life is more fully described in this chapter which tells of the thorough putting away of the evil things of idolatrous worship.

And then the blessed side of the experience, the reception of new life from the Lord as we are prepared for it, is beautifully described in the story of the Passover kept by Josiah. There is something very tender and touching in the saying, that there had been no such Passover even in the days of Israel's glory. It tells of the nearness to the Lord and union with Him, which is found through humble and faithful repentance. (A. 10655)

The mention of Josiah's death is interesting and touching from its very briefness. "Pharaoh-nechoh . . . slew him at Megiddo when he had seen him." The three kingdoms of Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon are important factors in the history of the later days of Israel and Judah, and they have here the same spiritual meaning that they have throughout the Scriptures: Egypt, the natural plane of life, especially natural knowledge; Assyria, rational power; and Babylon, self-love. As enemies of Israel and Judah, they represent these powers used to confirm evil and destroy a spiritual life. The meaning of these nations in this part of the sacred history is fully shown in E. 654. It is also shown in R. 707 and E. 1010 that Megiddo, the historic battle ground of the Holy Land, like Armageddon of the Apocalypse (Rev. 16:16), stands for a state characterized by the love of honor, dominion, and preeminence. The sweeping aside of Josiah at Megiddo by the king of Egypt and his host suggests the contempt with which a childlike regard for the Divine law is set aside by natural learning in its pride.

## **Lesson 22**

### **2 Kings 24: The King of Babylon Takes Captives**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We have to learn a long name, Nebuchadnezzar. He was king of Babylon, a large, rich city on the Euphrates River, which at this time ruled over a wide stretch of country, even to the border of Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar was now at war with Jerusalem because King Jehoiakim was not paying him the tribute which he had been paying.

We have seen pictures of Jerusalem on its hills, with the beautiful Mount of Olives standing by it. There were strong walls and gates. Inside the walls there were the temple and the king's palace and other beautiful houses, and busy streets and squares. It is sad to think of armies on these hills, from Babylon and from many nations around, battering down the walls of Jerusalem and carrying away to Babylon people and treasure. You know why this came upon the city. Prophets had told the people that it would be so. It was because the kings and the people disobeyed the Lord and worshiped idols and had images and altars of the idols in the temple courts and did other evil things.

Soon Nebuchadnezzar and his army came again against Jerusalem, when Jehoiachin was king, and this time, worse than before, he took the king and the king's family, and the able men and skilled craftsmen, and left only the poor and the weak. He appointed another king and called him Zedekiah.

Look at the map and see the long way that the captives must go from Jerusalem, up by Damascus and on to the Euphrates River, and down the Euphrates to Babylon. One can go to Babylon now and see walls and floors of Nebuchadnezzar's palace and of the temples. Were there no prophets to rebuke and teach the people? Jeremiah was in Jerusalem, a great prophet of the Lord, but the people would not listen to him, and even put him in prison. Daniel as a young man and Ezekiel went with the captives to Babylon. If the people had listened to the prophets, it would have been better for them.

##### **Junior**

You will be interested to follow the army of Pharaoh-nechoh which Josiah tried in vain to stop at Megiddo. Jeremiah the prophet lived and prophesied at this time, and we learn from the book of Jeremiah that Pharaoh-nechoh was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, at Charchemish on the Euphrates, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign. (Jer. 46:2) All the Holy Land was now practically in the power of Babylon. (2 Kings 24:7) You can learn who Jehoiakim was by reading carefully the last verses of 2 Kings 23. He was the son of Josiah, whom Pharaoh-nechoh had made king of Jerusalem. Be sure to read about Jehoiakim in Jer. 36:20 to the end.

Three times Nebuchadnezzar and armies of Babylon, called sometimes Chaldees, attacked Jerusalem: in the time of Jehoiakim, in the time of Jehoiachin, and in the time of Zedekiah. We

learn of the first two today, and of the last in our next lesson. Read of Jehoiakim in verses 1-4. It was then that the prophet Daniel was taken to Babylon and some of the gold of the temple. Read of Jehoiachin in verses 8-16; how Nebuchadnezzar the great king of Babylon, with an army, besieged Jerusalem, and Jehoiachin and his mother and the great men of the country, seven thousand soldiers and one thousand craftsmen and smiths, and the members of the royal family, their servants and others, all numbering ten thousand people, were carried captive out of the beautiful city and country which the Lord had given them, where they and their ancestors had lived for about eight hundred years, and were taken to the far-off country of Babylon, and the vessels of gold which Solomon had made in the temple (one wonders that by this time there were any left) were cut in pieces and all the treasures in the house of the Lord and in the king's houses were carried away. When have we heard before of Babylon, with warning that it would some day take captives from Jerusalem and rob the city of its treasures? (2 Kings 20:12-19)

Why did this dreadful punishment visit the people? Because they did not keep the Lord's commandments. They worshiped idols and were more evil than the heathen people about them. What are meant by "the sins of Manasseh" and by his shedding innocent blood? (Chapter 21) Not all the people were carried away, only the "best," that is, the ones who were the most able. The people who were not rich or skillful were left in the land, and the king of Babylon made another son of Josiah, whom he called Zedekiah, king of Judah. Notice how the foreign kings who conquered the Jews changed the names of the Jewish kings. The taking of captives from Jerusalem had begun, and the spoiling of the city, which would not end until the city was destroyed.

1. Who was Pharaoh-nechoh?
2. Who was Nebuchadnezzar?
3. What two among the last kings of Judah had very similar names? Which of these was taken captive to Babylon?
4. What other captives and what treasures were taken at this time?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

In 2 Kings 17, we read about the kingdom of Israel, the ten tribes, being carried away captive into Assyria because of their idolatrous and wicked life, and they never returned to the Holy Land. Now, for disobedience and wickedness, the people of Jerusalem and Judah were carried captive to Babylon.

You remember the wickedness of kings who brought idols into the temple, and especially of Manasseh who also "filled Jerusalem with innocent blood: which the Lord would not pardon." Again Jeremiah tells us in his prophecy that they burnt incense to the idol Baal, poured out drink offerings to other gods, placed abominations in the house of Jehovah, built high places to Baal, and in the valley of Hinnom which is close to Jerusalem had their sons and daughters pass through the fire to the idol Molech. (Jer. 32:29-35) And Jehoiakim the king cut in pieces and burnt in the fire the Word of the Lord which had been revealed through Jeremiah. (Jer. 36:20 to the end) They had profaned all the statutes and judgments and laws which represented the good things

which people should love and the truths of the Word which people should believe, till there was almost no good or truth remaining. Such a wicked and profane state of the church, full of self-love and abusing holy things, is meant in the spiritual sense of the Word by Babylon, and therefore, when the Jews had become so bad, they were given into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, which represented the same evil into which they had fallen. Much is told about Babylon and its meaning in A. 1029. Jerusalem was ruined and made desolate. The Jews were taken out of the Holy Land, and the Divine history ends, for the people no longer represented a true church.

It is true that we know something about the return of the Jews to Jerusalem, how they rebuilt the temple, and something of their history down to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Most of what we know of this story is told in books that do not belong to the inspired Word of the Lord. Some of them are preserved in our Bible, especially the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. They are good and interesting books, and precious because they help to prepare us for the Gospel and the coming of the Lord.

## Lesson 23

### 2 Kings 25:1-21: Jerusalem Destroyed

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

The people of Judah had disobeyed the Lord and worshiped idols much as Israel had done, and the time came when they too were carried away captive. They were taken even farther away than the people of Israel, to Babylon. We will in a moment look it up on the map.

Armies of Babylon came three times against Jerusalem, and each time more captives were taken away. The temple was spoiled. First, its gold and silver treasures were taken to be put in the temple of an idol in Babylon. We do not hear again of the beautiful ark in which were the commandments. At last, even the pillars and altar and laver from the temple court were broken up and the brass or bronze was carried away. The city, too, was spoiled. The good houses were burned, and the wall about the city was broken down. It was left very desolate, and it remained so for seventy years.

Now let us take our map and follow the captives on their long journey. Here is Jerusalem, and here is Babylon. But the journey was longer than it looks because this country between is desert, which they could not cross. They would go up to the Euphrates River and then down this way to Babylon. Babylon was a great, rich city, with palaces and temples. The country about it was flat, watered by streams from the Euphrates River. Some of the Jewish captives were taken into the great, strange city; some of them were given homes in the country near by.

How homesick you would be if you were carried far away to some strange land! And the Jews were leaving their Holy Land and their dear city, Jerusalem, and the temple of the Lord. Perhaps this leaving it and going far away would make them love it more and make them remember the Lord. Read verses 1-6 of Ps. 137. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion." The Psalm is full of the sadness of the homesick captives.

## **Junior**

Do you remember the messengers that came to Hezekiah from a far country, to whom he showed all his treasures, and how the prophet Isaiah rebuked him and told him that these same people would some day carry away the treasures and the people? (2 Kings 20:12-19)

Three times armies of Babylon came against Jerusalem, each time taking more captives and more treasure.

In the first verse of 2 Kings 24, you read about the first taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar when Jehoiakim, Josiah's son, was king. You read of this taking of the city more fully in Dan. 1:1-2. You learn that Daniel was among these first captives, and that at this time a part of the precious golden vessels of the temple were carried away.

Jehoiakim was followed by his son, Jehoiachin. Look carefully at these names, they are so much alike. When Jehoiachin was king, Nebuchadnezzar came again against Jerusalem, and this time he carried away to Babylon the king and the best of the people, and the craftsmen and smiths, and all the gold that was left in the temple. (2 Kings 24:6-16) The priest Ezekiel was among those taken captive at this time and he spoke his prophecies in captivity near Babylon. (Ezek. 1:1-3)

When he took Jehoiachin away, Nebuchadnezzar made the king's uncle king in his place and called him Zedekiah. He rebelled against the king of Babylon and then the end came. Jerusalem was besieged and taken a third time. The walls were broken down, the temple, the king's palace and the good houses burnt, and the brass or bronze was taken from the temple. You read of the cruel treatment of Zedekiah. More of the people were carried away, leaving only some of the poorer ones to be vinedressers and husbandmen. We read about this destruction of Jerusalem in 2 Kings 25:1-21, and in Jer. 39:1-10; and 52; for the prophet Jeremiah was living in Jerusalem in those days. Read of Jeremiah's own experiences during the siege of Jerusalem in Jer. 37 and 38. We shall learn more about Daniel and Ezekiel and Jeremiah in other lessons.

Read with our story today a part of the sad Psalm of the captives. (Ps. 137:1-6) Is this only a story and a Psalm of what happened long ago, or are we ever the captives by the rivers of Babylon, who weep as we remember Zion? When is this true of us?

1. What enemy took Israel captive? What enemy took Judah captive?
2. Who was the last good king in Jerusalem? Who were the kings in Jerusalem when the army of Babylon came three times against the city?
3. What great prophets belong to this time of the captivity?
4. How long would the captivity in Babylon continue?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

Study more carefully Ps. 137. It is spiritually a picture of those who come under the power of self-love (Babylon) and into the falsity and mere outward appearances of truth which come with self-

love (the rivers and willows of Babylon). This evil state is far from heavenly love (Zion) and heavenly truth (Jerusalem). Happy heavenly affections (songs of Zion) are not active, nor are glad confessions of heavenly truth (harps). If we yield wholly to the evil, there is no power to do good (right band), nor any power to speak truth (tongue). Evil of other kinds (Edom) rejoices to see heavenly truth (foundations of Jerusalem) utterly destroyed. Self-love destroys the beginnings of heaven (little ones of Jerusalem). Happy is the person who destroys evil in its beginnings (little ones of Babylon), condemning it with the Lord's truth (stones). (E. 411, 518)

Someone must make for us a more careful study of the meaning of Babylon. The evil represented by Babylon you see in Nebuchadnezzar's proud words: "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power; and for the honor of my majesty?" (Dan. 4:30) You find it condemned in Isaiah, in a proverb against the king of Babylon. "Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will be like the Most High." (Isa. 14:13-14) Babylon is a type of self-love, and the desire to rule over others, especially by means of holy things. Note the use of holy vessels from the temple as drinking vessels in Belshazzar's feast. (Dan. 5:1-4) It profanes holy things by using them for selfish ends. This is the meaning everywhere in the Bible, from the tower of Babel in Genesis to the fall of Babylon in the Revelation. (A. 1326; J. 54; E. 1029; R. 717)

Can someone now show us why Babylon was the special enemy of Judah, as Assyria was the special enemy of Israel? It is plain when we remember that Israel represents heavenly intelligence and Judah heavenly affection. Self-love is the very opposite of such affection. (E. 811, 1029)

The gradual enslavement of the character by an evil love or habit is suggested by the three times that the army of Babylon came against Jerusalem, treating it each time more severely and carrying away more captives. Notice, too, how at the earlier visits the gold of the temple was taken away, and at last even the brass or bronze. The pure motive of heavenly love is destroyed by the indulgence of self-love. The appearance of goodness in outward life may continue a little longer, but even this is soon lost. (A. 425; E. 70)

Does this captivity of seventy years in Babylon necessarily represent a state hopelessly confirmed in evil, or may it represent a state of temptation from the evil of self-love from which one may by the Lord's help, through repentance, return humbled to a happy heavenly life? Answer by reading Ps. 126 and Isa. 35. Seven and seventy in a good sense mean what is complete and holy, but in a bad sense what is complete in wickedness; or as here a full state of affliction before the coming of a brighter day. (A. 728, 6508) Judah would return in preparation for the coming of the Lord.

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Babylonish Captivity

In chapter 17, we read about the kingdom of Israel, the ten tribes, being carried away captive into Assyria because of their idolatrous and wicked life, and that they never returned to the Holy Land.

Now if you will read carefully chapters 24 and 25, you will learn how fearfully wicked the other two tribes, the kingdom of Judah, had also become, where the kings were of David's lineage, and that they also were finally carried captive to Babylon.

How dreadfully they transgressed the laws of the Lord, how far they had gone away from Him, you can see from reading verse 4 of chapter 24, where we learn of the Jewish king who killed innocent people, and "he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the Lord would not pardon." Again Jeremiah tells us in his prophecy that they burned incense to the idol Baal; poured out drink offerings to other gods; placed abominations in the house of Jehovah; built high places to Baal; and in the valley of Hinnom, which is close to Jerusalem, had their sons and daughters pass through the fire to the idol Molech (Jer. 32:29-35); and Jehoiakim, the king, cut in pieces and burnt in the fire the Word of the Lord which had been revealed through Jeremiah. (Jer. 36:20 to end)

In this way they profaned all the statutes, judgments, and laws which represented the good things which people should love, and the truths of the Word which people should believe, so that there was no good nor any truth remaining. Such a wicked and profane state of the Church is meant in the spiritual sense of the Word by "Babylon," and therefore when the Jews had become so bad, they were given into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon; and not only the kings and princes, and the whole people, but also the treasures of the house of Jehovah, and afterwards all its golden vessels; and the temple was burnt, and the walls of the city torn down. Thus, the city was ruined, brought to desolation, and accursed.

You can easily understand that since the land of Canaan represented heaven, it would not do to let the Jews, after they had become so wicked and profane, to remain in that holy land, for they would have profaned it utterly. For this reason, Jeremiah the prophet told them to surrender of their own accord to the king of Babylon, and that they who would not do this, but who would remain in the land, would die of the sword, the famine, and the pestilence. (Jer. 25:1-11)

The ten tribes, or the "captivity of Israel," never returned to the Holy Land. The Jews did. And there was a very important reason for this. It was not that the Jews became better in their captivity, for they did not. But the reason for their return was this: when the time should be at hand that the Lord would come into the world to redeem and save humanity, He was to be born in the Jewish nation, of a virgin of the house of David, and in the Holy Land, and was to manifest Himself where the Church would then be, and where His Word would be. For, the few good people who would then be among the Jews could know from the Word that the Lord was coming, and so could be prepared to receive Him.

This then was the reason that the Jews, unlike the ten tribes of Israel, were brought back again from Babylon, after having been captive there seventy years. Nevertheless, the number of years, seventy, represented the bitter and full profanation to which they had committed themselves.

When they were brought back, the temple was rebuilt. Yet they remained "a Babylonish" Church, as we know from the way the Lord, when He came, spoke of them in the New Testament, and also from the way that the priests and learned men, the scribes and Pharisees treated Him. Therefore, Jerusalem was destroyed again and the temple again burnt with fire, and it has never since been rebuilt, but a Mohammedan mosque occupies the site of the temple at the present day.

You will find the carrying away to Babylon referred to in the opening chapter of the New Testament, where we have "the book of the generation of Jesus Christ." There the history of the Israelites and Jews is divided into three great periods: 1. From Abraham to David; 2. From David to the carrying away into Babylon; 3. From the carrying away into Babylon until Christ.

Since the carrying away into Babylon was really the end of the representative Church among the children of Israel, therefore the inspired Word gives their history only thus far, there being, in the prophets of later history, only allusions to the rebuilding of the temple.

You will see for yourself that we are at the end of the historical books of the Word. We have today the last chapter of the second book of Kings. After that come the Psalms and then the prophetical books. It is true that we know something about the return of the Jews to Jerusalem, how they rebuilt the temple, something of their subsequent history down to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. But most of what we know of this story is told in books that do not belong to the inspired Word of the Lord, although some of these books are bound up with the books of the Word in the "Bible." They are good and interesting books, but they do not contain a spiritual sense, and therefore they are not Divine.

You will understand now why the historical books of the Word do not go any further; namely, because the Jews had ceased to be a Church representative of holy things.

It is very interesting to notice the connection of the prophetical books with this period.

The prophet Isaiah lived during the reign of the last kings of Judah.

Jeremiah lived during the time that the Jews were carried away. His warnings resulted in his being imprisoned by the king of Judah, showing still further how profane was the king. He was taken out of prison by the Babylonish king, who offered him a residence in Babylon, but Jeremiah preferred to remain with the poor people who were left in the land of Canaan to cultivate it. But even these did not heed his advice and warnings.

Ezekiel was among the captives in Chaldea, by the river Chebar.

Daniel was among the Jewish children who were captive at Babylon, and he became a distinguished officer of the Babylonish court. He was a faithful man, who under no circumstances neglected to worship Jehovah.

Zechariah was born in Babylon, and was among the first group of captives who returned to build the temple.

You will be interested to read some chapters from each of these prophets.

## **TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES**

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## **Lesson 24**

### **Isaiah to Malachi: The Prophets**

#### **CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE**

This table will be found helpful in studying the prophets. The first portion of it covers the period from the beginning of the divided kingdom after the death of Solomon till the captivity of Israel. The dates furnished in the margin are more or less uncertain. They cannot be fixed absolutely because the figures furnished relative to the length of the reign of the kings of Judah and Israel in the two books of Kings do not in many instances agree. The difficulty of fixing the dates is also increased when taken relative to the Assyrian chronology, which has the advantage of following an exact system. (See Smith's Bible Dictionary, word Chronology.) The table herewith follows a modern revision that seems to be as reasonable in its approximation to a correct date as any. Objections can be taken to it, but no reconstruction of the chronology can be made that is entirely free from them. However, all chronologists come together at the date 722 or 721 B.C. And fortunately, from this date onward to the end of the destruction of Jerusalem in 388 or 587 B.C., the dates given by different chronologists vary by only a year or two.

I. Israel's Decline and Fall				
B.C.	Kings of Judah	Kings of Israel	Prophets	Syria
940	Rehoboam	Jeroboam		
923	Abijah			
918		Nadab		
916		Baasha		
893		Elah		
892		Zimr		
		Omri		
876		Ahab	Elijah	Ben-hadad
874	Jehoshaphat		Elisah	Hazael
854		Ahaziah		
853	Joram			
850	Jehoram			
844	Ahaziah			
843	(Athaliah)	Jehu		
	Joash			
816	Jehoahaz			
799		Jehoash		
798	Amaziah			
784		Jeroboam II		
			(Jonah)	
770	Azariah or Uzziah		Amos Hosea	
741		Zachariah Shallum	Joel Obadiah Jonah	
740		Menahem		Razin
737		Pekahiah		
736	Jotham	Pekah	Micah	
734	Ahaz			Fall of Damascus
732				Syria annexed to Assyria Assyria
731		Hoshea		Tiglath-pileser
727	Hezekiah			Shalamanezer
722	Captivity. Fall of Samaria			Sargon

<b>II. Decline and fall of Judah, The Captivity and Restoration</b>			
<b>B.C.</b>	<b>Kings of Judah</b>	<b>Prophets</b>	<b>Contemporary Events</b>
722	Hezekiah	Isaiah	Fall of Samaria and dispersion of Israel
701		Micah	Sennacherib's invasion of Judah, Isa. 37
697	Manasseh		
642	Amon		
640	Josiah	Nahum	
622		Habakkuk	Reformation in Judah
609	Jehoahaz Jehoiakim	Zephaniah Jeremiah	
607			Fall of Nineveh
597	Jehoiachin		Siege of Jerusalem First deportation
	Zedekiah	Ezekiel	
586			Fall of Jerusalem. Second deportation
581			Third deportation to Babylon
561		Daniel	Release of Jehoiakim (2 Kings 25:27)
538		Isaiah	Fall of Babylon before Cyrus
536		Haggai	Return of the Exiles
516		Zechariah Malachi	Temple rebuilt and dedicated

Judaea was under Persian rule from 530 till about 330 B.C. After the death of Alexander the Great, the rule over Judaea was disputed by the Seleucids in Syria and the Ptolemies in Egypt till about the year 175 B.C. when it came wholly under Syrian rule under Antiochus the Great. In 167 B.C., the country obtained a quasi independence through the successful revolt of the Maccabees. This priestly rule continued until Jerusalem was captured by Pompeii in 63 B.C. This established the Roman power in Judea. Herod the Great was made King of Judaea in 37 B.C. He died in 4 B.C. The Lord was born of the remnant that same year, or in 5 B.C.

About the year 1763 Swedenborg made the following entry in his Spiritual Diary (No. 6082). Concerning Jerusalem and the temple after the captivity:

Temple began to be built	72* [537 B.C.]
It is completed as to its interior parts	91, 94 [516]
Jerusalem built	163 [446]
Haman sought to kill the Jews	215 [394]
Temple plundered	439[170]
The Jews forced [to worship] idols by Antiochus	441 [168]
The temple is cleansed	444 [165]
Alcimus begins to destroy the walls of the temple	449 [160]
Hyrcanus, Aristobulus, Alexander Jannaeus rule in Judaea	504, 505, 506 [105]
Aristobulus to	542 [67]
Pompeii occupies Jerusalem	545 [64]
Antigonus occupies Judea	568 [41]
Then Herod is declared king of Judaea	568 [41]
Herod besieges and captures Jerusalem	571, 572 [38, 37]
Augustus begins to erect the temple	586 [21]
The building of the temple having been completed, Herod celebrates the dedication	595 [14]
The temple is polluted by the Samaritans	615 [6 A.D.]
The building of the temple is interrupted	631 [22 A.D.]
The Lord was born	605 [5 B.C.]

\*This figure 72 probably represents the 72nd year after the captivity. The captivity lasted 70 years. "The Lord was born 605." This would mean 605 years after the captivity. And since the date of the Lord's birth was 5 B.C., the captivity began in 609 or 610 B.C. according to this computation. In the notes it was stated to be 606 or 605 B.C.

This is a remarkable table. Swedenborg's figures in the first column are not according to the Roman Era. The date which gives the means of computing them according to the current Christian Era is the last - the date of the Lord's birth - which he states as 605. This was the year 5 B.C. Therefore, the first date is 537 B.C. The date assigned in the lesson for the same event is 536 or 535 B.C. The other dates are equally near to those assigned by modern historians and chronologists given below. A comparison, with a few explanatory notes on the events, will be useful as the lessons from the prophets have much to do with the temple, the central feature of the city of Jerusalem.

516 B.C. The temple was completed in the 6th year of Darius. (Ezra 6:15) Haggai prophesied in the second year - 520 - when the building was renewed.

445. Nehemiah came from Babylon and inspired the Jews to build the walls of the city. The work was completed in 52 days. (Neh. 2)

"Haman sought to kill the Jews." This event, recorded in the Book of Esther, occurred in the reign of Ahasuerus. He is usually identified with Xerxes who reigned in Persia from 485-464. If it occurred in 394, as stated by Swedenborg, it belongs to the reign of Artaxerxes II.

170. Jerusalem was devastated and the temple plundered by Antiochus IV. (2 Maccabees 5)

168. Antiochus issued an edict to compel heathen worship in all his dominions. The temple was reconsecrated to Zeus Olympius, the worship of idols introduced there, an altar to Zeus set up on the brazen altar of Jehovah, pig's flesh offered thereon, and both sprinkled about the temple. The Jews were compelled to take part in these abominations. (2 Macc. 6; Josephus Ant. 13; Dan. 13:31)

165. The Maccabees entered Jerusalem, cleansed the temple, and rededicated it in a feast which lasted eight days. This is the origin of the feast of dedication. (John 10:22)

160. Alcimus was a high priest who made alterations in the temple and demolished a wall or building held to be especially sacred as "the work of the prophets." (Macc. 9:54)

John Hyrcanus, Aristobulus his son, and Alexander Jannaeus his brother, were priests who ruled in Jerusalem from 135-107, 107-106, and 106-79 respectively.

Aristobulus was the second son of Alexander Jannaeus. He succeeded his elder brother Hyrcanus in 69 and ruled till the year 63.

63. After a severe conflict, Pompeii took Jerusalem.

40. Antigonus, son of Aristobulus, captured Jerusalem and was declared king.

40. The same year Herod went to Rome and was appointed by the senate king of Judaea.

37. Herod appeared before Jerusalem in 39 and again in 37, when, after a five months' siege, he captured it.

20. Herod pulled down the old buildings of the temple and began to rebuild. (He may have done this at the instigation of Augustus.)

12. Eight years were spent in completing the work.

8 A.D. Some Samaritans polluted the temple by strewing human bones about the cloisters in secret during the night of the Passover. Up to this time, the Samaritans had been admitted to the temple. They were henceforth excluded. (John 4:9. About 24 years later.)

26 B.C. to 70 A.D. Additions were constantly being made to Herod's temple so that in the Lord's time it was said to have taken "forty and six years" to build. (John 2:20)

The Lord was born in the year 5 or 4 B.C.

NOTE: In A.D. 70, the city and temple were completely destroyed by Titus. The latter was never rebuilt by the Jews. All of which is significant of the failure of religion in the past. The Holy City New Jerusalem is the symbol of the revival of religion and the progressive construction of the cooperative commonwealth of the world, despite all appearances to the contrary today.

## **Lesson 25**

### **Isaiah to Malachi: The Prophets**

#### **INTRODUCTORY**

We do not often study the prophets in our Sunday schools. The books of the Divine Word from Isaiah to Malachi are even to some extent neglected in home reading. They are regarded as hard reading, unsuitable for teaching to young people.

It is true that the prophets make considerable use of metaphors and symbols and parables; still there is very much—the greater portion, indeed—that is a clear statement of truths that require little explanation to make them telling and forcible. These books are especially strong in their picture of the times in which they were written. No history depicts the course of the decline and fall of a great nation more perfectly. The prophets take us to the very roots of all degenerations in humankind. We have only to study their writings to understand our own times better, and to know what to do to stop the degeneration of the human race. What study could be more interesting! What more instructive and enlightening! With a little earnest cooperation in class work, there is no doubt that "The Prophets" will be found to be more interesting than we had ever imagined, and better suited to our young people than we could have believed. They are living documents.

The books of the Prophets are not arranged in our Bibles chronologically as will clearly appear later. The order in which they are given is that provided by the Lord. The Divine Word is not given to us primarily to teach us history, but to guide us on our way to heaven. Therefore, there is a spiritual reason why the books follow in a series from Isaiah to Malachi.

The Hebrew Bible is divided into three parts:

1. The Law, consisting of the five books of Moses;
2. The Prophets, which includes Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, and the books in our Bible from Isaiah to Malachi (excepting Daniel and Lamentations);

3. The Writings, which take in the other twelve books printed in our Bible, Ruth, Chronicles, etc.

We have specially to deal with the Law and the Prophets. The latter is divided into two great divisions, Former Prophets and Latter Prophets, and this last section is again divided into two, the greater prophets and the twelve minor prophets.

At the head of the Law we place the name of Moses. The first of the former prophets is Joshua, the first of the greater Isaiah, and the first of the minor Hosea. Thus, we have one name representing the law, and three representing the different divisions of the prophets.

There is a reason why these latter three names, Joshua, Isaiah, and Hosea stand first in their respective divisions. Isaiah undoubtedly was later than Hosea; and Hosea, as we shall see, wrote at a later date than Amos. Yet the Lord superintended the order in which they appear in the Divine Word, and in that order Isaiah is the first of one series, and Hosea first in another.

The law comes first as a separate division. It represents the instruction in the laws of heavenly life, the ideal. Then follows the practical working out of that ideal, as described for us in the prophets. First, the gift of heaven in childhood, and then the winning of that gift "in hell's despite" in later life. Consequently, the names Joshua, Isaiah, and Hosea head the three departments of the prophets. These three names all mean the same thing; they are three different forms of the Greek name Jesus, which means, "He (Jehovah) shall save His people from their sins." The prophets describe the Lord's work of salvation.

The former prophets unfold the test that is put upon the love of our neighbor as much as ourself; and the latter prophets, the test put upon the love of the Lord—the love of the neighbor more than ourselves. The major prophets unveil the saving power of faith, the minor prophets the saving power of love.

It is hard to grasp such generalizations as these otherwise than theoretically. It is useful, however, to bear them in mind; particulars will fall into line more readily afterward. Undoubtedly the whole of the Divine Word is intended for every angel in heaven, and person on earth. Yet it is equally true that all angels in their own societies have a particular part of the Word that carries a particularly clear message to them—it appears to theirs, to be their life from the Lord. Thus all in the heavens live in orderly relation to each other; which order is reflected in the Divine Word in its letter. (See T. 235, 272.)

## **Lesson 26**

### **Isaiah to Malachi: The Prophet**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The prophets that we read of in the Bible story were individuals to whom the Lord gave words to speak to the people. What prophets do you remember? Elijah was a prophet who made the

sacrifice on Mt. Carmel. Elisha was his servant and was the prophet after him. Isaiah was the prophet in Jerusalem when Hezekiah was king. Another prophet of the same time was Micah. King Josiah had instruction from the Lord through Huldah the prophetess. Zephaniah was a prophet in the days of Josiah. It was also while Josiah was king that the Lord called Jeremiah to be His prophet. If you can, you should see Sargent's picture of the prophets. We have writings of some of these great prophets in the Bible. Here is a Bible. Can you find the book of Isaiah? Of Micah? Of Jeremiah? Of Zephaniah?

## **Junior**

Where do we find the books of the prophets in our Bible? They are the last group of books in the Old Testament. Please find them. How many of these books are there? Four longer books come first, which because they are longer are called major prophets. What are their names? Then follow twelve shorter books, which because they are shorter are called minor prophets. It is worthwhile to learn their names and the order in which they come. We have no book of Elijah or Elisha or of Huldah the prophetess. We do find a book of Isaiah and books of Micah, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah, who were in Jerusalem in the times of which we have been learning. A little later when the people of Judah were taken captive to Babylon, Jeremiah was the great prophet in Jerusalem, and Ezekiel and Daniel were with the captives. You should have, and study, Sargent's picture of the prophets.

Who can open the Bible to the Prophets? The Psalms are very near the middle of the Bible, and the Prophets come a little after the Psalms. Who can find Isaiah? It comes first of the prophets in our Bible, one of the four longer or major prophets. Who can find Micah, one of the twelve shorter or minor prophets? These two prophets were living at the same time in Judah, when Hezekiah was king. Read of the kings under whom they lived in Isa. 1:1 and Micah 1:1. Isaiah was the older man and belonged to an influential family in Jerusalem. Micah was the younger man and was from the village Moresheth, toward the Philistine country from Jerusalem. The Lord chose prophets, as He chose disciples, from various kinds of people, and gave them His work to do and His message to speak. Both prophets rebuked the oppressive conduct of the rich, and condemned their worship as worthless to the Lord while they continued their evil ways. (See Isa. 1:1-20 and Micah 6:1-8.) While comparing the two prophets, notice almost the same words in Isa. 2:1-5 and Micah 4: 1-5. Find predictions of the Lord's coming in Isa. 7:14-15; 9:6-7; 11:1-8, and in Micah 5:2.

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

It is interesting in study of the prophets to learn what we can of the times in which they lived, and of the people to whom they spoke. This helps us to understand the clothing of their message. But continually as we read we feel that the message bursts its local setting. Its rebukes and promises are spoken to us and to people of all times. From the little happenings of Judah shine out promises for the world, especially promises of the coming of the Lord.

The word "prophet" usually means one who foretells or predicts. We are so accustomed to this signification of it that we find it difficult to admit any other. The Scripture usage of the word, however, means not so much "one who speaks before," as "one who speaks for, or on behalf of,

another." (See Exod. 4:16; 7:1.) The former prophets record the conquest of the land, the establishment of the throne of David in it, and the subsequent degeneration and captivity of Israel and Judah, just history. They dramatize the progressive unveiling of the weaknesses in the flesh that separate one person from another. And the preaching of the latter prophets, understood in the spirit, uncovers the evils that separate humanity from its Maker. The revelation is given to build up the Kingdom of God on earth, and reunite humanity in fellowship with the Lord. The prophetic word, so far as it points to the future, simply implies the Divine assurance of the power of the Word to ultimate itself in one form or other in the lives of people.

## Lesson 27

### **Isaiah 1: 6: "The whole head is sick"**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We are to get more acquainted with some of the prophets whom the Lord sent to Judah and Jerusalem to warn and teach the people. We have met some of these prophets, and there are more whom we must know; and we must learn where in our Bible to find their printed words. Who remembers a prophet in Jerusalem when Hezekiah was king? He gave Hezekiah courage from the Lord when the Assyrians came up to the city walls with their insulting words. He came to Hezekiah when he was sick. He told the king that he did wrong when he showed all his treasures to the messengers from Babylon. We will read that story again today.

Isaiah was the prophet who brought to King Hezekiah the words of the Lord when he was sick and when he was in danger from the Assyrians. Isaiah belonged to an important family in Jerusalem, and he may have been related to the king. Isaiah also spoke warnings and promises from the Lord to all the people. We will read Isaiah 6:1-8. It tells how the Lord called Isaiah and made him brave for his work. He seems to have been in the court of the temple in Jerusalem, where the altar was with the fire always burning on it. The seraphim were probably human forms with wings; they also had hands and feet. They remind us of the cherubim on the cover of the sacred ark. What did the seraphim say? What did one of them do? Then when Isaiah heard the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" He said, "Here am I; send me." He was prophet in Jerusalem for forty years. He rebuked the people for their evil ways. Some words of Isaiah are very beautiful, looking beyond the times in which he lived to the coming of the Lord. (Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1-9)

##### **Junior**

Isaiah is the first of the major prophets. Each prophet has certain characteristics that clearly distinguish him from all the rest. There is Amos, the desert shepherd, with his unflinching condemnation of Israel. "Prepare to meet thy God." Hosea reveals the love of God toward a wayward and sinful people. "I desire loving-kindness, and not sacrifice. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love. O Ephraim, how shall I give thee up?" Joel pictures the dreadful nature of the approaching day of judgment. "The day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can

abide it?" Obadiah predicts the punishment of Edom. And Jonah pronounces the church's message to the Gentiles to repent. Historically, these prophets precede Isaiah. They belong to the times of Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, and Menahem, kings of Israel, and of Uzziah and Jotham, kings of Judah, or from about the year 760 to about the year 740 B.C. Then comes the prophet Isaiah who deals with the decline of Judah. He was evidently called "in the year that King Uzziah died," about 740 B.C. (Isa. 6) He exercised his public office throughout a long and most eventful period of national history, during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah (1:6) until at least the year 700 B.C. The great invasion of Sennacherib referred to in Isa. 36 and 37 took place in 701 B.C. For the purposes of our studies we may divide the prophecies in Isa. 1-39 into four sections: those belonging to the reign of Jotham, 1-6; those relating to the times of Ahaz, 7-12; those concerning the nations and the relations of Judah to Assyria, 13-35; and those belonging to the reign of Hezekiah, 36-39. The chapters from 40 to 66 are historically connected with the exile of Judah.

During the ministry of Hosea and Amos, there was great prosperity in Israel. This accompanied the long peaceful reign of Jeroboam II (41 years). Similar was the prosperity in Judah while Jeroboam's contemporary Azariah or Uzziah reigned there (52 years). Great was the abuse of the blessings showered upon them. We shall see how Amos and Hosea condemned Israel for its sins in this period. No less searching is Isaiah's condemnation of the people of Judah. The land is full of silver and gold and treasures but is also full of idols. (2:7-8) The people are proud and self-confident. (2:11 and on) They practice evil without shame. (3:9) The rich grind the faces of the poor (3:14-15); they increase their territorial possessions with the intent of owning everything. They acquire a monopoly of the land, the source of living. (5:8) The fashionable women in Jerusalem are sorely condemned for pride and extravagance. (3:16-24) And woe be to them that revel in strong drink. (5:11-12) "Hell hath enlarged herself, and openeth her mouth without measure." (5:14) In such a state of society as this, we cannot wonder at the terrible arraignment of this rebellious people in chapter one.

Give special thought today to Isa. 6:1-8, the call of Isaiah and his strengthening for his work. The vision seems to have come to Isaiah in the temple court. Note the suggestion to the younger children about the seraphim (which is a plural word). Isaiah was fearful until the vision gave him courage. Compare the call of Moses (Exod. 2:10-11; 4:10-12); of Jeremiah (Jer. 1:6-9); of Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:1-3). All these men were fearful till the Lord strengthened them for their work. And remember the Lord's promise of the Holy Spirit to be with the apostles, to give them what to speak. (Matt. 10:19-20) Where have you heard before the words of verse 3, "Holy, holy, holy," etc.? Compare Rev. 4:8.

The vision of Isaiah when he received his call is impressive. The message which he was to deliver (6:9-12) is painful. It will harden the hearts of the people, till nothing is left but the very smallest remnant of good. The impression made upon the prophet by the words of the seraphim (6:3) is reflected in the title, "The holy One of Israel," which occurs very frequently in this prophecy and is only to be found in six other places in the entire Word. The expression is quite characteristic of this prophet, as are also his references to the promised tenth or remnant by means of which the nation shall be saved. This was revealed to him. (6:13) This verse might be translated better, "Yet in it shall be a tenth part, and it shall return, and shall be to exterminate or extirpate: as a terebinth (not teil tree) and oak whose stem is in them, when cut down: the holy seed shall be the stem thereof." The root meaning of both words for terebinth and oak is the same—hardy and

strong. The sense of the passage is now clear. As the stem of these hardy trees has an enduring life in it to put forth new stock, so this indestructible remnant has power from the Lord to increase and save His people. How strongly this thought is presented in 1:9, and elsewhere throughout this prophecy.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Isaiah means "the salvation of Jehovah," similar to the meaning of the words Joshua and Hosea. And these three, Joshua, Isaiah, and Hosea, are the first of the former, major, and minor prophets respectively. It is a vision or insight into the saving work of the Lord in humanity and the church. The Lord has done everything for us, yet have we turned to self, even to the entire neglect of the Lord and His Word. (Isa. 1:1-8) Very little acknowledgment of wrong exists within. (Verse 9) This remnant is the consciousness of having broken the ten commandments as taught to us in childhood. (The ten precepts signify remains. A. 576) It is through this that people are saved. Because evil is so strong within—"there is no health in us"—external worship is of no avail. (Verses 10-15) Therefore, we must repent, listen to conscience, and reform, and the Lord will give us good in place of evil. (Verses 16-19) Otherwise the Word is falsified, the church is taken away, and given to others. (Verses 20-27) Evil must surely produce destruction. (Verses 28-31)

Make today some study of Isa. 6:1-8, the call of Isaiah and his strengthening for his work. It was a vision with heavenly meaning, like visions described by John in Revelation. The first verse speaking of the death of an earthly king and of the Lord exalted as the heavenly king seems to lift our thought and the prophet's thought above earthly conditions which are fearful and discouraging to a higher plane where all is Divine brightness and strength. The seraphim and their wings are emblems of the Divine truth and its power, into the service of which Isaiah is called. (Compare the horses and chariots of fire of Elijah and Elisha.) The wings are emblems of the Divine truth in its supporting and protecting power, applied to higher and lower things of life. The words uttered by the seraphim (verse 3) are also in acknowledgment and praise of the Divine truth. Such is the spiritual meaning of "Holy" and of "Glory." Truth alone points out evil and condemns, but the touch of the Divine love is healing and the prophet finds courage for his mission. (A. 2921; E. 580) Compare the rushing mighty wind and cloven tongues of fire with which the Holy Spirit came to the apostles.

Chapter 6 presents a wonderful vision of the Lord in His Divine Word. Compare with this vision that of Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:5, 13-15) and that of John in Patmos (Rev. 4:2, 6, 8). The four animals and seraphim and cherubim signify the same thing. (A. 2921) The wings covering the face and feet signify the protection of the Divine Truth: wings to fly are truths with power of ascending and giving us a broader view of life. All truths of the Word proclaim the holiness of the Lord. The church is full of His glory. (Verse 3) But the doctrine of the Word is misunderstood by those who are in evils. (Verse 5) Yet the power to perceive the truth of doctrine (the lips) is purified by the application of the Divine Love (the live coal from the altar). (Verses 6, 7; E. 580) Then the Word will open and reveal the saving truth from the Lord. (Verse 7) It declares that an evil life destroys the church within. The heart that is hardened in evil becomes spiritually dead. (Verses 9-12) The only hope is in rendering obedience to those inflexible precepts inculcated in our minds in early

years. We must begin with the truth as we know it, the truth we understand best because we have learned to appreciate its practical meaning by repeated application to our conduct of old. We begin with that. It is the holy seed which is the stem or stump from which in time will burst forth buds and blossoms and fruit, and finally new seed within the fruit to perpetuate its kind to eternity. There is no other way of being saved than through this very small remnant.

## Lesson 28

### Isaiah 11; 12: The Rod Out of Jesse

#### HISTORICAL STUDY

##### Junior

Isaiah probably began to prophesy in the year that Uzziah died, about 740 B.C. (6:1) Jotham followed Uzziah as King of Judah. We may take chapters 1-6 as referring to the times of Jotham. Ahaz was the successor of Jotham. Chapters 7 and 8 undoubtedly belong to the reign of Ahaz. They tell us how Isaiah pronounced a judgment upon Ahaz and the house of Judah for not trusting in the Lord to free them from the hands of Rezin, king of Syria and Pekah, king of Israel. Rezin and Pekah endeavored to dethrone Ahaz. (7:6) Isaiah pled with Ahaz not to fear them: their kingdoms would soon be destroyed. Ahaz, contrary to the counsel of Isaiah, sought help from Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria. Isaiah declared that the consequences of this action would be fatal to the house of Judah. This took place about 734 B.C., when Pekah and Rezin invaded Judah. Ahaz's appeal to Tiglath-pileser resulted in the destruction of Damascus by the Assyrians in 732 B.C. (2 Kings 16) As yet, Judah is untouched, nor has the spoil of Samaria been taken away before the king of Assyria. (8:4) But ten years later, in 722 B.C., Samaria fell before the Assyrians, and the northern country was depopulated.

In the tenth chapter, Isaiah shows that Assyria is only an instrument in the Lord's hand, "the rod of Mine anger" (10:5), unable to do anything unless the power to act be given from the Lord. (10:15) Assyria has been the means of punishing Israel. That punishment is needed for its ultimate good. "A remnant shall return, the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God." (10:21) Judah is greatly disturbed now by the violent action of Assyria towards Israel. Isaiah counsels Judah not to be afraid. (10:24) Assyria will yet be punished for its cruelty. (10:25-27) It dare not presume to touch Judah. The prophet pictures the Assyrians hastening through the land of Judah and menacing the holy city. (10:28-32) But the Lord will not permit Assyria to violate Jerusalem. He shall judge the Assyrians. "He shall lop the bough with terror . . . he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall mightily." (10:33-34) The stout trees of Lebanon shall be cut down, never to rise again. But "out of the stem or trunk of Jesse shall come forth a rod, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." (11:1) Note the connection between the chapters. What a wonderful prophecy! The Assyrian is an instrument in the hands of providence. He shall bring suffering upon the Lord's people. But when he has served this purpose, he shall perish; and from the remnant of the nation that has been chastised shall spring forth One who shall bring peace upon earth, and restore Israel to its rightful place. (Isa. 11) Then shall Israel raise his song of

thanksgiving "as in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt." (Isa. 12) This is the climax, and brings this portion of the prophecy to a close.

The stem and roots of Jesse are identical with the very small remnant (1:9), the stump (or substance A. V. 6:13), and remnant (10:20 and elsewhere in Isa.). This doctrine of the remnant merits special attention. It is worth noting also that Isaiah had two sons. One was called Maher-shalal-hash-baz which means speed-spoil-hasten-prey, and has reference to the Assyrian king spoiling Samaria. (8:1-4) The other child was named Shear-jashub, which means "a remnant shall return." (7:3) This remnant or stump is frequently spoken of in chapters 1-39; and chapters 40-66 speak of that remnant having returned to restore the waste places in the land, and of the stem and branch which grew out of its roots - the Lord Himself.

The idea of the promised deliverer of His chosen people is first indicated in Gen. 3:13. It is again signified in the life of Joseph. (Gen. 43:3) It appears again in the work of Moses, Joshua, and the judges who were each sent by the Lord to rescue the people from their enemies. It becomes clearer in the promise made to David through the prophet Nathan. (2 Sam. 7:4-17) It rings forth from the last words of King David. (2 Sam. 23) And it is uttered with the greatest power by the prophet Isaiah at a time when the hopes of Judah were at their lowest, under the government of one of the most unworthy members of the house of David. Doubtless Isaiah, and the Jewish people too, only expected the advent of an earthly King who would release them from earthly enemies, a king like David. Since the fulfillment of the prophecy in our Lord, we know that His "kingdom is not of this world," and that the enemies are "the foes of man's own household."

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Assyria, the instrument in the Lord's hand, almost completely destroys the house of Israel. Assyria signifies false reasoning. (A. 1186, and on) Specious reasons are always at hand to excuse the wayward tendencies of the human heart. Our ruling evil love always works up to its highest pitch. As it approaches its worst, the reasons for clinging to it, and thus excusing it, become more subtle and specious, and threaten the destruction of the spiritual person, "the house of Israel." But the persistent effort to repudiate them, and to control the expression of the evil love in action leads to a new birth in the soul, or the promise of that new birth. Adherence to what we have been taught as right - drawn from the Ten Commandments - constitutes the "trunk and roots of Jesse." It is "the holy seed which is the stump," or "truth." (Isa. 6:13) From this root and stump springs forth a stem or branch which is to bring salvation and peace on earth. Without this basal remnant, no salvation to the individual or the race is possible. With it, all things are possible to humanity through the Lord.

The rod and branch primarily refer to the Lord. (11:1) His spirit is filled with wisdom, intelligence, knowledge, and might (verse 2). "He will judge from Divine wisdom (verse 3), save the faithful and destroy the unfaithful." (Verse 4; P. P.) Divine love and wisdom will act conjointly in Him (verse 5). With His presence established within, we have nothing to fear from evil because He will defend us from it (verses 6-9). The lamb, kid, and calf describe respectively the three degrees of innocence or trustfulness. Their opposites from which we have nothing to fear are typified by the wolf, leopard, and young lion. (F. 314) Neither can we be hurt by the poison of

deceit and hypocrisy. (8; A. 9013; E. 410) The knowledge of the Lord (verse 9) means more than mere knowledge in the memory; it is the knowledge born of experience. This life of the Lord in the centre in the church shall then spread outwards to the nations (verses 10-12). This passage identifies the Gentiles with "the outcasts of Israel, and the dispersed of Judah." All good that lies hidden beneath the self-life shall be restored and brought home. Then the understanding of the Word will agree with the heavenly love in the heart (verse 13). And all false reasoning shall be rejected and cast off (verses 14-15; E. 433). There will be ample opportunity for all good that has been stored up in the heart to come forth and influence the life (verse 16). It is impossible then to refrain from breaking forth into a joyful song of praise. (Isa. 12)

## Lesson 29

### Isaiah 37: Isaiah and Hezekiah

#### HISTORICAL STUDY

##### Junior

We have divided the first thirty-nine chapters into four sections: chapters 1-6 reflect the times of Uzziah; chapters 7-12 refer to incidents in the reign of Ahaz; chapters 13-35 are prophetic utterances against ten nations, against the church in general, and the relation of Judah to Assyria; and chapters 36-39 relate incidents in the reign of Hezekiah. These last chapters are almost an exact reproduction of 2 Kings 18:13-20:19. 2 Kings 18:14-16 is not in Isaiah, and Isa. 38:9-20 is not in Kings. Repetitions of this kind with slight variations are not uncommon in the Old Testament. We are most familiar with those in the Gospels. It is noteworthy that a repetition never appears in exactly the same context. The context varies its meaning, just like the meaning of words themselves. The Divine Word is thus enriched by them. These historical chapters deal with the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib in 701 B.C. (36; 37), Hezekiah's sickness (38), and the visit of the king of Babylon (39).

We have lately, when studying the Book of Kings, had the story of this great invasion before us. It is useful to recall the circumstances. The repetitions of the narrative should at least make a double or increased impression on our minds. It is a very important event. Sennacherib invaded Judah and sent Rab-shakeh to Jerusalem to demand the surrender of the city. Rab-shakeh is not the name of a man, but his title. The word is Assyrian and means "chief of the captains." Likewise Sartan and Rabsaris are titles meaning respectively "commander-in-chief" and "chief of the heads of princes." The Rab-shakeh approaches the walls of the city and addresses the people thereon in Hebrew. His words are cunning. They first point to the weakness of Judah in trusting to Egypt for help. Then they seek to show how useless it is to trust in Jehovah. And they close with the blasphemous challenge, "Jehovah said unto me, Go up against this land and destroy it." The scribes and priests ask the Rab-shakeh to speak in Syrian. They fear the influence of his words upon the people. The Rab-shakeh only becomes the more bold in his speech, offering rewards to those who surrender. Hezekiah sends to Isaiah in his extremity. The prophet enjoins silence; the city will be saved. The Rab-shakeh returned to Sennacherib at Libnah. But Tirade, Egypt's Ethiopian king, was on his way to meet Sennacherib. The Rab-shakeh again came to Jerusalem

with a more urgent demand for its surrender. Hezekiah took the letter to the temple, and spread it before the Lord, praying to Him to vindicate His honor. The answer came through Isaiah. Assyria has uttered blasphemy and shall be punished. There were slain that night 185,000. Twenty years later, in 681 B.C., Sennacherib was slain by his sons, and Esarhaddon reigned in his stead. This was the last appearance of the Assyrians in the land. Many are the conjectures as to the means by which the host was slain. The immediate cause is explained in A. 7879.

The prophet's sign of the promised relief in 37:30 is most interesting. The Assyrians had devastated the land. The Jews must be content that year with the crop resulting from the seed of the previous year's growth which has sown itself, i.e., the aftergrowth. Next year, "that which springs of itself" - the wild corn - shall be their only harvest. But the following year will yield abundant fruits. It is another symbol of the indestructible remnant in the Lord's church, as is proved by the succeeding words in verses 31, 32.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

An able commentator on this prophecy (Dr. G. A. Smith) makes some impressive remarks on these chapters which suggest the essential spiritual lesson. Jerusalem is the "fortress of faith." Those on Isaiah's side represent "an absolute and unselfish faith in God, Sovereign of the world and Savior of His people; those on the Assyrian side possess a bare, brutal confidence in themselves, in human cleverness and success, a vaunting contempt of righteousness and pity." It is the ancient conflict between faith in the Divine and mere human reason. Dr. Smith adds, "The more we have fed on the promises of the Bible, the more that the Spirit of God has engendered in our pure hearts assurances of justice and peace, the more we shall sometimes tremble with the fear that in outward fact there is no life for these beautiful conceptions of the soul. Do we really believe in the Fatherhood of God—believe in it till it has changed us inwardly, and we carry a new sense of destiny, a new conscience of justice, a new disgust of sin, a new pity for pain? Then how full of the anguish of impotence must our souls feel when they consciously survey one day of common life about us, or when we honestly look back on a year of our own conduct? Does it not seem as if upon one or two hideous streets in some center of our civilization all Christianity, with its eighteen hundred years of promise and impetus, had gone to wreck? Is God only for the imagination of man? Is there no God outwardly to control and grant victory? Is He only a voice and not a Creator? Is Christ only a prophet and not the King?" It is faith and human reason, Israel and Assyria, face to face. And the question is most critical indeed when it touches an old evil habit which we seek to excuse. There is no living faith unless we are ready, by means of the Word, to confute all excuses, and conform in conduct to the will of the Lord. Without private regeneration in this way, the world's redemption is hopeless. Strict attention to the work needed to be done in self is the antidote for doubts about the fulfillment of prophecy for the world at large. The more we hate evil—the particular evil to which we are prone—the more subtle and specious become the reasons which excuse that evil, and make it appear justifiable and right, yea, from the Lord Himself. The enemy ravages and overpowers all pure intellectualisms (Israel), and then concentrates its forces upon the will, the love of doing right from the Lord (Judah). The more we perceive what is right in the light of the Divine Word, the more vigorous become the attacks of the evil spirits who seek to prevent it. The false reasons that excuse grow more difficult to repel

because they increasingly appear to be from the Word. "Jehovah said unto me (Assyria), go up against this land, and destroy it." The Lord directed Assyria! The Lord is on the side of our enemies! This conflict reduces us to great despair. But with repentance and humiliation before the Lord, the deliverance from our enemies is effected. A remnant, the sense of right taught us in youth embedded in our hearts, this is our preservation. It is the holy seed of righteousness freed from all selfishness which takes root downward: and bears fruit upward in increasing abundance. (Isa. 37:30-32) It is the work of the Lord promised through His servant Isaiah, whose name means, "Jehovah is my Savior." The fruits of righteousness are gained through persistent effort to do right as of ourselves. (P. 100-128)

## **Lesson 30**

### **Isaiah 40: The Voice in the Wilderness**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." We hear it first as a voice of comfort to the people weary with their life as captives in Babylon. We remember the Psalm of the captives, "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion" ( Ps. 137); and the Psalm in which their thoughts fly back with the little birds to Jerusalem and the temple (Ps. 84). But the days of captivity are nearly over; they will soon be made free to go home to their own land. The verses tell of a highway for the Lord, remembering the roads sometimes built and made smooth for the coming of a great earthly king. The people seem weak like grass, but the Lord's word is sure and the Lord is strong.

The Gospels show us another meaning in this chapter. They tell us about John the Baptist who came preaching that people should repent, should stop their evil ways and get ready for the Lord. When the people came to John at the Jordan from Jerusalem and from the country all about, and asked him, "Who art thou?" he said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaius" (the Greek writing of the name Isaiah). (John 1:22-23; Luke 3:3-6) The comfort of this chapter was not only for the Jewish captives but for all the world.

We must read another of the glorious promises of the Lord's coming and of His kingdom from this book of prophecy. Among so many it is hard to choose. It shall be today the 60th chapter: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

##### **Junior**

The section of the Book of Isaiah which begins at the 40th chapter with "Comfort ye" is one of the most inspiring parts of Scripture. The words brought comfort to the Jews after their long captivity in Babylon. How long was the captivity? (Jer. 25:11-12) Cyrus is mentioned as the deliverer (Isa. 44:28; 45:1), the Persian monarch who took Babylon and gave the Jews permission to return and to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. We come soon to this thrilling story. (Ezra 1:1-3) Get the full

joy of this chapter to the captives, who heard the word Comfort, and looked up with hope. They must prepare for the Lord, as people prepared for earthly kings.

Remember John the Baptist and his reference to this chapter as the warrant for his preaching and as the description of his work. (John 1:22-23; Luke 3:3-6) How was John fulfilling the picture? How was he straightening and smoothing the way in preparation for the Lord? Are there still valleys to be filled and mountains and hills to be made low in preparation for the Lord? Are there crooked places to be made straight and rough places to be made smooth, if we are to live with the Lord and find the strength and joy of Christian life? This chapter helps us to know that it is possible for us and for the world.

We must get more of these glorious hopes and promises from other chapters—promises of the Lord's coming, with pictures of His trials and sufferings as vivid as any that are given in the Gospels (Isa. 53), and of the fruit of His victories in a world redeemed, a true kingdom of the Lord. As you turn the pages there is chapter 61, which the Lord read in the synagogue at Nazareth, and said that He fulfilled. Chapter 60 gives a picture of the world redeemed which we may compare with the Holy City in the last pages of Scripture. It is a picture which has power to lift people's hearts from discouragement and to give them hope. The power of the Lord is in His promises, to lead on to their fulfillment.

## HISTORICAL STUDY

It may be somewhat of a surprise that there is historically a break in the prophecy of Isaiah at the fortieth chapter. The former chapters belong plainly to "the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah," from about the year 740 to 700 B.C. Chapters 40 to 66, however, just as clearly picture a period in the history of the Jews at least 150 years later. The second verse of the fortieth chapter describes the situation. "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare (or time of service) is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." It is the voice of comfort to those in exile, for their punishment is almost completed.

This is not a forced interpretation of the passage, for the other chapters leave no doubt as to the time referred to. The people are in exile, suffering punishment as predicted by the prophets. They are being "tried in the furnace of affliction." Babylon is the scene of their humiliation. Jerusalem is in ruins, and the temple destroyed. "Thy holy cities are become a wilderness, Zion is become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste." (Isa. 44:10-11) The exiles complain that the Lord has forgotten them and forsaken them. It is already a long time since they have left their native land. They suffered sorely at the hands of their oppressor. But "the time of service is accomplished." The deliverer is at hand. The oppressor shall be humbled even as he has humbled Israel. And the oppressed shall be set free and return to the land to rebuild Jerusalem and restore the Temple. "Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, and He that formed thee from the womb. I am the Lord that maketh all things.... that confirmeth the word of His servant, and performeth the counsel of His messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, ye shall be built, and I will raise up the waste places thereof... that saith of Cyrus, he is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure: saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, 'Thy foundation shall be laid.'" (44:24-28) Cyrus is called "The Lord's anointed," whose

right hand He has strengthened to subdue nations before Him. (45:1) He is thus referred to as one who is on his victorious march to Babylon to release the exiled people.

Cyrus the Persian defeated the Medes in 549 B.C. and formed with them the powerful Medo-Persian empire. (Dan. 8:20) In 546 B.C., he subdued Lydia, and in 538 B.C., his forces entered Babylon by night without resistance. Then followed the release of the Jews in 537 B.C.

The full significance of these latter chapters of the book of Isaiah is therefore grasped only when related to the experiences of the Jews at the close of their exile in Babylon. The events which give the chapters a meaning in their letter took place about one hundred and fifty years after the close of Isaiah's ministry. The question therefore naturally arises: Did Isaiah write this portion of the prophecy which has been handed down to us under his name? The majority of the critics answer in the negative. If we question their conclusion, it opens up most difficult problems as to how the Lord gave the Word to humanity. There is no absolute proof either for or against the genuineness of the prophecy. We may construct working theories on the subject. We cannot dogmatize. It, however, remains clear that no other historical setting than that of the exile will unfold the literal meaning of these chapters. This is the basis for the spiritual lessons, and, therefore, the important thing to bear in mind.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

"Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God." It is the voice of consolation to those in exile. It derives all its force and meaning when connected with those in captivity to whom it is addressed. How dejected they were! "They that led us captive required of us songs, and they that wasted us required of us mirth." Likewise, when the wheel of fortune does not run according to our wishes, when circumstances are adverse, how hard it is to bend the will to live on earth as they live in heaven! Yet the Lord bids us be comforted, for the time of judgment is nigh. Pain and suffering shall have an end, "the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."

"All flesh is grass." All that is purely human perishes. Every person must die (E. 1082); change and decay are manifest on all hands. All earthly dreams pass away; all selfish thoughts come to nothing. But the Divine truth abideth forever. And they who place confidence in that shall rejoice, for through Him who gives it they are led into the ever green pastures of heaven.

Feel the power and the joy of these chapters (Isa. 40-66) with the Jews weary with captivity in Babylon. How wonderfully this experience of release and restoration is made the basis of promises of hope to every downcast soul and to the world. They are promises from the Lord, their hope and power will never be exhausted.

Give closer study to the voice in the wilderness in Isa. 40. To know that the words had fulfillment in John the Baptist gives us the key to spiritual interpretation. Consider the cry in the wilderness, the highway in the desert, and John's preaching in the wilderness. The desert suggests the barren state of the soul which has been long absent from the Lord. It was in the lives of people that John sought to prepare the way by repentance and cleansing the life from things evil and false.

Mountains of pride and selfishness must be humbled. Valleys to be exalted may mean states of humility which can be blessed. The crooked needing to be straightened and the rough places needing to be made smooth we cannot fail to understand. (A. 1691; E. 405) Do not leave the chapter without a look at its closing verse, the promise of power to rise into spiritual strength, and to have strength and patience for life's common duties. (A. 3901; V. 281)

In temptations, our greatest danger is to forget God—to doubt His power, wisdom, and love and to turn to the idols of our own imagination, fictions of our own brain, for comfort and relief. "The Lord is almighty and all-knowing." He rules over all things: without Him all things are as vanity and nothing. These essential facts are known to every Jew or Christian. They are among the first things learned in childhood. "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard," these familiar truths? The prophet places these fundamental truths in vivid contrast with the falsities of a dead religion. There are the idols of Babylon surrounding the Jews in profusion! What are these compared with the living God? To look upward to the Lord and trust in Him renews the life. To look earthward, and depend upon idols, means death. They who place confidence in themselves shall fail, no matter how buoyant and lively be their hopes. "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary: and they shall walk, and not faint."

## **Lesson 31**

### **Isaiah 53: Who Hath Believed Our Report?**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

The Servant of the Lord. Considerable prominence is given to this subject in chapters 40-53 of this prophecy. Usually the term refers to Israel as a nation. (See 41:8-16; 42:1-7, etc.) But here in chapter 53, it points to an individual, who is undoubtedly the Lord Jesus. From a careful examination of the various passages concerning Israel "My servant," it is clear that they also refer to the Lord Jesus, for the same service that is placed upon the nation is also assigned to the Savior. (Compare Isa. 42:1-4 with Matt. 12:18-20; Isa. 42:6 and 49:6 with Luke 2:32.) There are many other passages which make this quite plain. The prophecy by Isaiah probably contains a larger number of utterances that can be easily understood as referring to the Lord than any other book in the Word. This is unquestionably one reason why it has been so much studied and been made the subject of so many commentaries. The identity of "My servant" in this fifty-third chapter and the incarnate Lord is unmistakable. The Lord never lacks a servant. The servant appears throughout the Word. Abraham is styled "My servant." (Gen. 27:24) Likewise Isaac and Jacob. "Moses, My servant" is a very frequent expression throughout the Old Testament. And the same is true of "David, My servant." They are all styled servants of the Lord because they had a special Divine service to render to their people or to humanity. They were specially appointed by the Lord to perform that service. The particular service of each is recorded in the Word. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob served as fathers of the race, Moses as a deliverer and law giver, and David as

king and conqueror. In Isaiah, the service of "My people Israel" is pictured in glowing terms. Finally, the service rendered by the unnamed servant appears in this fifty-third chapter. The description of it really begins with the thirteenth verse of the preceding chapter. And this undoubtedly refers to the Lord Himself. He is the servant Himself—The Type Itself; of Whom all others are only antitypes. This goes far to show the wonderful unity of the Word, There is but one author of the Word, that is, the Lord.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

"The servant denotes the humanity appertaining to the Lord before it was made Divine. This was nothing else but a servant. It was from the mother, therefore, infirm, having with it an hereditary from the mother, which He overcame by temptation-combats, and entirely expelled. When He put off this humanity, He put on the Divine Humanity, by virtue whereof He called Himself the Son of Man, and also the Son of God. The former state was that of the Lord's humiliation, but the latter of His glorification. In the former He adored Jehovah as one distinct from Himself, and indeed as a servant, for the humanity is nothing else in respect to the Divinity." (Excerpted from A. 2159, where the point is fully illustrated.) The meaning of "the servant of Jehovah" is still further brought out in A. 3441. It is there stated that "My servant denotes the Divine Human, because the Lord by this is serviceable to mankind, for by this man is saved, inasmuch as unless the Lord had united the human to the Divine, so that man might be enabled to look upon and adore the Lord's human, and thus have access to the Divine, he could not possibly have been saved." This is fully illustrated in the above number.

Thus the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah treats "of the Lord's appearance in the state of humiliation." (P. P.) "Who hath believed that which we heard, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been uncovered?" Who can credit that the omnipotence of God is in the Lord Jesus Christ? For He suffered as all people do, and He was despised and rejected by people. Had the Divine, with all its power, been in Jesus, it would not have permitted such suffering to take place. Yet by this humiliation, and by this alone, can humanity be saved. "He hath borne our sickness, and carried our pains, He was pierced for our crimes, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." This passage has been misunderstood and taken to mean that the Lord suffered in our stead: the innocent suffered for the guilty. This is a terrible perversion of the text, and sets aside the repeated call for righteousness, for the Observance of the Lord's commandments. It is human to regard people as incapable of keeping the law. Our weak human nature tempts us to seek a living without working for it. Likewise the perverted soul longs for heaven without labor, and greedily accepts the vicarious atonement of the Savior.

It is a law of life that people must work for their sustenance. It is likewise a law of heaven that people must labor before they attain the rest of heaven. There are six days of labor. Evil must be conquered. The Lord took "the chastisement of our peace upon Him," but not in the sense that He suffered punishment in our place. Far from it! "Jehovah laid on Him the iniquity of us all," and "He bore the sin of many" that we might have the power from Him to overcome evil, and to do His will. The Lord bears our iniquities "when He fights for man against the hells." (A. 9937) But the Lord

cannot fight for people, unless they cooperate with the Lord by shunning evils in the natural human as sins against Him. (Life, throughout.)

The picture of the uncomplaining innocent sufferer in this chapter is full of the most tender pathos. These words have been engraved in the hearts of Christians. The actual fact of the Lord's sufferings on humanity's account, and the insight into them here afforded us, ought to touch our hearts most deeply. Why should we continue to pain the Lord by the waywardness of our lives, when the means of grace are so freely offered to us? He is still among us as He who serves—the servant of Jehovah—to heal, to bear our iniquities, and to make intercession for transgressors. (As to intercession, see A. 5573, 8705.)

## Lesson 32

### Isaiah 58: The Acceptable Feast

#### THE STORY

##### Junior

The origin of the religious ceremony of fasting is unknown. The earliest known records speak of the custom as already in common use. Accad was the home of Heber and Abram. The ancient documents handed down to us from that people make frequent mention of the usage of fasting. It is also an important practice of the Brahman and Buddhist, as prescribed in the Vedas. The Muslims observe religiously a strict fast in the ninth month (Ramadan). The custom, however, is not mentioned in the Egyptian monuments.

In the majority of cases in which fasting is mentioned in the Old Testament, it is one of the signs that accompany mourning. It is associated with mourning for the dead (I Sam. 31:13); with private and personal distresses (I Sam. 1:17); with sympathetic sorrow for the misfortunes of friends (1 Sam. 20:34); and with the expression of penitence for one's own offenses (I Kings 21:28), and for those of the people (I Sam. 7:6). "Persons fasting often displayed other signs of mourning, such as wearing sackcloth, rending their garments and plucking out the hair of the head, sprinkling the head with earth and ashes, weeping, lying prostrate on the ground, neglect of washing and anointing the person, and walking barefoot (2 Sam. 1:11; 13:16, 20, etc.). Moses fasted forty days and forty nights when in the mount with the Lord. (Exod. 34:28) Daniel fasted three weeks before receiving a vision from the Lord. (Dan. 10:2) And the Lord fasted in the wilderness when undergoing temptations. (Matt. 4:2)

"Fasting is a natural outward evidence of inward self-abasement before God, and of humble acquiescence in the Divine chastisements; it is an instinctive mode of manifesting sorrow for sin, and of enhancing and intensifying that sorrow." People feast when they are happy. The feast of the Passover was instituted in commemoration of the deliverance from Egypt and was an occasion for rejoicing. (A, 7093) On the other hand, it is natural to abstain from food when overcome with sorrow. Hence, during the Exile, four fast-days were appointed in the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months, to commemorate the fall of Jerusalem and subsequent calamities. (Zech. 7:5-6; 8:19-20) Again these fasts were turned into days of feasting after the return. But in the days of the

Exile, it appears from Isaiah 58 that the fasts had become a mere formality. Instead of drawing closer to each other in their sorrow, the Jews made it a day of pleasure, and also of oppressing their laborers (verse 3), hence the necessity for the condemnation of the house of Jacob, and the call for repentance and newness of life. In exile the people also forgot the commandment to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. What more natural, when away from home, away from the temple, and surrounded by idolators! They are asked to "call the Sabbath a delight," to "delight themselves in the Lord." The two things are identical. Neglect to keep the Sabbath day implies little or no joy in the Lord.

Notice the promise to those who repent that they shall return and rebuild the waste places of Jerusalem. (Verse 12)

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

"To fast signifies to mourn, because they fasted when they mourned." (E. 375) "It also signifies affliction, such as exists in the combats of temptations" (E. 730) and "mourning on account of the failure of truth and good." (E. 1189) Feasting—the enjoyment of the Divine blessings—comes with deliverance from evil. But mourning—the lack of heavenly life—comes with trial and all testing of character, so long as the trial lasts. In this chapter, a sharp contrast is drawn between the form and the reality. Often, signs of mourning are put on when there is no living sorrow in the heart. The sad countenance and the disfigured face are frequently in evidence as a mere pretense to enlist the sympathy of other people, or as a screen to more despicable feelings. (Matt. 6:16-18) This empty form is not only manifested in case of mourning the loss of friends, but in expressing sorrow for all kinds of misfortunes. It is evident in grumbling over one's lot in life. The inside of such voluntary abstinence from the enjoyment of whatever blessings one has is selfishness, and hatred of the Lord. All losses and misfortunes are but the occasion of making evident the weaker tendencies in the soul, which produces "mourning on account of the failure of good and truth." The sorrow or trial of fast is empty and valueless unless it leads to the suppression of these unheavenly qualities. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness," to shun the evils revealed in these trials as sins against the Lord?

"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him?" This is one of the strong passages in the Old Testament enjoining charity upon the Jews. It still stands true to its letter. Even indiscriminate charity, when prompted by mercy, has its good side. It "initiates into the internal of charity and mercy, which is clearly to discriminate who and what they are to whom good should be done, and how it is to be done." (A. 9209) Dealing bread to the hungry in a personal sense means nourishing and supporting the craving to do good, to help all in distress. Bringing the poor into the house in the same sense means finding a home in the heart for those humble states that are so receptive of teaching from the Lord, and without which we rebel against the acceptance of the truth. (E. 386)

When evils are shunned as sins, and charity exercised, truths come in abundance, and the Lord is with people to answer their petitions, to grant light, and to build up the church or heavenly character in them. (P.P.) This follows upon the due recognition of the conjunction of the Lord with humanity (the Sabbath). The state of peace and rest in the Lord is the highest aim of human life.

## **Lesson 33**

### **Isaiah 60: "Arise, Shine"**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

The pictures of life in Palestine presented to us by Amos, Hosea, Joel, Isaiah (in the first thirty-nine chapters), Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah are, for the most part, sad and unpleasant. They reveal the degrading social evils which were slowly but surely destroying the worship of the Lord, and bringing ruin on the people. Israel was the first to suffer for her waywardness (722 B.C.). Judah refused to profit by that lesson, and sank deeper and deeper in evil. Prophet after prophet was sent to them by the Lord to reprove them and call for repentance, but all in vain! Judah followed her downward course until the crash came in 586 B.C. Then follow the days of remorse and reflection in captivity. They are lightened by words of instruction and comfort from Ezekiel and Isaiah. Isaiah consoles them with the promise of release. Their deliverer, Cyrus, is on his way to free them. The deliverance is delayed. There is a lull. Is it not to be? Surely! The prophet spoke from the Lord. Therefore, relief comes at length. And now the beloved city of David is in view!

The night is gone. The eastern sun has leaped up above the horizon. The landscape is flooded immediately with light. And there lies the city before them in all its glory. It is not the ruined city. It is, as it were, a vision of the new city which they are about to build on the old foundations. "The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night, that men may bring unto thee the forces of the nations, and that their kings may be brought." (Verses 11, 12)

The prophet pictures the city as the center of the world to which all nations flow, and to which all people bring their wealth. First, there is the influx from the east. Caravans pour in from Midian, Ephah, and Sheba, with their wealth, and droves of sheep cover the narrow roads leading to the Holy City. Then, from the west, come floating over the sunlit seas the bright white sails of the well-laden vessels like "doves to their windows" bringing silver and gold.

The sanctuary shall also be built. And Lebanon shall again help to beautify the house of worship. Everyone who afflicted or despised the city shall be humbled. The place shall be filled with joyous inhabitants. "Violence shall no more be heard in the land." The Lord shall be their light. All mourning shall cease. They shall all be righteous, and shall inherit the land for ever.

How buoyant the feelings! How great the expectations! The relief from bondage is so deep, the heart's joy knows no bounds!

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Even such is the happiness of the mind when the crisis in a severe illness is past, and the patient is convalescing. The hopes for the future are bright and cheering. Likewise when temptations are over. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." When the devil left the Lord, "behold angels came and ministered to Him."

In temptations, the security and peace of the church in a person is threatened. When it is the evil of the love of ruling from the love of self that assails, its nature is more and more clearly seen as the temptation proceeds. The essential characteristics are depicted in the fall of Jerusalem and the captivity. This evil destroys the church within and holds the soul in bondage. The promises of the restoration from this captivity through Amos, Hosea, etc., are but expressions of hope which sustains the soul as the shades of night gather round it. But this chapter is expressive of the hope on the verge of its realization; hence the great joy that pervades every verse in it. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." The Lord has come. The darkness has been dispelled. The church is being restored, and all that can be brought even from the ends of the earth shall come to minister unto the Lord. "Then thou shalt see and be lightened, and thine heart shall tremble and be enlarged." (Verse 5, R. V.) Then everything that is good shall minister to the restored church. The camels shall bring gold and silver. Camels are animals of travel or beasts of burden. They represent the love of understanding natural truth or general principles of truth (A. 3048), such truth as was expressed by John the Baptist who was clothed in camel's hair and lived in the desert. This love brings to people the knowledge of the laws of life - the golden and silver rules of conduct. Innocent affections also come forth to the worship and praise of the Lord.

The church will receive all who are even in the least degree of truth, who are "in the shade of truth." (P. P., verse 8) They will enter the church, and will continually approach it because there is salvation. (Verses 9-12) "The spiritual-moral will draw near, even those who had not known the Lord before." (Verses 13, 14; P. P.) The trees - cedars, fir, pine, and box - are thus likened to people. (A. 10183: Life 46) The quality of the person is according to the use of the tree. The above are valuable and less valuable timber trees (A. 9405), used for building walls, for floors, doors and boxes. There are people who perform just such uses for the church of the Lord, to protect, introduce into, and preserve the sacred things of religion.

"And I will make the place of My feet glorious." The Word in its letter is full of glory when seen in its new light after regeneration. (R. 470: E. 600) The Lord's life, what He has done for humanity, is radiant with beauty. A light streams front the pages of the Divine Word so strong that the eyes can scarce behold it steadily. (S. 73)

The subsequent verses depict the joy of the life of heaven. There will be no further inclination to pervert the truth. The love of the Lord will rise supreme above every other love in the heart, and reign there forever. It is not quite here, but very nearly realized. "I the Lord will hasten it in its time."

Read Isa. 60, noting the likeness in many places to the description of the Holy City in Rev. 20-21, and feeling the abundant joy in the assurance of realization. "Arise, shine," reminds us of the Lord's birth in Bethlehem, but it will have further fulfillment as the Lord is more fully known. The

assembling of the peoples and the treasures of the earth represents the tribute of all natural things as they find their right relation to the Lord and spiritual life. The ships coming from afar are likened to the dove, a beautiful figure for a still more beautiful spiritual thought. (A. 3708; R. 901) With verse 11, read Rev. 21:24-26. Each quality of life more internal and more external will make worship of the Lord more perfect. (Verse 13) Each lower thing shall find a higher value. (Verse 17) No violence shall be heard. The sunshine of the Lord is over all. (See Rev. 21:23 and 22:5.) Each little thing living from the Lord unfolds unending possibilities of good. That the Lord will hasten it in His time, means certainty of fulfillment.

## **Lesson 34**

### **Jeremiah 1: Taming the Love of Dominion**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

The days of Hezekiah, of Isaiah and Micah passed. Other kings followed, as the time drew near when Jerusalem was taken and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and more and more of the people were taken as captives to Babylon. The last kings in Jerusalem were Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. During this time, Jeremiah was the Lord's great prophet. He was given his choice by the king of Babylon to go with the captives or to stay in Jerusalem, and he chose to stay. He was afterward taken by some of his countrymen with them to Egypt, where he died. In Jer. 1:1-3, you find mention of the kings in whose time he lived and prophesied, also in the first verse of other chapters. You will notice that the chapters are not always in historical order. Chapters relating to the days of Zedekiah come before chapters relating to the days of Jehoiakim. Chapters 32 and 34 are later than chapter 36. We need a little knowledge of these last kings in Jerusalem and of the destruction of the city and the going into captivity as the background of Jeremiah's life and work.

Learn what you can about Jeremiah. He was the son of a priest of Anathoth, a town a little north and east of Jerusalem. (Jer. 1:1) The same chapter tells us of his call to be a prophet of the Lord and of the Lord's strengthening him for his work. They were sad and strenuous days in which Jeremiah lived and worked. See, if you can, Michel Angelo's picture of Jeremiah, a very sad, strong figure. Jeremiah boldly rebuked the people and the kings. He urged them, too, to yield to Nebuchadnezzar and not to make a hopeless resistance. This gave cause for his being put in prison. (Jer. 37, 38) Some words of Jeremiah are addressed to the people in Jerusalem in the last days, and some to the captives far away, and some to other nations. His last days were in Egypt. (Jer. 43)

#### **BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY**

The prophecy by Jeremiah contains so many details of his history that we are able to form a good estimate of his character and life. He was born at Anathoth, a village situated about three miles northeast of Jerusalem, in the tribe of Benjamin. (Jer. 1:1; Josh. 21:18) He was very young when

called to the office of prophet (Jer. 1:6), "in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign," that is in 727 B.C. His work continued in Judah until the captivity "in the eleventh year of Zedekiah" - in 686 B.C. That was the year of the second deportation. A third and final deportation took place five years later in 681 B.C. (Jer. 52:28-30) The remnant of Jerusalem fled to Egypt, carrying Jeremiah with them. (Jer. 43:6) According to tradition, he was stoned to death there. Whether this is true or not, his life was that of a martyr. The people of Anathoth sought to slay him. (Jer. 11:18-23) Yea, his own family endeavored to kill him. (Jer. 12:6; 20:10) The chief priest put him in the stocks for pronouncing judgment against Judah in the temple court. (Jer. 19:14; 20:2) He was greatly disturbed by the false prophets and priests of the time ridiculing his counsel to the people. (Jer. 32) King Jehoiakim sought to arrest him. (Jer. 36:26) When the city was invested by the Chaldeans, Jeremiah tried to leave it but was intercepted at the gate, charged with the intention of desertion, and put in prison. (Jer. 37:11-15) Zedekiah, being anxious to know the issue of the siege, released him. Jeremiah prophesied adversely and prayed not to be put in prison. The king placed him in the court of the prison. But the princes were wroth, and demanded his execution. The king granted their request. They cast him into a dungeon to perish by starvation. From this dreadful death he was rescued by an Ethiopian eunuch by means of a cord made of "old cast clouts and old rotten rags." (Jer. 38)

Jeremiah was of a timid disposition. When the Lord ordained him to be a prophet, he said. "Ah, Lord God! behold I cannot speak: for I am a child." Compare this answer with that of Isaiah. (Isa. 6:3) In Isaiah's case, the impure lips were cleansed by the touch of a live coal from the altar in the hands of one of the seraphim. In Jeremiah's case, the Lord Himself put forth His hand and touched his mouth, imparting power to utter the Divine message. Isaiah's mission was to harden the hearts of the people, lest they be converted, even until the land be desolate. (Isa. 6:10) The word to Jeremiah was "to root out, and to pull down, and destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant." The tender-hearted man shrank from the duty imposed upon him. His sensitive nature was keenly affected by the way in which he was derided and mocked. He would fain have silenced the Lord's message of "violence and spoil." But the words were in his heart "as a burning fire shut up in his bones," and he could not withhold their utterance. (Jer. 20:7-9) They burst forth with power. They are laden with sadness. How could it be otherwise! The nation was on the very verge of ruin, in the greatest depths of wickedness. The prophet felt the burden of its sinfulness so heavily that he could have wept day and night for his fallen people. (Jer. 9:1) Hence he is sometimes called the weeping prophet. The pained heart is manifest throughout all his denunciations. He suffered for the people. But he resented their persecutions, and invoked the Divine vengeance upon his enemies. (See especially Jer. 18:18-23.) In this he was like King David (1 Kings 2) but unlike the martyr Stephen, whose last words were, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." (Acts 7:60) The weak human nature of the prophet makes its appearance. We sympathize with him. The burden was too great. He gave way under it. Only the Lord, who said, "Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do" could have given Stephen the ability to overcome resentment, and likewise impart to every human being now the power to love in place of hating his or her enemies. (Matt. 5:38-48)

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Jeremiah has long been recognized as a type of the Lord. And he is. "The like as is represented by Joseph, is also represented by Jeremiah the prophet" in that he was put into a pit without water. (A. 4728) His sufferings represented the sufferings of the Christ. The words regarding the call (Jer. 1:4-8) refer to the Lord, "who is there meant by Jeremiah; He will be born, that He may teach all men Divine truth." (P.P.) This is His message of truth in a sadly perverted state of the church. (Verses 1-3) Looked at individually, it is a time when people have become conscious of the violent way in which evil attacks their faith, and temporarily holds them captive, taking away their power to live freely the heavenly ideal. It is a state of great humiliation—the human is so active, the Divine seems altogether absent. The word of the prophet comes with Divine power to uncover the evil of falsity, destroy it, and then build up the waste places. (Verses 9-10) The purport of this revelation of truth is further explained in the two visions that follow. First comes the vision of the rod of the almond tree, which signifies the power which lies within the perception of interior truth. (A. 5622) This the Lord will guard that it may be fulfilled. Verse 12 ought to be translated, "Thou hast well seen, for I watch over My word to perform it." (R. V.) The Hebrew word for almond tree means "watchful." The spiritual life given by the Lord to humanity makes us alert to the presence of evil. We are not admitted into an interior life unless we are prepared to watch and preserve the truths revealed to us. (P. 221) But these interior truths have been perverted. (Verse 13) The seething pot denotes doctrine infused with passion, and thus perverted. (A. 10105) Evil lusts warp the judgment. The north, whence the enemy is to come, is the region of obscurity. The enemy is undoubtedly the Babylonians - the love of self. (Jer. 25:9) From this source spring falsities that threaten the destruction of the church in people (verses 14-15) and also lead to idolatrous worship. (Verse 16) "The Lord will admit these evils and falsities to fight against Himself, and they will succumb, because the Divine is the Lord's." (Verses 17-19; P.P.) Likewise the Lord permits us to enter these states - allows us to be tempted by fleshly lusts - and furnishes the truth which shall disclose them. In that truth is His presence, and in that Divine presence is power to save us. "They shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee."

The comment upon our chapter in Swedenborg's Prophets and Psalms opens several interesting lines of thought. Throughout the comment on Jeremiah in that book, the literal conditions of Jeremiah's time are shown to picture spiritual conditions of a church which is near its end through rejection of the Lord and of His truth of life. The treatment of Jeremiah pictures the treatment of the Lord. How strikingly the rejection of His truth, both in mind and heart, is pictured in the cutting and burning of the roll in our chapter! The comment of Prophets and Psalms upon Jeremiah 1 says, "The perverted state of the church (is described), verses 1-3; concerning the Lord who is (represented) there (by) Jeremiah, that He will be born in order to teach all men the Divine Truth, verses 4-8; that the Lord will permit them to fight against Him and that they will be subdued, because with the Lord is the Divine, verses 17-19."

## **Lesson 35**

### **Jeremiah 7: Appeal to Judah to Repent**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We are again with Jeremiah, the Lord's prophet in Jerusalem, who warned the people from the Lord that because of their evil ways Jerusalem would soon be destroyed and they would be taken captives to Babylon. We find Jeremiah today standing in the gate of the temple, talking to the people as they came to offer sacrifices at the altar and to worship. Sacrifices were not all that the Lord wanted. He wanted them to do right, to speak the truth, and to be just and kind to one another. If they would live so, they should live long and happily in their land; but because they were not being truthful and kind and because they were worshiping Baal and other idols instead of the Lord, they would be taken away and their temple would be destroyed. It could be destroyed, as the Lord's place had been destroyed in Shiloh. Who remembers the tabernacle of the Lord which had been in Shiloh, when Samuel was there as a little boy, helping the old priest Eli, and the Lord called Samuel at night and spoke to him? (1 Sam. 3) The tabernacle in Shiloh had been destroyed because the people did not obey the Lord and were not good. It would be the same with the temple. So Jeremiah is preaching to the people in the temple gate. But they will not listen and do right and live in their good land. Read Jer. 7:1-20.

##### **Junior**

Jeremiah is standing in the gate of the temple in Jerusalem, as the people of Jerusalem and from the towns of Judah are coming in to worship. (Jer. 7:1-20) Listen to the prophet. Is he rebuking the people for their care for the temple and their worship? No, but he is saying that all this is worthless if they neglect the greater duty of doing right and of treating each other honestly and kindly. Had they forgotten Micah's charge? "What doth the Lord require of thee?" (Micah 6:6-8) Pride in the temple (verse 4) will not excuse them for evil doing. The phrase "den of robbers" (verse 11) reminds us of the Lord's words in Matthew 21:13.

The people were also not faithful to the Lord, but were worshiping Baal (verse 9). Do you remember this idol, and Elijah's brave fight against the worship? Another idol worship is mentioned in verses 17-18, the worship of "the queen of heaven," Ashtoreth, connected with the planet Venus, and often associated with the worship of Baal.

What can you tell about Shiloh, mentioned in verses 12 and 14, and about the Lord's place which was in Shiloh?? Remember the setting up of the tabernacle in Shiloh when the people of Israel came into possession of the land (Josh. 18:1) and the importance of this sanctuary in the time of Samuel. (I Sam. 3) Find Shiloh on the map, in the tribe of Ephraim. It had long since been laid waste. Such would be the fate of the temple if the people of Judah continued in their evil ways. Read a little beyond our assignment the words in verses 21-23, which we can well put with Micah's appeal. Note the striking words in verse 25 about the Lord's sending His servants the prophets, "rising up early and sending them."

## HISTORICAL STUDY

Just about twenty-five hundred years have passed since Jeremiah lived. It seems a long time ago, so far away indeed that it appears difficult to find anything today in common with the situation then. Hence the difficulty to many of arousing an interest in the prophets. Yet the interest in this study is immediately awakened when we strike the right chord. The Jewish people were men and women like ourselves. They had feelings and thoughts, hopes and fears, likes and dislikes, and, in general, all the good and bad characteristics of humanity as it now is. We can therefore put ourselves in their position during these last days of the kingdom of Judah. There is the city of Jerusalem with its temple, its walls and its gates. The people come up to the temple to offer sacrifices. There stands Jeremiah at the gate-way. (Jer. 7:2) He appeals to the worshipers. "Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place." It is a last entreaty. If they will not hear, the temple will be destroyed like the tabernacle at Shiloh. When the ark left Shiloh, the glory of Israel departed from its midst. (1 Sam. 4; Ps. 78:60-61) The prophet's words are plain. No one who heard him could fail to understand. They are equally intelligible today to the simplest. Did the Jews hear? They heard, but they did not heed. They prepared to "do everyone after the stubbornness of his evil heart." (Jer. 18:12) Are we unmoved by their perversity? Alive to self-interest, but dead to the love of God! The heart is surely touched as we think of the people practically preparing their own grave. How soon were they to enter it!

Jeremiah appeared in 627 B.C. in the thirteenth year of King Josiah's reign. In 622 B.C., the great revival took place. (2 Kings 22:3) The lamp of faith was trimmed for the last time. Soon it began to flicker again before it went out. Josiah was killed by Pharaoh-nechoh at Megiddo. His son Jehoahaz or Shallum followed him upon the throne, but only reigned three months. Nechoh took him as prisoner to Egypt where he died. (Jer. 22:10-12) Eliakim or Jehoiakim then ascended the throne. He was a great enemy of Jeremiah. (Jer. 36) He reigned in Judah from 609 to 597 B.C. In 607, the Babylonians destroyed Nineveh, which gave them supreme power in the east. (See lesson on Nahum.) Jeremiah does not refer specially to this great event. But he draws attention to the victory of Babylon over Egypt at Carchemish on the Euphrates in 605 B.C. (Jer. 46) This was one of the most important battles of these times. It gave Babylon control over the east and westward as far as the Egyptian frontier. Thus, Jehoiakim became the vassal of Nebuchadnezzar. Jehoiakim rebelled after paying tribute for three years. Nebuchadnezzar then besieged Jerusalem for the first time and reasserted his authority. This was in 397, the year Jehoiakim died. Probably he perished in the siege. Jeremiah describes Jehoiakim's character in chapter 22:13-19. Jehoiachin was his successor. He reigned three months, and then surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar. He was taken a prisoner to Babylon. He never saw his native land again (Jer. 22:24-30), but in his latter days enjoyed certain privileges in Chaldea. (2 Kings 23:27-30) Nebuchadnezzar then placed Zedekiah on the throne of Judah. He plotted with Egypt to help him throw off the yoke of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar then appeared a second time before the walls of Jerusalem. The Egyptian army came to the assistance of Zedekiah (Jer. 37) but helped him in no way. After a prolonged siege, the city was taken in 586. Zedekiah endeavored to escape, was captured, had his eyes put out, and was carried in chains to Babylon. (Ezek. 12:13) The temple, palace, and city were burnt, and a large portion of its inhabitants taken into exile. A few were left to till the ground. They revolted and fled to Egypt, taking Jeremiah with them. (Jer. 40-44) Five years later, a third deportation completely desolated the land. (Jer. 52:30) Picture the people steeped in evil, their anxiety during the siege, and their grief in exile! And behold the prophet standing almost alone, dejected because

the people refused to listen to his message! The picture becomes most realistic when we try to put ourselves right into the situation.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Nothing could teach more plainly than the seventh chapter of Jeremiah the worthlessness of mere ceremonies of worship or of mere knowledge of the Lord and heaven if they do not find expression in amending of our ways and in acting with truth and kindness. Contrary thoughts and teachings are called "lying words." The sins which Jeremiah points out are common sins today, and with the Lord's interpretation of the commandments and of love to our neighbor, the call to repentance means even more to us. Real religion is not in acts of worship nor in much religious learning, but in refusing to do evil and in doing good for the Lord's sake and with His help. Worship and learning are helps to good life, not substitutes for it. (Life I)

The priests were called by Jeremiah a den of robbers, and the Lord called by the same name the priests of a later time. (Matt. 21:13) Spiritual robbers are those who claim what belongs to the Lord, who are proud in their religion and claim merit and holiness as belonging to them, which is not theirs but the Lord's. See the explanation of the command "Thou shalt not steal," in T. 319.

Shiloh and its sanctuary had been destroyed because of the wickedness of its people; so would the temple be destroyed. A Psalm after reviewing the unfaithfulness of the ancestors says, "So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men: and delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand." (Ps. 78:60-61) On this we have the comment, "By the habitation of Shiloh is signified the church which is in the good of love, and by the tent the church which is in the truths of doctrine; hence by God's forsaking the habitation of Shiloh, the tent in which He dwelt among men, is meant that the goods of love and the truths of doctrine were destroyed." (E. 811) It is easy to apply this thought to the passage of Jeremiah about the destruction of Shiloh and the coming destruction of the temple. The same evil conditions destroy the church and make impossible the presence of the Lord anywhere and always.

Chapter seven is addressed to those who enter in at the gates of the Lord's house - who signify "those who are in the lowest heaven with whom is the church in respect to good." (P. P.) They are the simple good. They can remain in the church only through applying the truth to their lives. (Verse 3) They must not trust in the false belief that external worship by itself is all that is required of them. (Verse 4) Heaven consists in doing the will of the Lord, in repentance, in doing justice, and shunning every tendency to worship self and the world. (Verses 3-7) When the life is in opposition to the commandments, worship is profaned. (Verses 8-10) A sense of self-merit in acts of worship robs them of the Lord's presence and profanes them. (Verse 11) This destroys the church in a person. Rejection of the Lord's truth brings strife and contention, instead of peace. (Verses 12-13) The word Shiloh means tranquillity, rest. The Lord Himself is called "Shiloh" (Gen. 49:10) and also the Prince of Peace. When the Lord's truth is despised, intercession is useless. (Verse 16) Confusion and disorder prevail within when the worship is profane. Passion is let loose, and consumes all the good and truth in a person. (Verses 17-20) External worship, external goodness alone, the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, is not what the Lord demands of

us but rather obedience to His will, the fulfillment of both tables of the Law. (Verses 21-23) The Lord pled with the children of Israel from the day they came out of Egypt to obey His voice. But in vain. (Verses 24-26) So He pleads with everyone to shun evil as sin against Him. The voice of His angels sounds in people's hearts daily, prompting them to obey Him. Some obstinately refuse to listen even to the very last. They will not brook correction or accept instruction from anyone, not even the Lord. Therefore, truth perishes. The voice of truth is silenced within and they give themselves over to profane everything that is holy. (Verses 27-31) They are then cast into hell, or rather they cast themselves into it, and the church perishes in them. (Verses 32-34) "From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." (Matt. 25:29) People remain in evil which becomes chronic and ineradicable if they do not repent. The Lord does not require much. A person comes into the fixed purpose of abstaining from all evil in him or herself "if once or twice in a year he examines himself and repents of the evils which he discovers in himself." (M. 529) Could less be expected of anyone?

## **Lesson 36**

### **Jeremiah 13: The Prophet's Girdle**

#### **THE BOOK**

In general, the prophecy of Jeremiah may be divided into three sections. (1) Chapters 1-45 relate almost entirely to the kingdom of Judah; (2) chapters 46-51 deal with the prophecies against the nations; and (3) chapter 52 is historical, describing the siege and capture of Jerusalem. This division is to some extent helpful to an understanding of the prophecy as a whole. Yet it is not altogether satisfactory as regards the first section. It may be said of this portion that in the main it is arranged in historical order. But there are marked instances of a break in this order. Take, for example, chapters 24 and 25. The former refers to the days of captivity, the latter to "the fourth year of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah." A prominent feature of the chapters in this section is the frequent reference to the particular time at which they were written. Most of the chapters from 21 to 45 open with specific reference to a date. "The Word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah," etc. This increases their value as historical evidences.

Briefly, section 1 may be thus outlined. One, the call; 2-10, prophecies regarding the sins of the nation and the impending judgment; 11, the plot of the people of Anathoth; 12, the desolation of the land, and promised restoration; 13, the linen girdle and its meaning; 14-15, an intercession on behalf of the fallen people; 16, the approaching disaster and its cause; 17, an exhortation to trust in the Lord and observe His Sabbath; 18-20, lessons from the Potter; 21-23:8, judgments upon the kings of Judah, and promise of the ideal shepherd of Israel; 23:9-40, against the false prophets; 24, the good and bad figs, those in exile and those left in the land; 25, prophesies seventy years' captivity; 26, Jeremiah's narrow escape from death; 27-29, his experiences in the reign of Zedekiah; 30-33, "the Book of Consolation" for those in exile; 34, during the siege of Jerusalem; 35, the faithfulness of the Rechabites a lesson to the Jews; 36, the roll of prophecies burnt; 37-43, personal history during the siege and after the capture of the city; 44-45, to the fugitives in Egypt.

Respecting the second section of the book (46-51), compare it with the corresponding sections in Isa. 13-23 and Ezek. 25-32. In each case, the prophets' denunciations of the nations are grouped

together. All three inveigh against Egypt, Moab, and Edom. Jeremiah has a special word against Ammon and Elam. In conjunction with Isaiah, he utters his oracle against Damascus, Kedar, and Babylon and together with Ezekiel against Philistia.

The third section (Jer. 52), as has been noted, deals with the capture of Jerusalem, and the exile of her inhabitants.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The parable of the linen girdle is explained by the Lord Himself. It is similar to the case of the parable of the Sower, which is followed by the explanation from the Lord's own lips, yet it is necessary to know what is meant by the seed—practical suggestions of Divine truth—to understand fully the explanation. So here it is needful to grasp what is signified by the linen girdle to see how it represents the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Linen made of the fibers of flax, signifies natural truth which serves as a garment for the deeper affections in a person.

Expressions of truth keep warm within them the love which gave birth to them, as linen garments preserve the heat of the body. (A. 7601) A girdle is something that binds or conjoins. The prophet represents the teaching of the letter of the Word. Therefore, the linen girdle on the prophet's loins pictures "the conjunction of the church with the Lord by the Word." (E. 570) The house of Israel and the house of Judah possessed the teaching of the Lord in His Word, which conjoined them with Him (the linen girdle). But they falsified this truth by evils of life and the self-justification of them. This is the girdle marred in the hole of the rock at Euphrates. It was profitable for nothing. The reason is explained in verses 10 and 21. We have the teaching of the Word which conjoins us with the Lord. There is danger of destroying it by false reasoning. "The human mind is intensely subtle in inventing an apology for that to which its inclination leads." (Godwin) Evil inclinations can argue away even the plainest precepts of our Lord. Then spiritual truth is falsified (verses 12-13), and brings destruction upon the person. (Verse 14) The knowledge of this should act as a warning and put us on our guard, that we give ear to the Word, and do not shut out the light of heaven, and live in gross darkness. (Verses 15-16) This will pain the Lord. (Verses 17) Evil increases pride in the heart. But "the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low." (Isa. 2:17) How shall it be effected? Such pride leads us captive.

(Verses 18-19) Our captor comes from the dusky north, from falsity which displaces truth. (Verse 20) The false thoughts are made effective leaders by the same master who marshals the truths in their order—the intellect. The keener the power of the intellect to grasp the truth, the sharper it is to formulate opposing falsities, hence the severity of the trial of a person who is held captive by falsities. (Verse 21) Wherefore this oppression? Because the hidden evils in the inner person are laid bare. (Verse 22) Evil is evil, and never can be good. The two cannot be mixed. (Verse 23; P. 223) Evil must be separated from good. (Verse 24) Therefore, oppression follows the presence of evil spirits with their false suggestions. (Verse 25) The Lord lays bare the inmost nature of evil to everyone who will listen to Him. (Verse 26) The Lord sees it all. He has granted the revelation of it to those who follow Him in the regeneration, painful though it be. "Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem!" He knows how trying it is. And then He bends the heart to Himself to be purified. "Wilt thou not be made clean? After when yet?" They are touching words. The Lord is searching the reins and the heart. Relief is nigh at hand, however, when we cry, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost

"Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10; 20) There is a close connection between the oppression of people represented by the captivity in Babylon, and that represented by the sufferings of the souls under the altar. (See E. 403.) They are both processes of vastation, of separating evil from the good.

## Lesson 37

### Jeremiah 18: The Potter's Wheel

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

On another day, the Lord has sent Jeremiah to the potter's house to learn a lesson. The potter makes all kinds of pots and jars and dishes of clay which can be baked hard and are then ready for use. The story says that the potter "wrought a work on the wheels." Our little picture takes us to a potter's house in Nazareth, and we see him working at his wheel. The clay that he is shaping rests on the post that comes up through the table, and he turns it with his foot on the wheel under the table. The potter becomes very skillful and can make beautiful and delicate jars. If the jar is hurt in the making, it can still be changed and be made right by the potter, for the clay is still soft. The Lord is like the potter working to make each one of us beautiful and useful. If we injure His work, He will not cast us aside, but asks us to repent and works again to make us beautiful. Read Jer. 18:1-10.

##### Junior

Often, in connection with the prophecy, the prophets were commanded to make something or to do something which was a sort of picture or parable illustrating the message that they were to speak. In our chapter today, the Lord used in this way the dish in the potter's hand that he was making on his wheel. As you read the chapter, you see the special lesson which Jeremiah was to draw from the potter's work for the people of Judah, the lesson that if they would repent and be obedient, the Lord would set them free from the fate of destruction and captivity which had been predicted to come upon them. But they did not repent, and you find the same figure of the potter's earthen bottle taken up again in the next chapter, where Jeremiah is commanded to get such a bottle and to break it in the sight of the people as a token of what would come upon Jerusalem.

You will think also how the lesson is for us. I wish before we read the chapter that we could go down to the house of the potter and see him or her shape the clay while turning it swiftly on the wheel. It is wonderful how it grows under the potter's hand, almost like a living thing, a beautiful symbol of the work of the Lord, the Divine Potter, shaping us day by day into forms of heavenly use and beauty; and if we will let Him do so, making again the vessel when it is marred.

Read what I have told the younger children about the potter and the wheel. We read in Isa. 64:8, "O Lord, Thou art our Father; we are the clay and Thou art our potter; and we all are the work of Thy hands." This pictures the Lord as our Creator. Is the lesson of Jeremiah the same, or does it

add something more? It adds the even more tender thought of the potter's patience and power to remake the vessel that has been marred. It is the thought of the Lord as Redeemer and Savior when we are repentant and accept His help.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The words of Isa. 64:7, "We are the clay and Thou our potter," and the lesson of the potter in Jeremiah are both interpreted in A. 6609 as describing the formation or re-formation of a person by means of charity and faith, and it is added, "Elsewhere, also Jehovah or the Lord is called the potter, and the man who is being reformed the clay." Prophets and Psalms says of the passage, "It is represented that those who are in falses and evils can be reformed by the Lord, verses 1-4; wherefore those who after repentance convert themselves, notwithstanding they are in falses and evils, are accepted by the Lord, verses 5-8; on the other hand, that those who are in truths and in good, and do evil, perish, verses 9, 10; it is said to those who are in the church, that they ought to repent and convert themselves, but that they are unwilling, verses 11-13; because they love falses of every kind, and thereby annihilate the church in themselves, verses 14-16; wherefore they will be destroyed, verse 17; that they lift themselves up against the Lord, and consequently against His Word, by despising Him and falsifying it, verse 18; a lamentation thereon, verses 19, 20; that they have no truth of the church, and that they act craftily, verses 21, 22; that they cannot be forgiven, verse 23."

In other passages of Swedenborg, a slightly different lesson is drawn from the vessel marred in the potter's hand, which was made again another vessel. This making again may mean the reforming of an unlovely character by the mercy of the Lord when one is repentant. But in the case of the Jewish nation, which did not repent, the making again of the vessel is said to mean the taking of the Divine truth from them and giving it to people who would make better use of it. (E. 177; A. 6669)

We take especially from the remaking of the vessel that was marred, the thought of the remaking of an unlovely character by the mercy of the Lord when one is repentant. The idea of reformation is often associated with the potter in the Scriptures, as when the money returned by Judas and spurned by the priests was given for the potter's field to bury strangers in. The Lord's redemption was rejected by the Church, but simple gentiles would accept it and be reformed. (A. 2276, 2966)

The translation of verse 14 is difficult. Swedenborg in E. 411 translates: "Shall the snow of Lebanon from the rock leave my fields? Shall the strange cold waters flowing down be snatched away?" and the snow of Lebanon is interpreted to mean, truth of the church, the rock from which it comes being the Lord's Word. But thee snow is cold truth, because a cold church is here treated of. The strange cold waters are explained to mean, falsities in which there is no good. The verse then seems to mean, Shall truth from the Lord's Word fail? Can the falsities which have taken its place be removed?

In verse 17, notice the east wind as the type of the Lord's Divine influence, scattering before it what is false and evil. You will remember the east wind with the same meaning in other places; for example, the east wind which divided the sea before the children of Israel. (Exod. 14:21)

The closing verses of the chapter, from verse 18 on, tell of the plotting of the people against Jeremiah, and Jeremiah's prayer that they may receive their deserts. What they did against the prophet is representative of what false and evil people at all times do against the Lord and His Word. They reject the Lord's Word and try to destroy it. As you read in verse 20, "They have digged a pit for my soul," you will remember also the story of casting Jeremiah into a pit in the hope that he might die. (Jer. 38:6) You are reminded of what Joseph's brothers did to him in the effort to be rid of him. In both cases is represented a rejection of the Lord and denial of His Word. (A. 4728; E. 537)

The prayer of Jeremiah seems to breathe of revenge; but spiritually as expressing the Lord's thought toward His children, it is simply a statement of the inevitable consequence of rejecting the Lord and His Word. One who so rejects the Lord cannot be held guiltless, because he is rejecting his only means of help.

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Potter's Wheel

Have you ever seen a potter? Few of you probably have. A potter is a person who makes all kinds of pots and dishes out of clay. Potters have a round table that is so made that it spins around its center. On the middle of this table, the potter places a lump of damp clay, and then, as the clay spins around and around, her or she shapes it by hand into whatever form is desired, the whirling motion making the form quite round. Any extra shapes that are not to go around, like the spout of a pitcher, the potter makes after the round part is finished. Then the pitcher, or vase, or whatever the vessel may be, is placed in an oven and baked and becomes hard as stone. The round table is called the potter's "wheel."

You will remember that Jeremiah was a prophet who lived during the reign of the last kings of Judah, and saw the Jews carried away to Babylon, but himself remained with the poor people whom the Babylonish king did not think worth carrying away.

This Jeremiah was told by the Word from the Lord to go to a potter's house, where he would hear the Lord's words. You will read the story in the chapter.

It may perhaps seem strange that he was told to do this thing. But there was a reason for it. The prophets in those days often did things, or witnessed things, that represented the state of the church. Some of the things they did were stranger than this visit of Jeremiah to the potter's house. For instance, this same Jeremiah was told to buy a girdle or belt and put it around his loins, and then he had to go to the Euphrates River and hide it in a hole. After many days, he was told to get the girdle again. He went and dug it out and found that it was "marred," or spoiled. Another prophet, Ezekiel, was once told to take a new razor and shave the hair of his head and his beard, and then divide all this hair into three parts, burning one of the three parts in the city, smiting another third part of it with the sword, and scattering the last third part to the winds, yet to bind a little of the hair in his skirt, and at last to throw it in the midst of the fire and burn it up.

I could tell you a number of stories of this kind from the prophets, showing that some of the things that they did looked almost like child's play. And yet every one of them represented

something very serious and important, namely, the state of the church as it then was among the Jews.

You will not find it hard to understand what was represented by what Jeremiah saw in the potter's house; namely, that those who are not good, but evil, and who have changed truth into falsity, can nevertheless be reformed or made good by the Lord.

See how this was represented in the potter's house. A vessel was being made. What is a vessel or a pot? Something to hold things. We use vessels to hold water, or wine, or oil, or milk, or flour, or oat meal, or rice, etc.

So the Lord makes vessels to hold love, and kind wishes, and true thoughts. These vessels are people.

The vessel which the potter was making was marred or spoiled. Is a person ever spoiled as a vessel for the Lord's truth and good? Yes. When the person is false and evil, and therefore will not hold love, and kind wishes, and true thoughts.

But the potter returned and made another vessel, as it was right in the hand of the potter to make.

So the Lord will make us over, but only if we will do what the Lord said to Jeremiah, that is, if we will repent, and turn to the Lord, if we will have trust in Him and show our trust by living according to His commandments, and exercise charity. For the clay of which a pot or vessel is made corresponds to charity. And what is charity?

Charity is love for the neighbor. In other words, charity is to will well to others and from willing well to do well, that is, to be of use to others. Those who so love the neighbor, and keep the commandments in the second table of the decalogue, are those of whom the Lord can form vessels to receive real heavenly life from Him. They are the clay of the Divine Potter.

## **Lesson 38**

### **Jeremiah 25: Captivity Foretold**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

The final captivity of Judah is rapidly approaching. The people are losing all sense of dependence upon God and all their respect for His laws, and giving themselves up to excessive evil. For twenty-three years, Jeremiah has been at his post in the early morning prophesying, calling on the people for repentance. He is only following in the footsteps of his predecessors whom the Lord sent to warn the people from day to day. But the headstrong, stiff-necked people will pay no attention. "Ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear." With terrible obstinacy they provoke the Lord with the works of their hands to their own hurt. Therefore judgment is inevitable. Their enemies from the north will come and will "utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolation," and they "shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years."

This is a definite prediction. Was it fulfilled? This prophecy was uttered "in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon." (Jer. 25:1) Jehoiakim became king in 609 B.C. And in the third year of his reign "Nebuchadnezzar came unto Jerusalem and besieged it." (Dan. 1:1; 2 Kings 24:1) It seems from the prophecy of Daniel that only a few choice personages were taken into captivity at that time. (Dan. 1:3-4) It was the beginning, however, of the captivity. And it is evident that Jeremiah took advantage of the occasion to strengthen his appeal to his people. Their hearts must surely be affected by this sad event! Will they not be forced into repentance by the prospect of being all taken into captivity! Seventy years captivity! They will never behold their home again, and all manner of curses shall come upon them in captivity! In vain are all the prophet's exhortations.

The captivity then began in the third year of Jehoiakim, 606 B.C. The first year of Nebuchadnezzar was 605 or 604. Nominally, Nebuchadnezzar effected this deportation of the princes and noblemen. Nabopolassar, his father, however, was king of Babylon at the time, and Nebuchadnezzar apparently acted as his colleague, and for spiritual reasons is spoken of as "the king of Babylon." The second deportation took place in the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar, 597 B.C.; the third in his eighteenth year, 586 B.C., when Jerusalem was destroyed, and the fourth in his twenty-third year, 581 B.C. (Jer. 52; 2 Kings 24:25)

But Jeremiah declared that "at the end of the seventy years the king of Babylon would be punished and the land of the Chaldeans made perpetual desolations." (Jer. 23:12) And so it came to pass. In 538 B.C., Cyrus destroyed Babylon. And in 537 B.C., the captivity was brought to an end through the release of the exiles. Thus, the prophecy uttered in 605 B.C. found a literal fulfillment in 537 B.C.

## **Intermediate**

This chapter describes the beginning of the last and most grievous trials of the regenerating soul. The fourth year of Jehoiakim and first of Nebuchadnezzar indicates the state in brief. It is the opening consciousness of the spirit of dominion—the lust of ruling present in a person's actions. The Lord's Word comes to enlighten and to warn the person regarding the nature of this evil. But all in vain. (Verses 2-4) The Lord's messengers persist in their efforts to receive a hearing. Yet those who are confirmed in evil pay no attention. They who are more or less governed by it will not admit how pernicious it is and cannot therefore be saved from the sad experience before them. (Verses 5-7) On this account (verse 8), falsities springing from the love of having one's own way assail the person and reduce the soul to a state of desperation. Happiness is gone, the voice of the Lord silent, the teaching of the church absent, the power of reasoning soundly lost, and the light of faith removed. Then the soul is held in bondage by the lust of being served. (Verses 9-11) When, however, this state of profanity has come to an end, the oppressors - the evil spirits who produce these states of desperation - shall be punished. (Verse 12) Evil cannot triumph over good. It is only permitted for the sake of the end - the salvation of the good. When it has effected this purpose, then it is controlled by the Lord. (Verses 13-14; P. 234) The effect of the spirit of falsifying the truth upon the "knowledges of truth and good, and also truths of every kind" is described in verses 15-27. It is the heart - the will - that falsifies. That being evil in its disposition it is impossible to avoid the falsification, and the consequent suffering. (Verse 28) Since it exists at the center, in falsifying the knowledges from the Word, it must needs proceed outward to the circumference. (Verse 29; S. 104) From the center outward the distress will be great (verse 30),

because the truth is profaned when used to excuse wrong feelings. (Verses 31-33) The consciousness of this in a regenerating person produces great lamentation. (Verses 34-38)

Every person is subject to persecution by evil spirits. In the most trivial actions, or words good or evil, the greatest depths of evil may be present within. The consciousness of the degree of evil in any act is regulated by the Lord - little is seen if the person can bear little, much if the person is ready to face and overcome it. "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." For example, the words "I cannot get over it" in one form or other frequently pass from the lips of people who have been offended by their friends, or in some way ill-treated by them. The degree of resentment and animosity in the speech may be an unconscious quantity to the sufferer. But as the meaning of the Lord's words "Love your enemies, etc." sinks into the heart, the presence of the persecutors becomes more evident. And when the point is reached where it is clearly seen that to utter words in resentment, or even permit them to have an abiding place in the heart, amounts to profanation, then the tormentors present are of the worst type and most difficult to get rid of. The sufferer then goes through the period of seventy years' captivity. Seven is predicated of that which is holy, and in an opposite sense of that which is profane. Truth at first only exists in the memory. It is known only in theory. But as it is applied to the states of life, the consciousness of evil increases. Finally, the fear of profaning the truth by permitting feelings contrary thereto to hold a place in the heart, brings the gravest anguish to the soul, from which the Lord alone can save in due time, when the trial is complete. (See A. 2694, 7166.)

## **Lesson 39**

### **Jeremiah 36: Destroyed Roll Rewritten**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We know that we should treat the Bible reverently, and when we listen to the reading of it we should remember that it is holy, and listen reverently. But hear how a king in Jerusalem treated the book of Jeremiah's words.

Isaiah and Micah were prophets in Jerusalem when Hezekiah was king. Time has moved on, and Jeremiah is now the great prophet in Jerusalem. The king with whom he first lived was Josiah. We remember Josiah as one of the two who were made king when they were little boys. He is called a good king, and he did much to stop the worship of idols and to bring back the worship of the Lord. But kings that followed returned to evil ways. Jeremiah spoke boldly to them and to the people, and warned them that the time was near when Nebuchadnezzar and his army would come and destroy Jerusalem and take the people captive to Babylon far away. Few were willing to learn from Jeremiah. At one time they put him in prison and even into a deep pit. (Jer. 37 and 38) At another time when the words of Jeremiah, which had been written in a roll by Baruch, his scribe, were being read to the king Jehoiakim and his princes, as a few pages of the roll were read the king cut them off with his knife and threw them into the fire that was burning in the palace, till all was burnt. Was it right? It was very wrong to treat in this way the Lord's prophet and the

words which he spoke from the Lord. If possible, you should see "a roll of a book," as we read Jer. 36.

## Junior

In the third year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, 606 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon carried some of the best citizens of Jerusalem into captivity. The following year Jeremiah prophesied the seventy years' captivity. (See last lesson.) That same year, the fourth of Jehoiakim (Jer. 36:1), the Lord commanded Jeremiah to write his prophecies against Israel and Judah and the nations in a book. What he had uttered from the beginning of his ministry in the days of Josiah should be written on a roll. Therefore, Jeremiah called Baruch to write the words that the Lord dictated to Jeremiah. Then Baruch went to the house of the Lord at the time of the fast when all the people in the city and from the country flocked to the temple, and he read the words of Jeremiah before them. When he had finished, Michaiah, one of the princes, went to the king's house, into the scribe's chamber, and told the other princes there all he had heard. They sent Jehudi to fetch Baruch. He came and read the words to them. They were afraid. They asked whence the words came. Baruch told them. They counseled him and Jeremiah to go and hide themselves. Then they informed the king of what they had heard. He sent Jehudi to fetch the roll and read it to him. But before Jehudi had read three or four columns (not leaves), the king cut the roll in pieces with a penknife and burnt it in the fire. He then ordered the arrest of Baruch and Jeremiah. The messengers, however, failed to find them because the Lord hid them.

Then Baruch took another roll and wrote in it the words which the Lord dictated to Jeremiah that had been in the first roll. "And there were added besides them many like words"; words of woe, because the king and the people had rejected the Lord's message, and refused to repent "that He might forgive their iniquity and their sin." "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

This happened in the ninth month of the year. The first month was Abib, the time of the Passover, the springtime of the year, which might be in March or the beginning of April. Therefore, the ninth month was in November or December. It was winter. The king was in the winterhouse; the fire burned on the hearth. This is usually for us a picture of comfort and happiness, but here it is one of utter desolation.

Baruch appears to have been a friend of Jeremiah. When Jeremiah purchased his uncle Hanameel's field in his native town of Anathoth, he "gave evidence of the purchase to Baruch, the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah." (Jer. 32:12) Baruch was probably a person of note, for his brother, Seraiah, was chief chamberlain to King Zedekiah and was entrusted with a message from Jeremiah to the exiles in Babylon. (Jer. 51:59-64) We also learn from chapter 45 that when Baruch had written the words on the roll, he was full of sorrow and dismay. But Jeremiah comforted him. Evil would come to the people in Jerusalem, but Baruch's life would be spared.

Turn again to chapter 36. The first verse tells the time of the incident in the history. Have you seen a book written as a roll, the pages joined side to side, with a stick and handle at each end on which the roll is wound? Have in mind this kind of book when you read Luke 4:17-20 and Rev. 5:1. Verse 5 does not refer to Jeremiah's imprisonment, which was later (Jer. 37, 38) but probably means that the priests had forbidden the prophet to enter and speak in the temple. Note the effect of the reading, till finally the roll was brought and read in the presence of the king. The season

was cold, and a fire was burning in a brasier in the room. A note interprets the time as December, 604 B.C. At this most irreverent treatment of the prophet's words, the people about the king were not disturbed. Compare the reading of the Book of the Law found in the temple and Josiah's rending of his clothes. (2 Kings 22:11) The rending of clothes was a sign of grief, for blasphemy and for truth profaned. (Matt. 27:65) Connect verse 26 with verse 19. Were the precious words of the prophet lost? The closing verses of the chapter tell us. The rewritten roll no doubt contained much of our present book of Jeremiah. Read again the Lord's warning to Jeremiah of hard treatment, but His promise of strength and protection. (Jer. 1:17-19)

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The first verse indicates the time when this event took place. This describes the state of the church. It was near the end of the Jewish kingdom. The people were exceedingly corrupt and degenerate. Still another appeal for repentance is made. (Verses 2-3) It came through Baruch, the son of Neriah. Baruch means "blessed," and Neriah, "the lamp of Jah." The appeal was therefore made through feelings of blessedness that spring from keeping the truths of the Word. (Ps. 119:1, 105) The sins of the people prevent the Lord from approaching them. But surely there is some delight in keeping His precepts! Appeal must be made to the people through that. (Verse 5) The season to do so shall be one of fasting, of mourning, and repentance. (Verse 6, E. 375, 1189) Possibly they may be in a mood to listen to the Lord's words then, and repent. (Verse 7) The appeal is made while the people are reflecting upon their past wrongs. (Verses 8-9) Revelation of wrongs against the truth of the Lord is made from the house of the Lord. (Verse 10) The appeal is communicated to those in intelligence, the princes. (Verses 11-13) They take it into serious consideration, "sit down and read it in our ears." (Verses 14-15) They were affected by the words, and determine that they shall be applied to the roots of the evil. (Verse 16) A person's intelligence inquires whence proceeds this revelation. (Verse 17) It is of the Lord Himself. All truth in the Word is from the mouth of the Lord. (Verse 18) The intelligent fear that harm will come to the truth. Evil has become too much ingrained in the character to be easily reversed. (Verse 19) The attempt is made to have the appeal touch the very mainspring of the evil. The king as the head of the people signifies the same as the people. (A.7224) He therefore acts for the people, and his action represents their action. He listens to the message. (Verses 20-21) But the people are in a continued state of evil - their hearts are cold. "He sat in the winterhouse." Sitting depicts a confirmed attitude of the will. Evil burns within. (Verse 22) Therefore, when but a little of the truth had been uttered, the whole message was rejected and profaned. Evil consumed the truth. Bitter resentment against the message rendered the appeal powerless. (Verse 23) It was done without shame. (Verse 24) The conscience stung slightly but in vain. (Verse 23) Then the effort was made to destroy the blessedness of life, and the Lord from Whom it came. (Verse 26) But it is impossible to destroy the Word. (Verses 27-28) The truth still rings forth its appeal for righteousness and judgment of evil. (Verses 29-31) People may sear the truth in themselves, yet the truth itself is indestructible.

What a blessing! What a comfort! The Lord will always find some who will receive His truth and live according to it despite all the trials of self-sacrifice which it involves. If we will not keep His Word, He will grant the precious heritage to others. "Did ye never read in the scriptures, The

stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matt. 21:42-43)

Upon Jeremiah 36, the comment of Prophets and Psalms says, "That the destruction of the church and of the Jewish nation is foretold, and it was urged upon them to repent, verses 1-10; that they knew the truth, verses 11-16, of what had been foretold by the Lord, verses 17, 18; that they rejected it by profaning it, verses 19-24; in like manner the Word, verses 25, 26; that the Divine Truth will not perish, verses 27, 28, 32; because they hardened themselves against it, therefore the destruction of the church and of the kingdom is at hand, verses 29-31." The comment on the re-writing of the roll is beautiful as picturing the vitality of the Lord's truth, that it cannot be destroyed.

Note the comment of A. 4725, comparing the treatment of Jeremiah with the treatment of Joseph, who also was cast into a pit in which was no water. Both incidents represent the rejection of Divine truth among falsities in which there was nothing of truth. See also E. 537. On the rending of garments as an expression of grief for truth denied, see A. 4763. But there was no such expression of grief for the destruction of the roll in our chapter.

The whole story of Jeremiah and especially the rejection of his words in our chapter suggest strongly comparison with the treatment of the Lord and His words, especially on the night of His trial before the priests; and this comparison is fully justified. The treatment of the prophet and his words were a prediction of the treatment of the Lord. The fact that it was winter and that a fire was burning on account of the cold reminds us of the cold on the night of the Lord's trial and of the fire at which Peter warmed himself with servants of the high priest. The destruction of the roll by the knife and fire suggests the rejection of the Lord's truth both by mind and heart. (E. 481)

## **Lesson 40**

### **Jeremiah 44: To the Jews in Egypt**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

"And King Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah." (Jer. 37) Josiah began to reign in 640, Jehoiakim in 609, Coniah or Jehoiachin in 597, and Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, three months afterward in 597 B.C. This was a year when the city was besieged. Zedekiah sent to Jeremiah to pray for him. Then Pharaoh came. He raised the siege. Jeremiah told the king that Pharaoh would return to Egypt, and the Chaldeans would take the city, and burn it with fire. The Chaldean army dispersed through fear of the Egyptians. Jeremiah attempted to return to his home in Benjamin. He was seized in the gateway and charged with desertion to the enemy. Jeremiah denied the charge. But the princes cast him into prison. The king sent for him, hoping to hear a more promising message from the Lord. Jeremiah gave him no encouragement and

demanded his release. He was consigned to the court of the prison and shown some favor. (Jer. 37) But the princes, enraged by his adverse prophecy, desired the king to grant his execution. Zedekiah did so. They therefore lowered the prophet into a dungeon where there was no water, but mire, into which he sank. There they left him to die of hunger.

An Ethiopian eunuch heard of this and pled with the king for Jeremiah's release. The king acceded. Then the Ethiopian took thirty men with him, and by means of "old cast cloths and old rotten rags" let down into the dungeon, and placed under the arms of the prophet, they drew him up thence, and saved him from a horrible death. Then the king again sought Jeremiah's counsel. But the prophet had only the same discouraging oracle: "Surrender to the king of Babylon, and all will be well; resist, and he will burn the city, and take you into captivity." Thereafter Jeremiah was consigned to the court of the prison until the day when the city was taken in 586 B.C. (Jer. 38) "In the eleventh year of Zedekiah . . . the city was broken up," after a siege of nearly two years. (Jer. 39:1-2) Zedekiah fled by night, but he was captured in the plains of Jericho, brought before Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, deprived of his sight, bound in chains, and taken to Babylon. Jerusalem was destroyed and the people carried away captive. Nebuchadnezzar, however, gave special charge concerning Jeremiah. The prophet received his choice of going into captivity or of remaining in the land with Gedaliah, whom Nebuchadnezzar had made governor over the cities of Judah at Mizpah. He chose the latter course. (Jer. 39; 40)

Soon the leaders who had escaped from Jerusalem gathered round Gedaliah at Mizpah. He counseled them to serve the king of Babylon and all would go well with them. But there were revolters in their midst. Gedaliah was warned, but refused to credit it. (Jer. 40) Then Ishmael and his confederates killed Gedaliah and the Jews that were with him. He also put to death some worshipers who came from Samaria, and then gathered the people together to join the Ammonites beyond Jordan. But Johanan and his friends went out against him. When Ishmael's followers saw Johanan, they forsook Ishmael. Thus, he was forced to escape with eight men to the land of Ammon. Then Johanan and the people went to Chimham near Bethlehem with the intention of escaping to Egypt, for they feared the Chaldeans would punish them for the death of Gedaliah. (Jer. 41) Before carrying out their intention, however, they sought advice of Jeremiah. He assured them that all would be well if they remained in the land and submitted to the king of Babylon but that destruction would overtake them in Egypt. He also reproved them for their hypocrisy in asking his advice, which they promised to follow, when yet they had determined to take their own way. (Jer. 42) In their pride, they disbelieved the prophet and carried him with the rest into Egypt. There Jeremiah prophesied the conquest of Egypt by Babylon. (Jer. 43) And there he uttered his final curses upon his wayward people. The truth of his words would be proved in the destruction of Egypt, like to the destruction of Judah. And yet—and yet—the Lord is merciful. A very small remnant shall escape, and join the remnant in Judah. (Jer. 44:14, 28)

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

It is a sad story. The experience depicted is no less painful. Judah has become utterly corrupt. The attempt is made to keep up the worship of the Lord in the temple, and at the same time to observe the worship of Baal and of Moloch, even to the sacrifice of their children. (Jer. 7; 32:35,

etc.) This is serving God and Mammon at the same time, which is profanation. Babylon represents profanation and adulteration of the Word. (A. 1368, etc.) Therefore, Babylon besieging Jerusalem represents the state of the people there. Jeremiah advises the king of Judah to surrender to the king of Babylon and all will be well, but if he refuses, then the city will be destroyed. The advice of the Lord is to acknowledge frankly the profane state in which they are, and then the Lord can help them. But if they refuse, then the worst must come to pass to force them to recognize the nature of the evil in which they are. (E. 1029, end) The evils in the natural person, however, are too strong to admit of a spontaneous free acknowledgment of the person's estate. Therefore, the truth is held in bondage, Jeremiah is put in prison. Nay, further, it is defiled, and the attempt made to destroy it. Jeremiah is consigned to the miry dungeon to die. He is saved through the intervention of Ebed Melech (servant of the king). A gentile love of obeying the truth preserves the Lord's message from destruction. The message, however, is powerless to influence people. (Jer. 38:28) Therefore, the end approaches. The effect of the obstinate refusal to admit that the worship of self and of God combined is profane worship is to destroy true doctrine. (Jer. 39:2) It is folly to attempt to escape this conclusion. It results in the loss of sight (the understanding of the truth, verse 7). Profane worship falsifies the truth. (Verse 8) Yet there is some "simple understanding of the Word" left, "the poor of the people, which had nothing." (Verse 10) Among these Jeremiah lived. This is unable, however, to resist contamination. (Jer. 40:7-16) It is in time rendered wholly corrupt. (Jer. 41) They who are thus affected look to the Word for advice. (Jer. 42:1-6) The Lord instructs them that "if they continue simply in their external worship, and do not consult knowledges of the natural man, they will be saved: if they consult them, all truth and good of worship will perish." (Verses 7-22; P. P.) They would not obey the Lord. They placed confidence in mere knowledge. To do this destroys the truth. Pride in what one knows falsifies the truth. (Jer. 43)

All trials are occasioned by the perversity of the natural person, which is totally opposed to the reception of the truth. The three great destructive powers in the natural person are reasoning from self (Assyria), the love of dominion (Babylon), and pride in knowledge (Egypt). The evil effects of the first are described in the destruction of Samaria and captivity of Israel. The disastrous consequences of giving rein to the second are briefly described in 44:1-6. And the fate attending the indulgence of the third is laid bare in 44:7-14. People who are overpowered by pride in what they know seek to justify themselves. (Verses 15-19) But the Word reveals the fact that such an attempt only seals their doom, and totally destroys the church in them. (Verses 20-27) If there is anything salvable in a person, the Lord will preserve it. (Verse 28) But "true knowledges are perverted by reasoning therefrom." (Verses 29-30; P. P.)

The difference in state between those taken into captivity to Babylon, and those who voluntarily went into captivity into Egypt, is strongly contrasted in Jer. 24 under the type of the good and naughty figs. (Compare Matt. 21:16-22.) For a lucid explanation of Jer. 24, see E. 403, which furnishes great enlightenment on this whole subject.

## **Lesson 41**

### **Lamentations: Good Cheer in Tribulation**

#### **THE BOOK**

The title of this book in our English Bibles is "The Lamentations of Jeremiah." This title does not appear in the original Hebrew. The title by which it is known is the first word, translated by our English word "How." It is merely a tradition that the book was written by Jeremiah. This tradition can be traced back to the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament, which was written at least three centuries later than the time of Jeremiah. The Septuagint contains this interesting preface to the book: "And it came to pass, after Israel was led into captivity, and Jerusalem laid waste, that Jeremiah sat weeping, and lamented with this lamentation over Jerusalem, and said..." This tradition is found also in the Targum, the Chaldee translation of the O. T. and is alluded to in the Talmud, the collection of Jewish traditions, and referred to in the writings of the Fathers. It may or may not be true. From a comparison of the style of Jeremiah with that in Lamentations, some critics consider that the balance of internal evidence is against Jeremiah's authorship, while others take an opposite view. Some little interest attaches to the study of these views as it affords the student a clearer knowledge of the contents of both books. This is the basis for the study of the spiritual sense.

The method and style in which this book is written is worthy of consideration, although we are unable to see any deep reason for it. We may simply know that these reasons exist because it is a Divine composition. There are five chapters. The first two and the last two have each 22 verses. The third chapter has three times 22 verses. There are twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet. In chapters 1, 2, and 4, each verse begins with a letter of that alphabet in succession. In chapter three, the first three verses each begin with the first letter, the second three with the second letter, and so on. The fifth chapter has twenty-two verses, but they do not follow in alphabetic order. The portion of the Word written in this acrostic form with which we are most familiar is Psalm 119. Here each of the first eight verses begins with Aleph, the next eight with Beth, and so on. A similar alphabetic structure is followed in Ps. 25; 34; 37; 111; 112; 145. A remarkable variation in the order of the letters occurs in Lam. 2; 3; 4. In each the letter Pe precedes the letter Ain.

The rhythm of the first four poems is also a peculiarity worth noting. It is the rhythm peculiar to Hebrew elegy. The verse usually consists of one or more members, each containing on an average not more than five or six words, divided into two unequal parts, the first being longer than the second. Two examples from the first and third chapters will best illustrate:

How doth the city sit solitary - she that was full of people!

She is become as a widow - she that was great among the nations!

The princess among the provinces - she is become tributary.

I am the man that hath seen affliction - by the rod of his wrath:

Me hath he led and caused to go - in darkness and not in light:

Surely against me is he turned, he turneth his hand - all the day.

The theme of each chapter is indicated in its opening verse. 1. The desolation and misery of Jerusalem - "How doth she sit solitary, the city that was full of people." 2. The Lord's anger with His people - "How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in His anger." 3. The nation's complaint and its ground of consolation - "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath." 4. A contrast of Zion's past and present - "How is the gold become dim! how is the most pure gold changed." 5. The nation's appeal for the Lord's compassionate regard - "Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us."

The book voices the deepest sorrows of the heart, the sorest trials in temptation. And yet the dark and dense cloud is not without its silver lining. It contains a few tender words of consolation, all the more tender because of the sorrowing gloom.

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

Think of the homesick Jews in Babylon, with little else to do but bewail their situation, and the words are full of meaning! Think of the soul held in bondage by natural feelings and thoughts the very reverse of its ideal, and they are filled with even deeper meaning! What a trial to be unable freely to express our love for those whom we dislike! What a hardship to be burdened with a discontented disposition that hinders us from enjoying what is really best in life! "They are said to be in spiritual captivity, who, as to the interiors, are kept by the Lord in good and truth, but as to the exteriors, are kept by hell in evil and falsity: whence there is a combat of the external man with the internal: in this state are those kept who are being infested." (A. 7990) "I am the man that hath seen by the rod of his wrath: me hath he led and caused to go in darkness and not in light: surely against me is he turned, he turneth his hand—all the day." Chapter 3: verses 1 to 21 picture the dark side of life, the state of the soul consumed with grief because the outer life is so much out of harmony with the living ideal given by the Lord. Every slightest defect in character is full of evil. "Every evil with its falses, has an inrooted connection with all evils and their falses: and such evils and falses are innumerable, and their connection is so manifold that it cannot be comprehended, not even by the angels, but only by the Lord." (A. 9330) The person who has been led of the Lord to see such evil within the tendencies of his or her lower nature finds a deep meaning in this lament. Such a person also derives corresponding comfort and encouragement from the words that follow. (Lam. 3:22-27) "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." In sickness, bodily or spiritual, it is well to "both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." The lesson closes with the words, "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth." Would that everyone were in earnest about religion in early adulthood! Would that there were less indifference to the highest interests of humanity! "For he who is tempted in the world is not tempted after death." (R. 185) And those who do not undergo temptation cannot be saved.

The comment upon the third chapter in Prophets and Psalms is full of suggestions. It is as follows: "Description of the combats of the Lord with hells, which were especially from the Israelitish and Jewish church, with despair, because all had been in evils and in falsities therefrom, and against

the Lord: He invokes the Father that He may not be forsaken, and that He may conquer and subjugate these hells. These things in a summary."

## **Lesson 42**

### **Ezekiel 1: Visions Born of Captivity**

#### **HISTORICAL STUDY**

##### **Junior**

The captivity in Babylon is now the central point of our study. It lasted seventy years. (Jer. 25) It began in 606 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar took a few choice people from Jerusalem to Babylon. (Dan. 1:1-3) The second great deportation was effected in 597 B.C. Ezekiel, the priest, was one of the number then taken into exile, together with Jehoiachin, his king. His mission began five years later, in 592 B.C. (Ezek. 1:2) His message then was addressed to those in exile. He lived in a house of his own in Tel-Abib, by the river Chebar, which was probably a tributary of the Euphrates. (Ezek. 1:1; 3:15, 24, etc.) There was evidently a colony of the Jews there. (See Jeremiah's advice to them in chap. 29.) The elders came to Ezekiel's home to hear his messages to them. (Ezek. 8:1, etc.)

The message is very carefully arranged. It has three distinct divisions: (1) chaps. 1-24, (2) chaps. 25-32, and (3) chaps. 33- 48. It will be well to take a general survey of the contents of the first division now. Four dates are given: first, the fifth day of the fourth month in the fifth year of Jerusalem's captivity - that is 592 B.C. (Ezek. 1:2); second, the fifth day of the sixth month in the sixth year (Ezek. 8:1); third, the tenth day of the fifth month in the seventh year (Ezek. 20:1); and fourth, the tenth day of the tenth month in the ninth year. (Ezek. 24:1) This was the same day on which Nebuchadnezzar invested Jerusalem. (2 Kings 25:1) The following year, 586 B.C., the city capitulated and was burnt. The burden of these chapters (1-24) is, briefly, the impending fall of Jerusalem, This is pictured in many ways by vision, allegory and parable, and symbolic actions. The prophet addresses "the rebellious house" of Israel in captivity that they who have ears may take warning and profit by his words. Like Jeremiah, he sees no hope for those left in Jerusalem. They must perish. (Ezek. 10) As for those in exile, they are stiff-necked, slow to hear, and must suffer much in consequence. But when they have been purged, they will return to their land, and "form the foundation of a better Israel in the future." (Ezek. 11:17-20; 20:37-38) These two things seem to be fully summed up in chapter 24. The fate of those in the city is depicted in the parable of the boiling pot. Its effect upon those in exile finds expression in the death of Ezekiel's wife, and the manner in which he was commanded to accept the sad event. Before this event, the prophet's lips had been closed; he could not teach the people on account of their rebelliousness. (Ezek. 3:22-27) But after the experience of the destruction of their loved city, "the desire of their eyes," his mouth would be opened, they would listen to his words, and "know that I am Jehovah." (Ezek. 24:27)

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The prophecy opens with a most wonderful vision of the cherubim. So many details are given that it is difficult to form a clear idea of it. Yet devout readers are profoundly impressed by the majesty and glory of the sacred picture, even though they cannot define it or see distinctly what it means. The significance of the picture as a whole seems clear. It is plain from chapter 10 that the four animals are cherubim. The two most prominent places in the Word where we find cherubim mentioned are in Gen. 3:24 and Exod. 25. The cherubim were placed at the entrance of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life. They were also above the mercy seat, and on the curtains and veil in the tabernacle. They were guards to protect interior sacred things from destruction. (A. 308) In Ezekiel, the living creatures or cherubim signify "the Lord as to Divine Providence, and as a guard preventing His being approached except through the good of love; and as this guard itself is in the heavens, and chiefly in the inmost heaven, therefore this heaven is signified by the cherubim." (E. 504) Thus, the vision of Ezekiel is in essentials a vision of the Lord as the Word. "The Divine external sphere of the Word" is described in verse 4. (P. P.) All the terms used in this verse wonderfully describe familiar characteristics of the sense of the letter. "Out of the midst" of this are the four living creatures with the likeness of a human being. In its inner sense, the Word is in the human form. "The Word is God." Each creature had four faces and four wings. Celestial and spiritual things are conjoined therein. (S. 80) The natural sense sparkles, from the Divine natural good therein. (Verse 7) Its inner sense has a humanizing power. (Verse 8) The conjunction of good and truth gave power to protect and to rise. (Verse 9) The appearance of the Word to different groups of people is various, and yet in essence the Word is the same. Each of the four had the same four faces. (Verse 10) The inner life is protected perfectly against profanation. (Verse 11) The life in the Word is from the Lord and directed only to Him. (Verse 12) It glows from Divine Love and flashes forth Divine Truth. (Verses 13-14) Wheels give power of motion, power of acting and going forward. This is effected by truth derived from good—the doctrine of life. (A. 9872) The spirit of the Lord or of His Providence is in doctrine drawn from the Word. This gives doctrine its power. By the Divine Spirit of the Lord also people are directed in using doctrine in the work of regeneration. (Verses 15-21) The firmament or expanse above the creatures is "the Divine above and in the Word." (Verses 22-23) Thence is the influx and power of the Divine Truth. (Verses 24-25) Above all is the Lord Himself as a human being. (Verse 26) The two closing verses describe "the Divine Love and Divine Truth appertaining to Him."

The meaning of the vision is probably not very clear. Our power, however, of grasping the passing wonderful nature of the Divine Book is very limited. At least the vision and its imperfect significance to us suggest very strongly the hidden depths of wisdom which are far beyond our reach. We bow in humility before the Infinite Wisdom of the Lord, Still we reach upward.

"Our reach must exceed our grasp,

Or what's a heaven for!"

"The more fully evils in the natural man are set aside by shunning them and turning away from them, the more nearly is man conjoined with the Lord . . . and the more nearly he is conjoined

"with the Lord the wiser he becomes" (P. 33-34), and consequently sees more clearly the wonderful nature of the Divine Word, which is our guide.

The first chapter is the key-note to the prophecy. Taking it in connection with the twenty-three following chapters, which all point to the lesson to be learnt from the impending fall of Jerusalem as a consequence of sin, it seems to suggest the Lord's providence in permitting the most direful evils to come out, be seen, and felt, and repented of. (P. 281) War with all its horrors exists for judgment, until our hatred of it exceeds our lust for it. The name Ezekiel has the twofold meaning, "God will strengthen" and "God will prevail." The word God has reference to the Divine Truth. (See A. 2769.) The seer's name suggests the strength in the Divine Truth in the Word to enable people to prevail in the worst temptation—combats with evil, the hardest lessons in life.

## **Lesson 43**

### **Ezekiel 18: Call to Repentance**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

"The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Can you find this proverb anywhere else in the Bible? What does it seem to mean? Is it true or false? As you read on in the chapter, you find the lesson that one is not condemned for another's sins. Each one is the Lord's child. Each of us stands on our own feet before the Lord, with our own opportunity, our own duty, and our own responsibility.

Does this lesson, taught so clearly in Ezekiel, help you to understand the words of the first commandment: "For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments"? (Exod. 20:5-6) It certainly shows that while the wrong-doing of parents may make it harder for children to do right, the sins of the parent do not descend upon the children in a way to condemn them or to take away their opportunity and responsibility to do right. That opportunity and responsibility are given to everyone and are carefully guarded by the Lord.

In the latter part of our chapter, the same lesson is applied in a slightly different way—to the opportunity, the duty, and the responsibility of the present, and to its independence of the past. The past is a sort of parent, and the present is the child; and while the present is affected by the past, it still is essentially free for us to make it what we will. We must not feel secure in the present because some good has been done in the past. Such a sense of security makes us weak and is certain to bring trouble. On the other hand, we should not be hopeless in the present because of wrong in the past. Both thoughts are important. The latter thought especially is urged most tenderly in our chapter, encouraging people who have done wrong to repent, and assuring them of their opportunity and ability to repent, and of the Lord's desire that they should repent. You find this same lesson urged again in Ezekiel 33. Remember these chapters of Ezekiel when you feel discouraged about doing right, or when you find someone else despairing, feeling that it

is no use to try to do better, that the wrong has gone too far, that it is too late to repent. Find courage and help others to find courage in these promises of the prophet.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The chapter is explained as follows in the Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms: "That it is said, if the fathers are evil, their offspring are also evil, verses 1, 2; but that the offspring are not condemned on account of the father, but everyone on his own account, verses 3, 4; that there are some of that offspring who do not commit evils, nor act contrary to the goods and truths of the church, and that they are saved, verses 5-9; on the other hand, that the offspring who commit evils, or act contrary to the goods and truths of the church, are condemned, verses 10-13; but that he who does not act thus is saved, verses 14-17; but that the fathers are condemned, verse 18; that everyone is dealt with according to his deeds, verses 19, 20; that the impious, who converts himself, is saved, verses 21-23; and that the pious, if he becomes impious, is condemned, verse 24; that both the former and the latter are of Divine justice, verses 25-29; an exhortation that they would turn themselves, because the Lord desires the salvation of all, verses 30-32."

The saying in verse 4, "Behold, all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine," teaches very clearly the independent relation of each one to the Lord. Each of person's life is a gift from the Lord to him or her. Each is the object of the Lord's loving care. Each has his or her own responsibility to the Lord.

In verse 2, we find the words, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die"; and in many places in the chapter, it is said that they who do right shall live, and that they who do evil shall die. It is everywhere plain that the Lord is not speaking of the death or life of the body, but of the death or life of the soul. An evil state chosen and confirmed is spiritual death, and a good state chosen and confirmed is spiritual life. The kind of death and life which is meant throughout the chapter is very plain. "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God; and not that he should return from his ways and live?" See also verse 23. (A. 5407; R. 853)

In speaking of the man who turns away from his wickedness to a good life, it is said in verse 22, that his transgressions shall not be mentioned unto him. We are taught that whatever has been a part of one's life can never be absolutely removed; but that evil which is repented of is removed from the center of life to its circumference, where it ceases to disturb. That transgressions shall not be mentioned certainly means that they shall not annoy, that they shall not come to consciousness in any painful way. We may remember this verse in connection with what is taught us about the memory in the other world. We take with us to the other world the complete record of all that has been a part of our life, and if there is occasion the memory may be opened, and evils which have been committed may be brought to view even to the least detail. This is done at times with hypocrites who profess goodness but have not repented of evil. The memory then is opened with such clearness and such detail that it is impossible longer to deny the wrong. But it is different with those who have sincerely repented and turned away from evil. There is no necessity for opening the memory of wrong which they have humbly and thoroughly repented of. Of such a one it is written: "All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be

mentioned unto him." They have been left behind by the Lord's help, and the memory of them is not revived. (P. 79: H. 462)

In verse 25, the Lord's way is described as equal or just. The word does not imply that the Lord's way is mechanical and impersonal, alike to all. With infinite adaptation to the needs of all, the Lord's love extends to all, and desires the salvation and eternal life of all.

## Lesson 44

### Ezekiel 27: Glory and Fall of Tyre

#### THE STORY

##### Junior

The preceding lessons were taken from the first portion of the book of Ezekiel (chapters 1-24), which chiefly deals with the impending fall of Jerusalem. The second portion covers chapters 25-32. It contains the prophecies on seven foreign nations, viz.: Ammon, Moab, Edom, the Philistines, Tyre, Zidon, and Egypt. Those on Tyre and Egypt are long, occupying several chapters each, the others are brief. Prophecies on the nations by Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah have already been referred to. Those by Ezekiel spring from a different point of view. Jerusalem has just been destroyed. The prophet thinks of the nations rejoicing over Judah's disaster, like Obadiah's picture of Edom. Shall they do this with impunity? Nay! they too shall be punished.

The message against Tyre was given in the year 586 B.C., just after the fall of Jerusalem. This was the eleventh year of Ezekiel's captivity, and the eleventh of Zedekiah's reign in Judah. (Ezek. 26:1; 2 Kings 25:2) At that time, Nebuchadnezzar was at "Riblah in the land of Hamath" (Jer. 52:9), which is on the river Orontes, some distance northeast of Tyre. From this point, Nebuchadnezzar conducted his siege of Tyre which, according to Josephus, lasted thirteen years - from 586-573. Ezekiel looked for a great fall of Tyre similar to that of Jerusalem, and depicts it in a most graphic manner, though history does not record the issue of this siege.

Tyre was a most difficult city to enter. It is spoken of in the days of Joshua as a strong city. (Josh. 19:29) The name Tyre means "rock." It was built on an island rock about half a mile from the main-land. Unlike other Phoenician cities, it formed a little kingdom in itself. Hiram, king of Tyre, built a house for David in Jerusalem. (2 Sam. 5:11) This same Hiram brought materials to Jerusalem to build the temple. The wood was hewn in Lebanon, taken to the sea, and sent in floats over seventy-five miles to Joppa. (2 Kings 5; 2 Chron. 2:16) He also furnished sailors for Solomon's navy when it went from Ezion-geber to Ophir for gold. (1 Kings 9:26)

Shalmanezer, king of Assyria, besieged Tyre about the year 721 B.C. at the time when he invested Samaria. The city was again besieged in 586 by Nebuchadnezzar, who was apparently unsuccessful. (See Ezek. 29:17, which was written sixteen years afterward.) Later, it was attacked by the Egyptians and then by the Persians, who brought the Tyrians under their rule. In these days, Tyre again supplied cedar wood for the building of the second temple. (Ezra 3:7) Finally, the city surrendered to Alexander the Great in 322 B.C. after a memorable siege of seven months. The conqueror achieved his victory by constructing a great mole between the main-land and the

island, which remains to this day. Undoubtedly, the place was on an island in Ezekiel's day. He frequently speaks of it as being "in the midst of the sea."

Canon Driver considers this chapter (Ezek. 27) to be "one of peculiar archaeological and historical interest." Another writer says "it furnishes us, on some points, with details such as have scarcely come down to us respecting any city of antiquity, excepting Rome and Athens." How well equipped was this city! How well-defended! How widespread was her trading and how valuable her goods! Yet "thy riches, thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy marines, and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war, that are in thee . . . shall fall into the midst of the seas in the day of thy ruin."

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Tyre was a rock island city having a king of its own. It was situated at the outer northern boundary of Philistia. Its citizens were merchant traders and abounded in wealth. All these facts bear out its signification, namely, knowledges of spiritual and celestial truths. (A. 425, 1154 and on) Zidon was neighbor to Tyre, about 20 miles north of it, at the extreme boundary of Philistia. The word Zidon means "fishing." This helps in understanding the significance of the two towns, and why they are so frequently mentioned together. "Tyre signifies interior knowledges, and Zidon exterior knowledges of spiritual things." (See A. 1201.) This signification is based upon the fact that the people of Tyre and Zidon at one time possessed the Ancient Word that is now lost, from which they cultivated the science of correspondences, and were in representative worship. (See S. 21, 102.) They therefore "signify the Ancient Church, but as to the knowledge of good and truth." (A. 5319)

From the above it is evident why Hiram, king of Tyre, furnished Solomon with cedar, and the beautiful brass vessels for the outer court of the temple. Cedar wood signifies the rational or spiritual person. The interior knowledges of good and truth can only be grasped by an enlightened rational faculty. These knowledges also furnish the vessels of worship in the outer plane of a person's life.

Tyre means, as already noted, "rock." Peter is the Greek word with the same meaning. Caesarea Philippi was on the borders of the land almost due east of Tyre. There Peter made the confession. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And the Lord said, "Upon this rock I will build My church." The interior knowledge of the spiritual truths of the Word proclaims the sole Divinity of the Lord. This is the ultimate basis or foundation of the Church.

Here in Ezekiel, however, is a picture of the greatness of Tyre, and of its fall. Knowledge is power. An interior knowledge of the truth brings great power. It confers intelligence, protection from evil, ability to serve others, wisdom, Divine worship, and increase in goods and truths. (Ezek. 27:1-25; P. P.) But when it is made to minister to the wishes of the natural person, then it is degraded and destroyed. The fall of Tyre succeed the destruction of Jerusalem. The one is a consequence of the other. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, is the instrument in both cases. This implies that the spirit of serving self, or of ruling over and directing the affairs of people to suit self, destroys the Church in a person, and falsifies all the knowledges of good and truth from the

Word. When we are made conscious by the Lord of the presence of this deep-seated evil in our life, and of its effects upon those things which we have been accustomed to regard as most precious, then we have a sorry experience before us, but rich in its reward to the repentant.

## Lesson 45

### Ezekiel 45: Ezekiel With the Captives

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

We are to get acquainted with another prophet of the Lord, Ezekiel. He was a priest in Jerusalem at the same time as Jeremiah. He did not stay in Jerusalem with Jeremiah, but was taken with the captives to Babylon, and spoke to them there messages from the Lord. To get acquainted with Ezekiel, we must take the long journey to Babylon and find where he is living, with a company of the captives by the river Chebar. This probably was one of the many canals which led water from the Euphrates River through the flat country near Babylon. On the journey from Jerusalem, we see much of the Euphrates and of the rich gardens along its banks. Babylon was a great, rich city. It had great buildings, and it had its gardens. The captives from Jerusalem were not slaves in Babylon but had their homes and their work in the country and their business in the city. They were far away from their temple, but the Lord gave them a prophet, Ezekiel, to teach them and encourage them. Without such a teacher, they might forget the Lord in this far-off country where other gods were worshiped.

We will read one of Ezekiel's chapters, 34. It is about sheep and shepherds. It is about bad shepherds who have been neglecting the sheep. Who are the shepherds and the sheep that the prophet is speaking of? Who is the Good Shepherd who will seek out the sheep and bring them together and tenderly care for them? Read the last verse of the chapter: "And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God."

##### Junior

With Jeremiah, we were in Jerusalem and saw the people of the city taken captive to Babylon. This did not happen all at once. Three times captives were led away: at the fall of Jehoiachin, at the fall of Zedekiah, and after the death of the governor Gedaliah. First, many of the important people and craftsmen were taken away (2 Kings 24:10-14); then most of the remaining people (2 Kings 25:11); and still a third company (Jer. 52:30), till only a mere remnant of the people was left. Ezekiel, a priest in Jerusalem, and Daniel, then a young man, were taken away with the first company of important people.

Follow the long journey on the map, going far to the north and then down the Euphrates River to avoid crossing the desert. Pictures show beautiful gardens and fruit trees along the Euphrates. Further south, the country is flat and marshy, crossed by canals from the river. The river Chebar in our chapter was probably one of these.

Ruins remain, showing the size and strength of old Babylon. Walls and pavements of Nebuchadnezzar's palace can still be seen. Notice in pictures the beautifully made raised figures of animals on the walls. Records found among the ruins show the culture of the people and their careful business methods. Here the Jewish captives lived, for the most part comfortably, in the great city and in the country near, enjoying their homes and doing business. Only they were not allowed to go back to their own land.

So far away from Jerusalem and the temple of the Lord, the people might easily forget His worship and His laws and fall into the worship of the people of Babylon. They would very likely have done so, but for the prophets, especially the prophet Ezekiel, who gathered the people about him and spoke to them from the Lord. We read in the first chapter of Ezekiel of the vision that came to him and of his call to be a prophet. It reminds us of the call of Isaiah (Isa. 6) but has more of strange symbols. This is characteristic of Ezekiel. The early chapters of Ezekiel are largely predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem because of its disobedience. There were also promises that the Lord would gather again His people and make them a glorious nation. The book closes with visions of the temple restored and glorified. In the middle of the book are chapters of prophecy against other nations, some of them very eloquent, as the chapter against Tyre. (Ezek. 27) The preaching of Ezekiel did much to keep remembrance of the Lord alive among the captives and to prepare them for going back to Jerusalem when the time should come.

We read in chapter 34 a story of sheep and shepherds which we can well understand, after all the stories and lessons that we have had about shepherds and flocks in Palestine. With these we must put the verses that we are soon learning from Isaiah: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd," What meaning would this prophecy of Ezekiel have for the captives in Babylon? What promise does it bring to us?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Ezekiel was an instrument of the Lord in keeping alive the religious life and hope of the Jews in their captivity, making possible their return to Jerusalem and the re-establishment of their worship. Letters to the captives from Jeremiah, and the glowing prophecies of the later chapter, of Isaiah contributed to this. In general, Divine prophecy and heavenly vision keep faith and hope alive, making possible the fulfillment of promise in its time.

It is of interest to compare the vision and call of Ezekiel (Ezek. 1) with the vision and call of Isaiah (Isa. 6). There are features in common, with fuller development in Ezekiel's vision. As before, the winged creatures represent the power of the Lord's truth supporting and protecting. The wheels, like the chariots of the Elijah and Elisha visions, represent the power of the Lord's truth in application. See the explanation of wheels and chariots in A. 8215. The visions associated with the call of Isaiah and Ezekiel both represent the power of the Divine truth into whose service the men were called.

Several chapters of Ezekiel predict the destruction of Jerusalem near at hand, for its rejection of the Lord. See chapter 4 where the prophecy is also accompanied by symbolic action. Several chapters give beautiful promise of the gathering of the captive people and their restoration and

reviving by the Lord. Nowhere in Scripture is the opportunity for repentance and the appeal to repent put more strongly than in Ezek. 18. "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves and live ye." Nowhere is the gathering up and revivifying of a people or a soul that seems without life and without hope more strikingly described than in the vision of the resurrection of the dry bones. (Ezek. 37)

The chapter of Ezekiel rebuking the evil shepherds and promising the care of the Good Shepherd breathes the spirit of our Lord's parables of the lost sheep and of the Good Shepherd. The chapter is a plain lesson to those who attempt to teach from a selfish motive and who lead others to an evil life. So the church is utterly destroyed. "The bad pastors destroy everything of the church and corrupt the simple, verses 18-21." Such is the comment on the chapter in Prophets and Psalms. Read in A. 10794 of priests who teach truths and by them lead to the good of life and thus to the Lord, and are good shepherds of the sheep; and of those who teach and do not lead to the good of life, who are evil shepherds. Notice the beauty of verses 13-15. David is promised as the Shepherd long after King David had lived and died. (Verses 23-24) Like so many chapters of Scripture, this chapter cannot close without handing us the key to its universal spiritual lesson (verse 31).

## **Lesson 46**

### **Ezekiel 37: Dry Bones Revived**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

When was Ezekiel taken to Babylon? How many years later did his call to office come? That was about the year 592 B.C. Thus, the first section of the prophecy, chapters 1-24, which points to the destruction of Jerusalem, belongs to the years 592-586 B.C. The second section, chapters 25-37, contains the group of prophecies on foreign nations. Section three includes chapters 33-39, which consist chiefly of a series of addresses to the exiles. And the last section of the book, chapters 40-47, written in 572 B.C. (Ezek. 40:1), describes the vision of the temple.

This lesson is taken from the third section, which was written after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. The exiles were doubtless in a most despondent state. In their despair, they doubt the Lord's providence. They say, "The way of the Lord is not equal." (Ezek. 33:17, 20) But Ezekiel points out that each individual is responsible for his or her own deeds. If the righteous turn from righteousness and do evil, they shall die for it. But if the wicked turn from wickedness and do good, they shall live. This is the same doctrine which he has already taught them at great length in the clearest language. (Ezek. 18) Then he prophesies the desolation and destruction that awaits those left in the land. There is hope for those in captivity but none for those in the land. (Ezek. 33:23) He reproves the leaders of the people, but promises the advent of the Shepherd of Israel who will bring blessings to His people. (Ezek. 34) Edom shall be punished for his hatred and envy of Israel. (Ezek. 33. See also Obadiah.) For the same reason, the heathen shall be punished, but the house of Israel shall be cleansed and purified and return to the land. (Ezek. 36) Then follows the

vision in the valley of dry bones. Israel, in captivity, has lost hope of ever being restored. (Ezek. 37:11. See also Ps. 137.) This vision is most full of encouragement for the disheartened captives. It assures them of the restoration not only of Judah but also of Israel. The entire house of Israel shall be brought into their own land, "And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. David My servant shall rule over them: and they all shall have one shepherd." The closing verses of this chapter are exceedingly beautiful.

The two closing chapters in this section - 38 and 39 - deal with the destruction of the forces of Gog, and the restoration of Israel.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The prophet was placed by the Lord in the midst of a valley full of bones. The bones represent "the whole house of Israel." The valley signifies the state of dark despair—"our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts." Humanity is then in an exterior natural state in which the truths of heaven do not appear in clear light. The bones represent the people, or rather the truths which they possess. These are "truths in the ultimate of order upon which spiritual truths are founded." (E. 659) They are basal or foundation truths of Christian life. The bones are very dry: there is no moisture in them. The truths are lifeless without good. They are disjointed and unconnected, being separated from each other by the perverted state of life in which humanity is. The facts of being are severed and rendered powerless to support and sustain spiritual life owing to the overpowering influence of evil. "Can these bones live? O Lord God thou knowest." Ezekiel is to prophesy unto them to hear the Word of the Lord. Upon the application of the Word, the bones come together, they are covered with flesh, and the breath or spirit imparts life to them. The truths that were disjointed are put together, the fundamental truths are brought into orderly relation to each other, the perfect system of faith is established and furnishes a sufficient basis for receiving new life from the Lord. The bones are then bound together and covered with living tissue. The sinews or ligaments are connecting truths of a higher order, a more living type. The flesh is the love which gives motion or power of activity to humanity. And the skin is the outward expression of this truth and love, its form varying according to the individuality of the recipient. Finally, the breath from the four winds enters this form and it lives. The four winds signify the spirit of the Lord in the four quarters of heaven. (R. 343; F. 418) Through heaven, the Divine life is imparted to humanity. "No one can be conjoined with the Lord as He is in Himself." The Lord, however, is "in the whole angelic heaven like the soul in man." Life through the angelic heaven is thus the Divine life tempered according to humanity's power of reception. These steps describe the process by which a person is brought out of a state of despair to one of life. This subject is now treated from a different standpoint. First comes the revivification through the truth; now follows the conjunction effected through "the good of charity and thence of works." This is what is signified by the piece of wood. (A. 5354) When the Lord implants His love in the heart and humanity receives it, acknowledging its source, then it reunites all that had been severed by evil. The church is made one from the Lord and is henceforth protected from all evil infestations.

The closing verses in this chapter are full of beauty and comfort and encouragement. The child, when rebuked for telling a lie, has little consciousness of the extent of wrong done. As it grows up, it learns more fully how the world regards insincerity. If it is well instructed in the precepts of the Word, the knowledge about this evil becomes still greater. In later life, if it follows the path of regeneration, the perception of the wrongfulness of insincerity increases as regeneration advances. When the attacks of the evil spirits in stirring up hidden tendencies to it are at their worst, and hope is nigh gone, then is the promise of permanent relief near at hand, even at the door. "I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone on every side, and bring them into their own land. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be My people (Compare Rev. 21:3.)

## **Lesson 47**

### **Ezekiel 47: Vision of the Temple Restored**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Ezekiel was with the captives in Babylon. Jerusalem was now destroyed, and the temple was in ruins. But bright promises of Jeremiah, of the later chapters of Isaiah, and especially of Ezekiel, who was living and teaching among them, kept alive the hope of the people that the Lord would bring them back and make them happy in their land. Among Ezekiel's cheering words were bright visions which were given him of the temple and of Jerusalem built again. As we read of the temple in the vision, we remember the temple built by Solomon, with its inner and outer chambers and its court, with the ark and the sacred furniture, and the altar in the court. But in the vision, all was more beautiful and more glorious. It begins to remind us of the vision of the holy city shown to John and described in the last chapters of the Bible. And from under the threshold of the eastern gate of the temple in Ezekiel's vision flowed a stream of water which grew larger and deeper as it flowed. It went out across the barren wilderness of Judea to the Dead Sea, so salt that nothing could live in its waters. Everywhere the stream brought life. The sea was made fresh and was filled with fish, and fishermen cast their nets along its shores. And by the river on this side and on that grew trees with new fruit every month and healing leaves. We must read the beautiful description of the vision given to Ezekiel to cheer his heart and the heart of the captives (Ezek. 47:1-12) and with this let us read the description of the vision of the holy city shown to John (Rev. 21:10-13, and 22:1-2).

##### **Junior**

At the 40th chapter of Ezekiel begins the description of his vision of the temple and Jerusalem restored, which fills the remainder of the prophecy. As we begin to read, we have in mind the temple built by Solomon in Jerusalem. But as we read on, we think still more of the vision of the holy city described by John in the last two chapters of the Bible. Please open your Bibles to Rev. 21 and 22, and compare the vision of Ezekiel and the vision of John. Do you note any striking

difference? What likenesses do you find? In both cases there is the measuring by the angel. There is much likeness between the stream of living water of Ezekiel's vision and the pure river of water of life of the Revelation. Following this beautiful stream with Ezekiel, it flows eastward from under the threshold of the temple on the south side of the altar. It runs out across the barren wilderness of Judea, bringing everywhere fertility. It reaches the Dead Sea and freshens its salt water so that it teems with fish of all sorts, like the Great Sea, the Mediterranean, and its shores are busy with fishermen. En-gedi, mentioned in verse 10, is in the middle of the west shore of the Dead Sea. En-eglaim is not known. There is much likeness between this life-giving river and the river in the Revelation. Especially we find it in the 12th verse of Ezekiel's picture, in the fruitful trees on both sides of the river with new fruit every month and leaves that are for medicine. The whole land healed and made fruitful by the living water is in the vision divided anew to the tribes of Israel. The names of the tribes are given to the twelve gates of the city. The vision and the book of Ezekiel's prophecy end with the words, "And the name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there." You will feel what encouragement this vision must have brought to the captives in Babylon. We know what encouragement the vision of the holy city brings to us. Both visions describe the Lord's church made strong and living and beautiful.

Surely no words could be more full of encouragement and hope for the dejected exiles than those of Ezekiel written after the destruction of Jerusalem. He points out clearly that evil is inevitably followed by fatal consequences. Israel's captivity is due to evil. Yet each is responsible for his or her own evil. And if the wicked will turn from wickedness, they will surely live. Confident that Israel will repent, he predicts their victory over Gog, and closes his message with the beatific vision of the restoration of his people.

The vision was seen in the twenty-fifth year of the captivity, fourteen years after the city was smitten. (Ezek. 40:1) That was the year 572 B.C. The city was destroyed in 586 B.C. The prophet is most methodical and exact in his description of the temple. Indeed, the methodical arrangement of his thoughts is a marked characteristic of the whole book. In this vision, he begins with the description of the temple, proceeding from the outer court, with its gate-ways and chambers, to the inner court with its various chambers. (Ezek. 40-42) The glory of the Lord then enters by the east gate, and fills the whole house. Ezekiel is counseled to "show the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern" (Ezek. 43:10), thus proving that it is the type of the perfect life. Then follows a description of the altar of burnt offering and the ceremony of consecrating it. (Ezek. 43) The next three chapters (Ezek. 44-46) deal with the relation of the people to the temple and the public services to be held there. "The central aim of the regulations contained in these chapters is to maintain the sanctity of the temple inviolate." It must never again be profaned. The last two chapters treat of the relationship of the temple to the land. Waters proceed from the threshold of the house eastward, and flow into the sea, and heal its waters. Fish shall again live therein. But the marshes shall not be healed. They shall yield salt. Trees shall grow on either side of the river. Their leaves shall not fade. They shall yield fruit every month. "And the fruit shall be for meat, and the leaf for medicine."

The land shall again be divided among the tribes. The boundaries given are indefinite. Many of the names used occur only in Ezekiel. Those best known are Hamath, Damascus, the Hauran, and Kadesh. "The east sea" evidently refers to the Dead Sea and "the great sea" to the Mediterranean. The borders, north, east, south, and west, can only be dimly defined. They are made clear when the significance of the names is recognized. This territory was to be apportioned to the tribes in

strips extending from east to west. Seven tribes received their portions in the north. Then comes the strip called "the oblation" to be occupied by the temple, and the domains of the priests and Levites. And then come the five strips of land given to the remaining tribes, reaching to the extreme southern border. The sanctuary is to be in the midst of "the oblation" (Ezek. 48:8), in the city on the top of the very high mountain in the land of Israel. (Ezek. 40:2) "And the name of that city is, Jehovah is there." (Ezek. 48:35)

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

This is a wonderful vision of the Lord's New Church. It depicts the heavenly state to be reached by all who have been regenerated. The temple on the mountain top in the city is the central feature of the vision. The worship of the Lord and the doctrines of the church have been debased and perverted by humanity. (The vision was seen "fourteen years after the city was smitten.") But through the mercy of the Lord, that worship will be restored and these doctrines established once more in their purity in the hearts and lives of people. The city is the type of active community life, or of the heavenly principles and precepts which actuate people in their service to one another. The sanctuary in the midst of "the oblation" represents the internal worship of the soul, its recognition of the Lord as the source of all life and power.

From study of the tabernacle of Israel and Solomon's temple, we recognize the temple as a type of the church, a type of heaven, and in the fullest sense a type of the Lord's Divine Humanity, the perfect dwelling of the Lord with humanity. There is so much likeness between the vision of Ezekiel and the vision of John in Rev. 21 and 22, that much that is said in interpretation of the Revelation in Apocalypse Revealed is helpful in study of the prophet. "There also the New Church is treated of." (R. 936)

In both visions, much is said of gates and of the several quarters. There is entrance to the Lord's church and to heaven for people of many kinds of heavenly character. Recall the meaning of the several quarters. The east is the quarter of nearest approach to the Lord. Here was the stream of living water. (R. 901, 906)

There is in both visions measuring of the temple and the city. What is spiritual measuring? There are also various reeds or standards by which measuring is done. (R. 904)

A beautiful feature of both visions is the river of living water. Such a river must represent abundant truth from the Lord cleansing and renewing the life. This is the meaning of the rivers in Eden. (A. 107, 108) Several verses of Scripture associate rivers with the temple and the holy city. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High." (Ps. 46:4) "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be." (Zech. 14:8) What is such water from the temple, but the truth of the Lord's Word, renewing the life of the soul and of the world! These waters signify "the Divine truth reforming and regenerating." The wilderness and the salt sea to which they come represent departments of life even to the most external made living by this truth. (E. 513) The saltiness here represents states more and less confirmed in evil. (A 2702; E. 313) The broadening

and deepening of the stream at the successive measurements represents the increasing perception of the Lord's truth as one receives it first in a natural way and then in a more spiritual way, till its celestial meaning is reached beyond the understanding of any but highest angels. (E. 629)

The trees on the river's banks are the lives made fruitful by the Lord. Compare Ps. 1. They are made fruitful according to every state of faith, for this is the spiritual meaning of the months. The healing leaves are rational truths that are received and correct evils of life with those who do not directly learn from the Lord's Word. (R. 935, 936)

The new earth is to be reapportioned to the tribes of Israel. The new heaven is to be restored to the faithful. Each will receive a place there in which he or she can best serve all the rest. All who will suffer themselves to be instructed in the new life (the sojourner) shall receive their place in the kingdom of the Lord. (A. 1403)

The vision opens with the measurements of the temple and closes with the measurements of the city. It discloses the quality of the internal worship of the Lord and the external life in harmony with it. And the book concludes with the words, "the name of the city from that day is, Jehovah is there." "The church is the Lord's church." Any heavenly life people have within them is the Lord's life. The acknowledgment of this makes heaven. (Matt. 16:13-19)

There are three great prophets of the Exile: Ezekiel, Daniel, and Isaiah. The name Ezekiel has a twofold meaning: "God will strengthen" and "God will prevail." His message proclaims the Divine truth which strengthens and gives people power to prevail in the most direful temptations. The name Daniel means "God is my judge." His message proclaims the Divine truth which effects the judgment in states of profanation and of the love of ruling. But Isaiah proclaims the advent of the Savior - Cyrus - who represents "the Lord in respect to the Divine Human." And Isaiah's name means the same as Jesus, "the salvation of Jehovah." It is worthy of note that the prophets Ezekiel and Daniel both receive the title "son of man." They are the only two prophets who have received this description. Daniel is only once so called (Dan. 8:17), but the title is applied to Ezekiel ninety times. There is a deep significance in this fact, which is connected with the two prophets in exile. (See L. 28.) They thus represent the Lord as to the Word. "The Lord is called the Son of Man when the passion and judgment are treated of." (L. 24, 25) The captivity is the picture of most severe states of suffering, and also of judgment.

## **Lesson 48**

### **Daniel 1: A New Perception of Justice**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Do you remember Babylon, the great city where the Jews lived as captives seventy years, where Ezekiel the priest taught them and kept alive their faith in the Lord, and their hope? Daniel was also a prophet of the Lord who was taken to Babylon, as Ezekiel was, among the first captives from Jerusalem. He was a young man at the time, and was one of several princes who were chosen

for fine looks and bright minds, to be taught and trained in the palace school in Babylon, so that after three years they could be attendants and advisers to the king. We read their names in verse 6, but their names were changed and they were given other strange names by the king. Hear what Daniel and his three friends did. They would not eat the food nor drink the wine provided for them, which they called unclean, and asked to be given pulse to eat, which means here various fruits and vegetables, and water to drink. The one in charge of caring for the young men was afraid to change their food, lest they should not be as strong and beautiful as the rest. But he let them try it for ten days. And what happened? Daniel and his three friends were better in face and flesh than those who had eaten the king's food. So the keeper took away the king's food and gave them the food they asked. After three years of special care and training, the young men were brought before the king, and Daniel and his three friends were the best. They were ten times better in wisdom and understanding than the wise men of Babylon.

Several grand stories follow in the book of Daniel, which teach us to be brave and faithful to the Lord.

## **Junior**

The Book of Daniel occupies a unique place among the books of the prophets in the Old Testament. It is somewhat like the place held by The Apocalypse of John in the New Testament, being mainly apocalyptic in character. The first six chapters are partly historical, or relate incidents in which Daniel took a prominent part. The latter six chapters contain the account of four visions seen by Daniel. The prophecy is written in two languages, or rather, two dialects. From chapter 2:4-7:28, it is in Aramaic, or what is improperly called Chaldee. It is not the language of the Chaldean empire, but a dialect akin to the Hebrew, which in later times became the language of the exiled Jews in Chaldea. The book contains several words of Persian origin, and a few Greek words. Certain other peculiarities are worthy of notice. The familiar prophetic expression "Thus saith the Lord" is not once used. The word "Jehovah" (printed Lord in capital letters in our English Bibles) which occurs on almost every page of the books of the Divine Word, appears only in chapter 9. Other names, such as God of heaven, Son of God, Ancient of Days, etc., are used instead. Daniel does not address the Jews like Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc. He does not upbraid them for their sins. His view off the advent of the Messiah is distinctive. The Messiah is not spoken of as of David's line. The Jews are not to be restored to their own land. The prophet's vision steps beyond the limits of his own race, he sees whole empires rise and fall, and a religion take the place of past religions which is to fill the whole earth. "Instead of a church for the Jews, there is to be a church for all mankind."

We must learn what we can about Daniel from the first chapter. He was a young man, among the first captives taken from Jerusalem. The taking of captives mentioned in Dan. 1:1-2, seems to be the same that is described in 2 Kings 24:1, 10-14. Shinar means the country of Babylon. (Gen. 11:2)

As to the prophet himself, he was apparently of noble blood. (Dan. 1:3-4) He was carried into captivity "in the third year of Jehoiakim king of Judah," that is, the year 606 or 605 B.C. He was young then and was instructed, together with his companions, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, "in the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans."

The names of the young men chosen for special training were changed. Their Hebrew names contained a name of God. Daniel means "God is my judge," "Dan" meaning judge, and "el" meaning God. This is lost in the Babylonian names, which often instead contained the names of heathen gods.

Daniel and his three friends felt that the king's food was unclean and would defile them. It may have been unclean according to the Jewish law in its manner of preparation, and it may have been dedicated to idols. They asked for pulse. This word usually means in English peas, beans, lentils. But the meaning here is vegetable food. They were allowed to try this diet, and after ten days were so well and strong that they were allowed to eat only the vegetable food. When they were brought with others before the king and examined by him, Daniel and his three friends were found better than all the rest and superior to the wise men of Babylon. That Daniel continued to the first year of King Cyrus would mean through all the seventy years that the Jews were captives in Babylon, for it was Cyrus who gave them liberty to return to the Holy Land.

There follow in the book of Daniel chapters that give pictures of the selfish pride of the kings of Babylon and of the courage of Daniel and his friends in remaining faithful to the Lord. These chapters (1 to 6) make the first half of the book. We find here the story of the fiery furnace, and of the lions' den.

Chapters 7 to 12, the second half of the book, record visions of Daniel that have an immediate relation to the history of the times after the captivity and a more spiritual relation to conditions and changes in the Christian Church.

The Prophet Daniel is twice referred to in Ezekiel's prophecy. In the first instance (Ezek. 14:14, 20), he is associated with Noah and Job as an example of piety; in the second passage (Ezek. 28:3), he is extolled for his wisdom. It is noteworthy that these two qualities—piety and wisdom—stand out prominently in his book.

The experiences of the prophet in Babylon are sometimes regarded as being in a large degree parallel with those of Joseph in Egypt. Each resists temptation to defilements. Each interprets the dreams of the king. And each is raised to a position of honor in recognition of his wisdom.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Until recent years, the narratives of Daniel (chapters 1 to 6) were regarded as literal history, but acquaintance with "apocalyptic" literature of the later Jewish days has led to the belief that this type of writing is employed in the book of Daniel. It was characteristic of such writing that the name of the author did not appear, but that the lessons given in historical or prophetic form were associated with some wise leader of the past. It was also characteristic of the apocalyptic writing, as the name implies, that it drew aside the veil to reveal forces of the spiritual world and the fulfillment of Divine promises there which had no fulfillment here. We recognize this in the Revelation, the Apocalypse of the New Testament. This view of the book of Daniel need not affect at all the acceptance of the book as of the Divine Word, and it is definitely recognized as of the

Divine Word, in our Lord's reference to it in Matt. 24:15, and in our doctrines. (A. 10325, 1709) It is of interest to learn what we can of Daniel, the central figure of this Divine book.

Those who read chapters of Daniel as apocalyptic and of later writing believe that the date of writing was in the days of persecution by Antiochus Epiphanes, ruler in Antioch, 175 to 164 B.C. The history of Persian rule in western Asia, which began with Cyrus, and of Greek rule, which began with Alexander's defeat of Persia, belongs to the period between the Old Testament and the New. This history is indicated in the book of Daniel itself as the subject of Daniel's visions (Dan. 8:19-22; 11:2-4) Following this historical application of the visions, they lead up to the oppression of Antiochus and promise then Divine deliverance. If ever there was a time in Jewish history which needed Divine lessons of courage and devotion to the Lord, it was this time, and it may well be that the Lord in those days gave everlasting lessons of courage and devotion. (A. 1183, 5223)

Scripture itself points us also to an application of the book of Daniel to the Christian Church. See the Lord's reference to Daniel in Matt. 24:15. This reference indicates the conditions and experience of the Christian Church to which the lessons of Daniel apply, for the Lord in that chapter of Matthew is describing in representative language the states of spiritual desolation to be experienced by the Christian Church as it approached its judgment and the founding of a new church by the Lord. The reference to Daniel may be especially to Dan. 9:27 and 12:11. Swedenborg speaks of it, however, as a reference in a more general sense to all prophecies concerning the coming of the Lord and the condition of the church, especially its condition at His coming. (A. 3652; E. 684)

The abomination of desolation in the holy place describes a condition in the Christian Church when the Lord's truth and good are despised and things evil and false have taken the central place. The charge, "Whoso readeth, let him understand," means that such conditions should be well noted by people of the church, who should cling for safety to love to the Lord and charity to the neighbor. The line of application to the Christian Church is followed throughout the interpretation of Daniel in Prophets and Psalms. Babylon is everywhere recognized as the symbol of self-love and the love of rule in the church, even by the profane use of holy things. This is the meaning of Babylon in the Book of Revelation, which in the explanation of that book is shown to have had a special development in the Roman Church. Prophets and Psalms shows in Daniel 1 the desire and effort of the selfish spirit of rule to appropriate for its own use the knowledge and understanding of the church. It shows in Daniel 3 the effort of this same love to claim worship to itself. The attractiveness of such worship is meant by the music at which all should fall down. Those faithful and loyal to the Lord refuse to worship. Self-love burns as a fiery furnace with hatred and desire to destroy them. The protection of the Lord is so manifest with those loyal to Him, that even those in self-love are constrained to worship.

The summary of the internal sense of the first chapter is thus stated in Prophets and Psalms: "Verses 1, 2. When the church among the Jewish nation had been destroyed, 'Babylon' appropriated to herself all things pertaining to it. Verses 3-21. She wished to know all things of the church, and to acquire an understanding of them, and this was the beginning of 'Babylon.'" Jerusalem besieged by Babylon represents the church in a state of profanation. The vessels in the house of God taken to the land of Shinar signify that the holy truths of the Word were appropriated by the love of rule. (A. 1183) This same spirit also desires to acquire all the

knowledges of truth that it may use them to further its own interests. Daniel and his companions were to be educated that they might serve the king of Babylon. The love of rule is a strong incentive to the study of even the spiritual sense of the Word. That is a Babylonian spirit, which is well illustrated in worldly affairs. The love of pre-eminence stimulates people beyond measure to study and to master those knowledges which will insure success. Likewise, when the knowledge of the truths of the church lies in the path of success, no pains are spared to acquire proficiency therein. It is clearly Babylon which has taken hold of people when they study the truth simply to prove that others are wrong and they are right.

Daniel and his companions refused to partake of the king's meat and drink. This suggests the presence of a true spirit in people at war with the evil spirit of dominating over others. This spirit of the Lord in people is ultimately to be their judge and protect them from bondage to evil. It refuses to be defiled with evil and falsity that belong to an unclean lust of the flesh. It is nourished by the truths from the Word, "pulse," or, rather, "seeds." The spiritual life of a person can only prosper when fed by true thoughts drawn from the Word that are capable of being developed so as to produce the fruits of righteousness.

At the end of three years, Daniel and his three companions were found in matters of wisdom and understanding to be ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers in the kingdom. "The magicians were acquainted with such things as are of the spiritual world, which they learnt from the correspondences and representatives of the church; therefore also many of them had communication with spirits and hence learnt illusory arts, whereby they wrought magical miracles." (A. 5223) Daniel is called the "chief or master of the magicians." (Dan. 4:9; 5:11) Doubtless he had his light in spiritual knowledges from above under the Lord's guidance. He prospered for the same reason that Joseph prospered: because the Lord was with him. Light and strength and prosperity accompany all who look to the Lord and trust in Him.

## **Lesson 49**

### **Daniel 3: The Fiery Furnace**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

This lesson from Daniel contains one of those pictures from the Word that make such a vivid impression upon us in childhood that we never forget it. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, set up an image of gold in the plain of Dura. The image was sixty cubits high and six broad. That is about 75 feet high and 7.5 feet broad. Doubtless it was not solid gold, but a gilded image. The plain of Dura in the province of Babylon has not been identified. The image was evidently erected close to the city and must have presented an imposing appearance when the sunlight flashed upon its bright surface. At the dedication, the king summoned the leaders of the people to be present. All were commanded to fall down and worship the image whenever they heard the sound of the music. Daniel's three companions refused to comply. They were cast into the furnace of fire. Those who bound them and cast them in were burned, but the three remained in the fire uninjured. The king saw them walking in the midst of the fire, "and the form of a fourth like unto a

son of the gods." (R. V.) Thereupon Nebuchadnezzar called them to come forth, acknowledged the power of their God, issued a decree threatening death to any who blasphemed Him, and promoted the three to positions of honor in his kingdom.

This story strongly appealed to the imagination of the Jews and appears in various forms in their ancient literature. One of the most remarkable of these is that contained in "The Song of the Three Children." This book is to be found in the collection generally known as "The Apocrypha," which comes to us through the Septuagint and Latin versions of the Old Testament. This "Song" is accepted as canonical by the Roman Catholic Church. It represents Azarias as praying to God from the midst of the fire for deliverance. In answer, the Lord sends His angel who "smote the flame of fire out of the oven and made the midst of the furnace as it had been a moist whistling wind so that the fire touched them not at all, neither hurt nor troubled them." Thereupon "the three, as out of one mouth" sing a song of thanksgiving that is composed largely of passages from the Psalms.

Two other short stories in the Apocrypha that relate incidents in the life of Daniel may not be unworthy of mention as they appear as appendices to the prophecy in some Bibles. These are "The History of Susanna, Or the Judgment of Daniel" and "The History of Bel and the Dragon." As literature, they are incomparably inferior to the Book of Daniel. They form no part of the Divine Word, but are simply interesting from a historical point of view.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Canon Farrar regards this third chapter of Daniel as a wonderful illustration "of the deliverance of undaunted faithfulness; as setting forth the truth that they who love God and trust in Him must love Him and trust in Him even till the end, in spite not only of the most overwhelming peril, but even when they are brought face to face with apparently hopeless defeat." The situation is one in which the love of rule is in the ascendancy and threatens destruction. Can human beings prove equal to the strain? With the help of the Lord, they can come out of the trial unscathed.

History furnishes illustrations of the meaning of this chapter. The Church of Rome is generally recognized as a type of Babylon. (See R. 729.) Many times in the past, this Church has sought to dominate over people and dictate to them what they shall believe. And if people would not bow down to the papal authority, they had to suffer excommunication, which consigned them to hell. Many adherents of that Church have felt the dread of opposing this authority and its terrible consequences, of which they had been brought up to stand in awe. Take as an example the case of Waldo and his followers in A.D. 1177. Following their history and the story of their persecution affords a slight idea of the trial through which they must have passed, in refusing to bow down to the image and daring the flames of the fiery furnace.

Through experience with the Waldensians and many other seceders, the Church of Rome has, however, learned to become more politic in her dealings and seldom anathematizes her members. Nevertheless, the anathema, in a deeper sense, is used everywhere, and by all people when possessed by the love of ruling from the love of self. This love of having one's own way demands that all shall bow down before this lifeless image—lifeless because there is naught of God in it,

naught but self. "Whosoever will not agree with me, act as I determine is best for them, or favor me, is condemned. I shall have nothing more to do with them (except in so far as it is impossible to avoid dealing with them)."

All the governors and rulers are summoned to the dedication of the image. Every argument is marshaled together to support self. And when the music plays, every knee must bow. When the delights of self-love are active, then everyone must assent. "Musical instruments correspond to the delights and pleasantness of spiritual and celestial affections" (A. 8337), and also their opposite affections. (As to the nature of the delights of the love of ruling from the love of self, see W. 271; P. 215.) Self will not be gainsaid or balked in any way. The slightest opposition rouses resentment.

This spirit is often present in humanity. To recognize and oppose it as sinful in the sight of God is the mature action that fully brings out the spirit of self-love and makes it more plainly visible. In resentment, that spirit determines to consume the God-given truth that condemns it. The fire of hatred is kindled. The Lord's truth is not affected by it. They who worship self are destroyed by the fires of self-love. But they who worship the Lord are protected. The Lord is present with them to save them from the scathing influences of anger. "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." (Isa. 43:2)

Nebuchadnezzar saw the angel walking with the men in the fire, called the three forth, and commanded his people to respect the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. "'Babylon' was compelled by this to acknowledge and worship the Lord." This apparently implies that the disorderly love of rule is brought into subordination and made to serve the Lord alone. The power of ruling is turned away from that of serving self to that of serving others. "The love of ruling from the love of uses is in the highest degree heavenly, and consequently is with those who are in the highest heaven." (See M. 262.)

## **Lesson 50**

### **Daniel 5: Belshazzar's Feast**

#### **HISTORICAL STUDY**

Daniel was taken captive to Babylon in the third year of Jehoiakim, about the year 606 or 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar was not then king of Babylon, but co-regent with his father Nabopolassar, and simply called king by anticipation. He assumed the full authority of the throne in 604 B.C. and reigned in Babylon till 561 B.C. He was succeeded by Evilmerodach, 561-559; Neriglassar, 558-555; Laborosoarchod (9 months), 555; and Nabunahid, 555-538, the year in which Cyrus took Babylon. The first four chapters in Daniel belong to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. The fifth refers to Belshazzar as the king of Babylon and the son of Nebuchadnezzar. (Dan. 5:2, 11, 18) There is no mention in the monuments, or tablets, or clay cylinders, of Belshazzar as a king of Babylon. There are, however, several contract-tablets that establish the fact that Belshazzar (Bel-sara-usur "Bel protect the king") was the son of Nabonidus or Nabu-nahid. "As regards his [Belshazzar's] relationship to Nebuchadnezzar, it is possible that Nabu-nahid may have sought to strengthen his

position by marrying a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, in which case the latter might be spoken of as Belshazzar's father ('grandfather' by Hebrew usage)."

The Babylonian Chronicle respecting this period gives us to understand that Nabonidus was not in Babylon when Cyrus was preparing to advance upon it. He appears to have been with the forces at Sippar or Sepharvaim. And it is recorded that when Cyrus overcame the enemy in battle at Opis, he had "some conflicts with the men of Akkad, and took Sippar on the 14th day of January without fighting. Nabonidus fled" (Chronicle). It may thus have been that while Nabonidus was in Akkad, Belshazzar was in Babylon and was there declared king by the people. In any case, Cyrus' leader, Ugbaru or Gobryas, took Babylon without resistance, according to all the chronologists on the night of the 11th of Marcheswan 538. According to Daniel, Belshazzar was king at least three years. (Dan. 8:1) This contradicts the generally accepted list of kings above given. It is only fair to state that no record has yet been found that establishes the kingship of Belshazzar, and the contract-tablets bearing dates continuously throughout the reign of Nabonidus to the conquest by Cyrus make no reference to any other king than Nabonidus.

This chapter then brings us down to the very close of the Babylonian empire. And what a terrible end! Drinking, feasting, and revelry, and the profanation of the holy vessels belonging to the temple of the Lord. A very few simple words are employed to describe this closing scene. Yet each stroke of the pen speaks volumes. Therein lies its power to appeal to so many different classes of minds and leave a definite impression. The feast, the handwriting on the wall, the terror-stricken king, the perplexed magi, the interpretation by Daniel, and the death of the king that night, furnish the never dying outlines of this picture.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Whoever considers the extremity to which any evil leads can readily estimate the danger and the responsibility attached to it. The abuse of strong drink leads to delirium tremens, insanity, and death. The knowledge of that fact doubtless saves many from an injudicious use of it. The final outcome of a deeper evil - the love of pre-eminence—is laid bare in a startling light in this story. Not everyone can see it. In our lives, not nearly so much attention is directed to the indulgence of the spirit of self-will and its evil consequences as is given to the indulgence of intemperate habits and their consequences, although the ultimate result of the former is far more serious than that of the latter.

"Babylon' profanes all things of heaven and of the church." (P. P. on Dan. 5:1-4) Acts prompted by a spirit of self-will, love of pre-eminence, or love of ruling, if not checked will profane and destroy everything heavenly in the soul. Everyone is capable of seeing from the Lord that this is true, even as Belshazzar saw the writing on the wall and trembled. That writing, which was "from heaven" (E. 373), discloses the inner nature of the feast - what it means. Yet the king cannot tell what the words signify. He sees the words but can neither read nor understand them. Likewise the magi see them but can neither read nor interpret. Those steeped in evil possess rationality but cannot understand the truth from themselves. They have conscience and can be made conscious of the sad plight in which they are and even moved greatly by the fear of consequences. But it is impossible for them to discern the real outcome of evil - its fatal effects upon themselves -

without enlightenment from the Lord. A Daniel is needed to read and interpret the message from heaven.

Daniel prefaces his interpretation by a short address to the king. God gave Nebuchadnezzar his father a kingdom, and glory and honor. But when he became filled with pride, his kingdom was taken from him, and he suffered until he learned that God alone rules over humanity. "And thou, his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy heart, though thou knewest all this, but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven," and profaned His holy name. Self-confidence in pursuing an evil course in life always deadens the conscience. History and experience may be interesting to read, but they have no word of warning or advice for self. History proves that no one learns anything from history. The writing on the wall is seen but not comprehended either in its letter or spirit. The Divine Word is likewise often read, and yet no more is seen than the literal expressions, because seen in natural light "which in itself is dead, and not in spiritual light, which in itself is living." The Divine Word with its message of life, however, is opened to people by the Lord Himself as they will to do the Divine Will. (P. 134) Through this enlightenment, "it is confirmed by those who are in the truths of the church, that it is contrary to the Word for them to exalt themselves above the Lord, for thus things holy are profaned." (P. P. verses 10-24) The ultimate issue of pride proceeding from the love of rule is that it utterly destroys religion. (P. P. verses 25-28; E. 370; Life I) "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it." To number signifies to determine the quality of the life. "Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting." "Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

## **Lesson 51**

### **Daniel 6: The Lions' Den**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We are again in the great proud city of Babylon, with its palaces and temples. Another grand story is told us, and this time of Daniel himself. Darius was king, and Daniel was the most trusted and most honored of the rulers set over the kingdom. Other men less honored disliked Daniel and wished to do him harm. What complaint could they make against him? For he was faithful in everything and did everything well. They knew that Daniel worshiped the Lord and prayed to Him, and never to any idol or to any person. And so they came with a plan to the king, that a law should be made that no one for thirty days should make any prayer to any god or person, but only to the king, and that any one who broke this law should be cast into the den of lions. The law was made and signed.

What would Daniel do? His enemies knew what he would do. "He went into his house, and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." They came and found Daniel praying, and they complained to the king. The king was sorry, but the law had been made and signed. He could find no way to save Daniel, and he was cast into the den of lions. A stone was laid upon the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it so that it would not be moved. I am telling

you too much of the story. We must read it in the Bible words, and listen for the part that tells what the king found when he came in the morning to the lions' den.

## **Junior**

It is another grand story of Babylon, and Cyrus was the king who took Babylon and gave the Jews liberty to return to their own land. The Darius spoken of in Dan. 3:31 and in our story may have been an officer of Cyrus, temporarily in power. Soon Cyrus himself took charge. (Dan. 6:28)

We have learned of Cyrus king of Elam, the country to the east of Babylon, who after conquering Media, Persia, and much country to the north and west, took Babylon. It seems that for a time he made Darius ruler, but afterward Cyrus himself was king. This was the Cyrus who was hailed as the deliverer of the Jews in the prophecies of Isaiah. "That saith of Cyrus, He is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." (Isa. 44:28; 45:1) It was this Cyrus who released the people from captivity and sent them back to Jerusalem, as we shall learn.

The pride and foolishness of Darius is shown in his commanding that prayers should be made to him, which ought only to be made to the Lord. It seem like the pride of Nebuchadnezzar over again, and grown worse.

How plainly we can see Daniel, not afraid of the king's law, going to his house and opening his window toward Jerusalem, kneeling in prayer three times a day. We remember the petition in Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, that the Lord would hear and answer even captives in distant lands who should pray to Him "toward their land which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name." (1 Kings 8:44-48) We remember how the thoughts of the captives flew with the little birds to Jerusalem and how they longed to be there in the courts of the temple. (Ps. 84) In eastern countries, we think of Solomon's words and of the prayers of Daniel when we see faithful Mohammedans bowing in prayer toward their holy city Mecca. The Lord told us to go to our closet for prayer; and how can we open our window toward Jerusalem? Are we as faithful and as brave as Daniel in remembering our prayer to the Lord? In the spirit, we are on our knees in prayer though walking or sitting, when in desperation our desires to do right and to be right are strong and availing.

The lions' den, like the fiery furnace, is a picture of the fierce cruelty of selfishness toward those who will not yield to it, when they wish to have their own way, or to be admired. Even in the church, there have been cruelties and persecutions of those who would not follow selfish leaders and give them honor. The Lord protects those who bravely trust in Him; even when they lose worldly things, even when their bodies suffer, their souls, their real selves, are safe and may have a sense of safety in the Lords protection. See the same promise in Ps. 91:1, 7.

Someone is waiting to tell me that there is no den of lions hereabouts, of which we need be afraid. But someone else replies that the den of lions that is really dangerous to us is not a den of wild beasts, nor the anger and violence of other people, but anger and hate rising up in our own hearts. The Lord warned us to beware of such beasts. (Matt. 5:21-22) And in that lions' den of angry feelings and passions, the Lord will protect us. He met and overcame these lions in His temptations. (Mark 1:13) His power will protect us if we think of Him and ask His help and say His prayer or His commandment. The Lord is with us to protect us in the fiery furnace and to shut

the lions' mouths. Were we in a fiery furnace or a lions' den during the week just past? Did we think of the Lord and feel His protection?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Let someone take up the last thought, about the lions, and show more fully how we may be in a lions' den, and what protection is promised in this story of Daniel. Animals represent affections, and fierce cruel animals represent fierce and cruel passions. In the account of the Lord's temptations, it is said that He "was with the wild beasts" (Mark 1:13), and in explanation the beasts are said to mean "the hells and the evils that rise out of them." (E. 650 end) A Psalm speaking of the Lord's crucifixion, and at the same time of our temptations, says, "They gaped upon Me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion." (Ps. 22:13) And another Psalm says, "My soul is among lions: and I lie among them that are set on fire." (Ps. 57:4) The lions are fierce evil passions; and the lions most dangerous to us are fierce passions aroused by evil spirits in our own hearts.

The lions of Babylon are the fierce passions that spring from a supreme self-love and desire to rule by means of holy things. Religions intolerance is one of them. (A. 10412)

It is the height of self-love and pride for a person to desire and to accept worship that belongs to the Lord alone. How did the angel answer John? "See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow servant . . . Worship God." (Rev. 22:9; 19:10) This spirit is the opposite of the spirit of serving others, which is the greatest in heaven. (Matt. 20:25-28)

The safety of Daniel in the lions' den (like the safety of the three friends in the fire) pictures the safety of those who seek the Lord's protection from these fierce passions. Remember the promise in the Psalm, "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet." (Ps. 91:13) The destruction of the enemies of Daniel by the lions (like the consuming of those who cast the three friends into the fire) pictures the spiritual destruction of those who indulge fierce evil passions and do not seek the Lord's protection from them. The anger which they feel towards others does more harm to themselves. The wives and the children of these men, who shared their fate, represent the developments of evil life that make one with the evil passion and should be condemned with it.

We remember the Lord's reference to Daniel in Matt. 24:15, which shows a relation of this book to states of the Christian Church, for the Lord in that chapter of Matthew is telling of states coming in the church toward its close. And we have found a development of this application of Daniel in Prophets and Psalms. In Daniel, as in Revelation and in all Scripture, Babylon is the symbol of love of rule, even by means of holy things. This spirit even claims to exercise Divine powers, and seeks honor and profit by them. We see this spirit in the decree of Darius, and we see the cruel rage of this spirit toward those who will not yield it worship in the lions' den. It is rather startling to read in Prophets and Psalms that the lions' den is the Inquisition: not that the cruelty in the Christian Church known as the Inquisition is all that is meant by the lions' den, but this was an example of the violence of self-love toward those who will not yield to it and give it worship.

The den of lions within ourselves is more to be feared than any outward persecution. What do fierce beasts represent? Lions may have a nobler meaning, but here they are symbols of fierce and cruel passions. But they are passions that the Lord overcame in His temptations and that He will help us to overcome. (Mark 1:13; Ps. 57:4) Think of the Lord and His protection when we read of one "like the son of God with the three in the fiery furnace," and when we read of the angel who closed the lion's mouths so that Daniel was unhurt. (Isa. 63:8-9) We may also think of angel helpers sent by the Lord to camp about us and to bear us up in their hands (Ps. 34:7; 91:12), and again we may think of these angels as the Lord's Divine truth given for our protection. Angel means messenger, and abstractedly, an angel is a message of Divine truth given for our guidance or protection. If in a time of temptation or of danger, we will remember the Lord's prayer or His commandment or other words of Scripture and feel its protection, we are realizing something of the lesson of the fiery furnace and the lions' den. There is power in the Divine truth of the Lord's Word to protect us in the den of lions, and to shut the lions' mouths. There is power in the Divine words to restrain hell itself, and to keep us safe in every temptation. (R. 900, 910)

Read in E. 1086 of the power of the Divine Word to restrain hell itself and to keep us safe in every temptation. "A man who is in genuine truth from the sense of the letter of the Word can cast down and dissipate all the diabolical crew, and their arts in which they place their power, which are innumerable, and this in a moment, by a look alone and by an effort of the will. In fine in the spiritual world nothing can resist the power of genuine truth, confirmed from the sense of the letter of the Word."

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### **Leading Thought: The Lion's Den**

The point of the story of Daniel in the lions' den that we wish to emphasize is that he was thrown into the den because he would not worship a man as god, even if that man was the king. It shows us how very low humanity had sunk at that time, that they should actually deify a person. Although Daniel knew the decree established by the wicked schemes of the leading men of the kingdom who were jealous of him, he would not debase himself to such man-worship. He would worship the Lord even if he had to die, rather than worship a man.

This was not the only case in ancient times when people were proclaimed gods. We are taught in The True Christian Religion that many of the idols that used to be worshiped were images of people who had once lived and who had been proclaimed gods.

But you who are familiar with the story as it is told in the literal sense will want to know something of the inner meaning.

You will remember that there are several inner meanings in the Word of the Lord. The highest or inmost sense is called "the celestial sense" and treats of the Lord Jesus Christ alone, how He assumed and glorified His human nature. The next to this is called "the spiritual sense" and treats of the reformation and regeneration of humanity. The next lower to that is called "the internal historical," or "proximately interior sense," and treats of the history of churches.

In "the internal historical sense," "Babylon" means the Roman Catholic Church; and "the lions' den" means the Inquisition.

You know that when the Lord our Savior, Jesus Christ, established His Church, the members were simple, earnest people; they loved one another and obeyed the Lord's commandments. This went on for two or three hundred years. But gradually, the ministers changed. Instead of loving the Lord above all things, they began to love to rule over people, and to control them so that they should do what they wanted them to do. They continued to preach with great zeal and to profess belief in Jesus Christ, but only because by such preaching they could obtain influence over the people. They taught people that the Lord Jesus Christ had given His great power on earth and in heaven to the leading bishop of the church, whom they called the pope, and that the pope could let anyone into heaven or into hell as he chose. They taught the people that when the Lord said to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 16:18-19), it meant that the Lord gave power to Peter to admit anyone to heaven or to hell; that Peter was thus the first pope, and that he transferred this power to the next pope, and this one to the next, and so on, down the centuries. And the people believed that this must be so because the words seemed to read that way, and they did not understand them aright. But the Lord has now taught us in the Writings that "the Rock" on which He said that He would build His Church was not Peter but the truth that Peter confessed in verse 19, in the words, "Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

By their misinterpretation of the Lord's words, the popes, and the priests who were under them, obtained power and wealth. They would take money from the people, promising them forgiveness of sins if paid for it. They introduced a kind of religious service called a "mass for the dead," which was said to free the dead from the torments of a place called "purgatory," if the priests were paid to perform the mass. They obtained such power over people that they even made kings afraid of them.

Now, was not this claim that they could let people into heaven or cast them into hell as they chose, making themselves like God? For only the Lord alone can save people. The Roman Catholic priests did just as the leaders and the king of Babylon did, and therefore this love of ruling over the souls of people is meant in the internal sense by Babylon.

Of course, this love of ruling over others, controlling them, and being able to make them do just what one wants, is very bad. It makes a devil of a person, just as the love of serving others makes an angel of him or her.

In time, the Roman Catholic Church became so wicked that they would imprison and torture people who did not believe as they did. It would be too horrible to relate the various kinds of instruments of torture they planned and made in order to compel people to believe as they did. This is known as the "Inquisition," from the word to "inquire," for they set spies to work to inquire, or search out, what people said and did that was contrary to the decrees of the Church, and they then punished them so that many died.

This Inquisition, of which you may read in history, is what is represented by the lions' den into which Daniel was thrown. Daniel himself represents the good people who read the Word and worshiped the Lord Jesus Christ instead of the pope, and who were tortured.

You know that all who die enter the world of spirits - that great world that is between heaven and hell - and live there as they did in the world, remaining there a shorter or a longer period, but not more than thirty years. Before the Last Judgment (that stupendous event that took place in the spiritual world in the year 1757, and of which much is told us in the Writings, especially in the work entitled the Spiritual Diary), people remained in the world of spirits for many centuries. Indeed, nearly everyone who had lived from the time when our Savior was in the world, remained in the world of spirits until the Last Judgment.

The evil popes and priests, as they died, went into the world of spirits, and lived there, occupying immense mountain regions, where they built great cathedrals, and convents, and watch-towers, and splendid palaces, and carried on an elaborate worship just as in the world, with which to fool the common people who came into that world by death, and to maintain their control of them.

And as the Roman Catholic Church was there, so also was the Inquisition.

The good people, who really loved the Lord, and were truly of His Church, and who, as we have seen, are represented by Daniel, were guarded by the Lord, so that they might not undergo the punishment of the Inquisition. This is meant by the Lord's keeping the lions from hurting Daniel. On the contrary, those who invented that horrible crime were cast into hell, which is meant by the leaders of Babylon being themselves cast into the den of lions.

## **Lesson 52**

### **Daniel 8: Vision of the Ram and Goat**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

Chapters one to six of Daniel constitute the first section of his prophecy. They are historical, dealing with the period from the beginning of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar until the days of Cyrus the conqueror, from about 605 to 537 B.C. (Dan. 1:1; 6:28) The last six chapters form a separate section consisting of the visions and dreams of Daniel. Apparently, they were sent to the prophet during the last days of the captivity, and after the release. (Dan. 7:1; 8:1; 9:1; 10:1)

The eighth chapter describes the vision of the ram and the male goat. It was "a vision" and must therefore have been seen in the spirit in the spiritual world. (L. 52) Yet the vision speaks of earthly things, as "the palace of Shushan in the province of Elam, by the river Ulai." (Verse 2) The interpretation of the vision by the angel Gabriel also refers to earthly kings and kingdoms. It is very remarkable how closely the history of these kingdoms bears out the interpretation. The ram with two horns "pushing westward and northward and southward" is "the kings of Media and Persia." The goat coming from the west that smote the ram is "the king of Greece," its great horn being "the first king." It is a matter of history that the Persian kingdom pushed westward into Palestine, northward into Syria, and southward into Egypt. Then came Alexander the Great, the Greeks' first king, who vanquished the Persians and destroyed their power in the east. "And the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven." (Verse 8) This means that "four kingdoms

shall stand out of the nation, but not in his power." (Verse 22) The four kingdoms that arose out of the empire of Alexander at his death were those of "the Seleucidae at Antioch, of the Ptolemies in Egypt, of Lysimachus in Thrace, and of Cassander in Macedonia." Further, "out of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great," and profaned the altar in the sanctuary. (Verses 9-14) This refers to "a king of fierce countenance" (verses 23-25) whose name is not given.

Commentators identify him with Antiochus Epiphanes, the great persecutor of the Jews in the second century B.C. He desecrated the altar in Jerusalem by erecting on it a small heathen altar, which remained there for three years, when the temple was purified and the altar of the Lord dedicated at a feast which lasted seven days. (Origin of "feast of dedication," John 10:22) A record of these events is to be found the Books of the Maccabees in the Apocrypha.

It is interesting to follow this literal historical interpretation of the vision. It may or may not be correct. In a similar way, John's vision in Patmos contains messages for each of the seven churches in Asia. These places, with which John was familiar, have all been identified. This also furnishes interesting information. The names provide a basis for the letter of the Divine Word. So far they have contributed to the construction of a Divine composition, even as the pen of the author lends its service to him in his work. It may be interesting to know whence the pen came, and even to formulate some probable conjectures about its origin. But the work of the author is immeasurably greater.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The main subject of this vision is the ram or sheep and the goat. Its meaning is more readily comprehended when thought of together with the parable of the sheep and the goats. (Matt 25:31-40) Plainly, the sheep there refer to the blessed, and the goats to the unrighteous. The sheep are they who hear His voice and follow Him. (John 10) The goats hear but do not follow. They are in faith alone. Here, the ram pictures "the church in faith, in charity, and its power." (P. P. 1-3) The Lord's disciples and their immediate successors - the early Christians - were in faith and charity, and through them, Christianity spread with power all over Europe. It went westward and northward and southward. But gradually the spirit of love to the Lord, the desire to be led by Him, was destroyed by the influence of faith alone. This is the goat that destroyed the ram. (A. 4169; E. 212) From this ram proceed the horns that produced such havoc. They represent kings and kingdoms, according to the interpretation given by Gabriel. These signify the powerful arguments that proceed from this principle of faith alone. The most harmful are such as prove the impossibility of keeping the commandments of the Lord. These desecrate the temple of the Lord. They destroy all worship of Him, and violate the most direct teaching in the Word. The Lord continually pleads with people to keep the commandments. He would not have asked us to do this without giving us adequate power to do it. The selfish tendency in the external person is to live in ease and luxury without labor. Many labor simply to gain this selfish object. Likewise the selfish tendency of the soul is to gain heaven without labor. Many labor to do good simply that they may merit heaven. (Matt. 25:44) The spirit of faith alone must be conquered in every Christian. Its doom is sealed when we shun evils in our natural self as sins against God. This effects the Lord's advent in humanity. It is foretold by Gabriel. (Verse 16; Luke 1:26)

The angel Gabriel who spoke with Daniel and with Zacharias and Mary may have been a particular angel in heaven. (H. 255) If so, he did not speak for himself or from himself but for and from a society in heaven whose ministry it is "to teach from the Word, that Jehovah came into the world, and that the human which He took there is 'the Son of God,' and Divine...They who are in this ministry are called Gabriels." (R. 548; H. 52)

Daniel fainted and was sick after the vision. (Verse 27) The "end of the Church" depicted in the vision "is a sad time." (P. P.) It is a sore experience to come under the influence of the spirit of faith alone. The cure is to be up and work for the king. "Afterward I rose up, and did the king's business." This action suggests the cure for many a heart pang—live less for self, and more for others.

## Lesson 53

### Ezra 1:3 (Historical): Return of the Captives from Babylon

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

The captives in Babylon had been encouraged by promises that they should some day go back to their own land. The time came when Cyrus, king of Persia, took Babylon, and soon after gave the Jews leave to go home. He told them to rebuild the temple which had been in ruins many years, and gave them back the gold and silver dishes and instruments which had been taken from the temple and brought to Babylon. Not all the captives went. Many of them were living comfortably in Babylon and preferred to stay. But a large company went, and many who did not go helped those who went with gifts.

They came to Jerusalem, and what a dreary sight it was - the city and temple still in ruins. When they started to build, they were hindered by other people of the land. There was a long delay in getting to work upon the temple. But they built the altar and began once more to make offerings on it. Do you remember the large altar in the court before the temple, where the fire was always burning and where offerings were made? At last the foundation of the temple was laid. There was rejoicing, and there was loud weeping by the old men who remembered the beautiful temple before it was destroyed.

After a time, the people in Jerusalem were helped by the coming of others from Babylon. One company was led by Ezra. He had made much study of the Scriptures and the law, and helped the people with the temple and the worship. The book called Ezra tells about the hard work and the dangers of the people trying to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, and about Ezra's coming to help them. Tell the children what you find in Ezra 1, and read to them Ezra 3:10-13. Tell also about the setting out and journey of Ezra and his company, as you find it in Ezra 8:15, 21-23, 31-32. I find in Ezra the names of two prophets of the Lord: Haggai and Zechariah, who encouraged the people in their rebuilding of the temple and the city. Sometime soon we must find the words of these prophets in the Bible and see what they spoke from the Lord.

## **Junior**

What promises do you remember which cheered the captives in Babylon with the hope of coming back some day to their own land? There are such promises in Isa. 40, Jer. 29, and Ezek. 34, and many more. The time had come for the deliverance. We have learned already in a prophecy the name of the deliverer. (Isa. 44:28; 45:1) We learn some facts about the return of the captives and about the hard work which they had in rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple, in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Today, we learn what we can from Ezra about the return and the rebuilding.

Who is Cyrus, who is mentioned in the first verse of Ezra, and in the prophecy of Isaiah? We have met his name also in Dan. 1:21. Cyrus was the ruler of Media and Persia, who took Babylon and gave the Jews permission to return to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. The very language of the decree of Cyrus is given us in Ezra 6:1-6, for the decree had been kept among the rolls, and when search was made by King Darius, it was found. The later verses of Ezra 1 tell about precious vessels from the temple in Jerusalem. We read in 2 Kings 24:13 and 25:1 of the taking of these vessels by Nebuchadnezzar's soldiers. We read in Dan. 5:1-4 of the irreverent use of the holy dishes; and now we read that Cyrus gave them to the captives to take back to the temple. Those who went carried other treasures given to help them by Jews who preferred to stay in Babylon. Picture the desolation that they found on coming to Jerusalem. How long had it been in ruins? The first thing rebuilt was the altar, so that offerings could be made. Then the foundation of the temple was laid. Ezra tells us of the rejoicing and the weeping of the people. (Ezra 3:10-13) Why the weeping? Compare Hag. 2:3, 9.

Besides the great labor of rebuilding the ruined temple and city, there was hindrance in the work from people of the land, chiefly from the district of Samaria. Remember that many people of that district were brought by the Assyrians from distant places. The Jews never recognized them as brethren. (2 Kings 17:24-34) You see in Ezra 4:2, 9-10, that these were the people who chiefly made the trouble. When the Jewish captives returned, these people offered to help them. Their help was refused, and then they hindered the Jews in their rebuilding in every way they could, especially by sending complaints to the Persian king. You can read in Ezra 6 how such complaints were settled when Darius had search made among the records and found the original decree of Cyrus. Darius confirmed it, and gave the people further aid.

There were hindrances, but there were also helps to the rebuilding. Two prophets are mentioned in Ezra 5:1, who brought strength and courage from the Lord. Also two men came with help from Babylon: Ezra the scribe, of whom we are learning especially today, and Nehemiah the statesman, of whom we shall learn next Sunday. Read the account in Ezra 1 of the first return of the captives; and read in Ezra 8:15, 21-23, 31-32, of Ezra's own coming with more helpers.

We read more in Neh. 8 of Ezra's public teaching of the laws of worship, after the city wall was built and order was established by Nehemiah.

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

We are taking two lessons from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which are not books of the Divine Word. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are regarded by scholars as belonging with the Chronicles, which also are not part of the Word. The lack of spiritual and religious quality in Ezra and Nehemiah is noticed by many readers, but they have an interest, for they help to connect the earlier history of the Jews with the history to follow, and they give a background which helps in the understanding of the later prophets, especially Haggai and Zechariah. Besides reading for this historical help which Ezra gives, it may be useful with this lesson to turn over the pages of the Old Testament, noting books which are of the Lord's Word and books which are not. Make sure also that we understand the principle by which in the New Church the two classes of books are distinguished, namely, that books of the Word have a continuous spiritual sense, and in fact infinite depths of meaning which other books have not. "The books of the Word are all those which have an internal sense: but they which have not, are not the Word." The books of the Word in the Old Testament are the five books of Moses, the book of Joshua, the book of Judges, the two books of Samuel, the two books of Kings, the Psalms of David, the four major and twelve minor Prophets; and in the New Testament, the four Gospels and the Revelation. (A. 10325)

In our glance at the books of the Old Testament, some question may have arisen in regard to the book of Job. Swedenborg calls it a book of the Ancient Church, and he quotes it often as illustrating correspondences and the use of natural symbols to express spiritual ideas. It shows the knowledge of correspondences that was familiar to the Ancient Church and the use of correspondences which they made in their writings, but there is not the continuous spiritual meaning relating to Divine things that marks a book of the Divine Word. See statements in regard to Job in A. 3540; E. 543, 740, which throw much light upon the distinction between books of the Word and books not of the Word.

Should we use the terms "Word" and "Bible" with precisely the same meaning?

### **Lesson 54**

### **Nehemiah 1:2 (Historical): Rebuilding the City Walls**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Some of you have a picture of a man on horseback riding out from Jerusalem at night to see the ruins of the walls and gates, for the walls had long ago been broken down and still lay in ruins, and the doors of the gates had been burned. This was Nehemiah, who had been sent by the king of Persia and Babylon to be governor in Jerusalem and to stir the people up to build the city walls. Nehemiah was an officer of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, at Suza (Shushan) to the east of Babylon. His brother had come from Jerusalem and told him how sad things were there and how the city was still in ruins. It made Nehemiah very sad, till the king noticed it and Nehemiah told him why

he was so sad. The king did what Nehemiah wished. He sent him to Jerusalem to help on the work. He gave him a guard of horsemen for the journey, and gave him letters to the governors of the country west of the Euphrates River, directing them to give him help, and especially to the keeper of the king's forest to give him wood for the gates and for timbers. So Nehemiah came to Jerusalem, and after three days, he rode out at night to see the ruined walls.

Nehemiah was a good governor and leader for the work. He stirred the people up to build the city walls, and people from other towns came to help them. But there were enemies who tried in every way to hinder, and the people while they worked on the walls had always to be armed and on their guard against attack. But at last the work was done, and they marched in two processions around the walls, going in opposite directions. One procession was led by Nehemiah, and the other by our old friend Ezra. Yes, Ezra was still there, and now that the walls were built and Nehemiah ruled the people well, Ezra could teach the laws of worship, of the Sabbath, and of the feasts, as he could not do before Nehemiah came.

The two leaders worked together, Ezra for the temple and the worship, Nehemiah for the city walls and the good order of the city.

## **Junior**

Read the thought that I have given the younger children about Nehemiah. Then if you look at the book of Nehemiah, you will see other important things that I have not told them. Especially you find much about Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, who were leagued together as enemies of Nehemiah and of the people working to rebuild Jerusalem. We see from Nehemiah 4:1-2 that Sanballat had some position in Samaria. He represented the same hostility of the Samaritans toward the Jews, which we learned in Ezra developed when the first captives returned to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple and their help was refused. (Ezra 4) This becomes more important when it helps us to understand the unfriendliness of Jews and Samaritans and their separate places of worship which we find in the Gospel days. (John 4:9, 20) At first, these enemies represented that the rebuilding of the city was with the purpose of rebelling against the king. Then they ridiculed the work, saying that a fox could knock down the wall that they were building. They then planned an attack upon the workers so that Nehemiah's people working on the wall must always be armed. (Neh. 4:17-18) They tried to lead Nehemiah into a conference with evil purpose. They conspired with false prophets in Jerusalem. But the work of building the walls went bravely and steadily on, and was finished. We read of the celebration and the processions led by Nehemiah and Ezra in Neh. 12.

The strengthening of the city and the good rule of Nehemiah gave Ezra a freer opportunity for teaching the Scriptures and the laws of worship to the people. (Neh. 8) We find them especially keeping the feast of tabernacles, the autumn thanksgiving feast, in which the people for seven days lived in booths of leafy branches, on the housetops and in the city squares and temple courts, as prescribed in Lev. 23:33-44 but neglected since the days of Joshua. (Neh. 8:14-18) This feast of tabernacles the people were still keeping in Gospel days.

We have still to read the words of the prophets sent by the Lord to strengthen the people in rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple. Do you remember the prophets' names? Can you find them in the Bible?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Our purpose in this glance at the books of Ezra and Nehemiah is to make acquaintance of books not of the Lord's Word but preserved in His providence in the Bible. They help to give historical connection between the Old Testament and the New, and especially to give us the background of the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah.

Have you considered the spiritual significance of the captivity in Babylon and the return and rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple? There are abundant references to the captivity in books that are of the Lord's Word and have the deeper spiritual meaning. The taking of captives to Babylon is described in 2 Kings 24 and 25. The captivity is described in Psalms, as in Ps. 137, and is continually present in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. It is mentioned also in the genealogy of our Lord in Matt. 1:17.

We gave some thought to the captivity of Judah in Babylon in connection with the taking captive of Israel by Assyria. Israel as a kingdom of the Holy Land represents the understanding, and the kingdom of Judah the will in a spiritual life. We recognize Assyria, representing a proud and self-confident rationality, as the special enemy of Israel, the spiritual understanding; and Babylon, representing self-love and love of rule, as the special enemy of Judah, the heavenly affection. The instances of blasphemous pride in Daniel give a vivid picture of the extent to which self-love can go. The seventy years may suggest the complete destruction of spiritual affection. But what of the many promises of the Lord's remembrance and of return from the land of captivity? Remember the tender words by Jeremiah to the captives, "Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart." (Jer. 29:13) It is plain that the captivity of seventy years may describe a thorough humbling of the soul through temptations from the love of self, through experience in its fiery furnace and its den of lions, resulting in a return to spiritual life, humbler and wiser than before. We shall recognize this thought in the saying of Haggai "that the glory of the latter house should be greater than of the former." (Hag. 2:3, 9) Read interesting statements about the meaning of the captivity, in A. 393, 728; E. 403.

For one illustration of the meaning of the captivity and the restoration, think of the reference to the captivity in the genealogy in Matthew. This genealogy is often thought of as describing the qualities of human nature which the Lord inherited in being born of a human being. Doubtless it does contain this thought, but it is more important as describing the building up of a human nature through learning and doing the Divine truth, in which the Divine love could dwell with humanity. The generations from Abraham to David are the steps of learning and obeying the Divine truth in childhood; the generations from David until the carrying away into Babylon are the steps of learning and obedience taken in years of rational development; and the generations from the carrying away into Babylon to Christ are the steps taken in the most loving reception of truth and obedience to truth, when through severest temptations all pride and self-love were thoroughly resisted and overcome. That each of these periods was fourteen generations describes the completeness with which the Lord accomplished the work of learning and obeying the Divine truth in childhood, youth, and manhood.

We enjoy especially in learning of the building and dedication of Solomon's temple the thought that the temple represents the Lord in His Humanity, the perfect dwelling-place of the Divine with humanity. We may have this same thought in relation to the temple rebuilt, of which Haggai speaks. And we find the Lord in the Gospels accepting a still later temple as the symbol of Himself. (E. 220)

## Lesson 55

### Hosea 5; 6: "Come and Let Us Return"

#### HISTORICAL STUDY

The book of Hosea is the first of the twelve books which constitute "the minor or lesser prophets." These twelve are gathered into one volume or roll among the Hebrews and are known by the common title Book of the Twelve. The Latins were the first to designate them "The Minor Prophets," "on account of their brevity as compared with those who are called the Major because of their ampler volumes." (Augustine) This title has now become common in most modern languages. Hosea is there the first of the twelve. Historically, however, Amos comes first. He prophesied in the days of Uzziah and Jeroboam, about 760 B.C. (Amos 1:1) But Hosea takes us down to a later date. He lived "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel." (Hos. 1:1) There is no indication in the book of Amos that he prophesied subsequent to the reign of Jeroboam II. But there is strong evidence that Hosea did. Chapter 1:4 was apparently written in the days of Jeroboam II for it predicts the fall of the house of Jehu. Jeroboam II was the fourth ruler of that house, and the prediction was fulfilled in his son Zechariah who was slain only six months after he became king by his successor Shallum. (2 Kings 15:10, 12) The kingdom of Israel was then in a state of anarchy. Shallum reigned only one month when he was in turn assassinated by Menahem. (2 Kings 15:13-14) This occurred about the year 748 B.C. Hosea evidently wrote the latter chapters of his prophecy in this restless period, or during the reign of Menahem. (See Hos. 7:7; 8:3-4; 10:3, 7, 15; 13:10-11) These were brutal times when kings were massacred, and in turn cut down all who refused to support them. (2 Kings 15:16) Little wonder that Menahem could not retain his position without the aid of a foreign power. Thus, when Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, invaded the land, Menahem bought his support with a thousand talents, which he raised by taxing the people. As the vassal of Assyria, he continued to hold the throne. Hosea refers to this covenant in 10:6 and 12:1 but declares that Assyria cannot save the kingdom. (Hos. 14:3) Assyria never lost her hold over Israel from that time. Menahem reigned over Israel ten years. Pekahiah his son followed him on the throne of Israel in 738 B.C. In two years, civil war broke out again. Pekah murdered Pekahiah. Then Pekah in 734 B.C. allied with Rezin, king of Syria, attacked Ahaz, king of Judah. Ahaz appealed to Assyria. Tiglath-pileser captured Damascus and ended the Syrian kingdom. At the same time, he warred against Israel and carried away many of the people captive. (2 Kings 15:23; 16:5) More internal warfare followed in Israel. Pekah was killed by Hoshea, who took the throne as a vassal of Assyria. Soon, however, Hoshea conspired against Assyria and turned to Egypt for help. (2 Kings 17:3-4) Shalmaneser then dethroned and imprisoned him. Then followed the three years' siege of Samaria, which fell before Sargon, Shalmaneser's successor, in 722 B.C. The ten tribes were transported to the east and scattered in all directions.

Thus, in the days of Hosea, the nation was fast approaching its doom. Its sins were the cause of its ruin. Hosea is no less condemnatory of these sins than Amos. He does not particularize so much the sins of the wealthy, as Amos does. The sins which Hosea singles out are those of violence, licentiousness, the heart that knows not its Maker, and a degenerate priesthood. His charge against the people is summed up in the words, "There is no truth, nor loving kindness, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing and lying and killing and stealing and adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood." (Hos. 4:1-2) Violence is universal. Israel devours its rulers. (Hos. 7:7) The princes are revolters. (Hos. 9:25) The priests even aid and abet open murder. (Hos. 6:8-9) Thieves break in, and troops of robbers raid without. (Hos. 7:1) Licentiousness and idolatry are rampant. (Hos. 4:11-12, 17) The people know not their Lord. (Hos. 5:4; 4:6) The nation is ripe for punishment. Hosea continually speaks of its immanence, but he does not clearly see whence it is to come. He suggests that they will be cast away and become wanderers among the nations, hints that the Assyrian will be their future king, and predicts the terrors of that day. (Hos. 9:17; 11:5; 13:16) The evils of his day were more present to him than the enemy who was to inflict punishment. Yet he foresees the impending fall of the nation, and beyond that in the far future, the Lord's purposes of restoring it, and healing their backsliding. His stern, severe judgments are born of his personal contact with his countrymen: his predictions of their restoration spring from his trust in the Divine promises. (Gen. 13:15; 17:8)

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The meaning of the two chapters in Hosea is made clearer when we know that Ephraim represents the understanding of the Word. "The quality of the church with man is according to his understanding of the Word." (T. 243) In a similar manner, the extent of people's usefulness is limited or determined by their knowledge of their business or profession. Little knowledge gives little power; much knowledge opens the way to great possibilities. Success is dependent upon the right understanding of the work; failure follows misunderstanding. Apply this to the subject of life. True success in life depends first upon the right understanding of what the Word teaches, what the Lord requires us to do. How serious a matter it is when someone misunderstands the Word! This is what Hosea refers to. He is addressing those who temporarily or permanently falsify the truth. (T. 237) The real cause of the falsification is that "they will not frame their doings to turn unto their God." (Hos. 5:4) We love our old evil habits and seek to excuse them. Then again, in our distresses, a voice comes from our guardian angels signifying that we are not looking at our situation from the right standpoint. We listen to the voice of truth which presents the other, the eternal side, and we penitently cry out, "Come, and let us return unto the Lord, and He will revive us." But our constancy is short-lived. The evil spirits again get control over us. We wish to excuse our backsliding. "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away." (Hos. 6:4) How faithfully these chapters portray the rapid fluctuations from evil to good, and good to evil, that go on in the mind when tried and tempted! How clearly we recognize our propensity in turns to accept and reject the truth! "The Lord desires loving kindness and not sacrifice [mere external goodness]; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." (Hos. 6:6) This is the issue of

our struggles; but it is a long time before we reach it, before we are ready wholly to lose our own life that we may find a different life in the Lord.

## Lesson 56

### Hosea 11; 14: I Will Heal Their Backsliding

#### HISTORICAL STUDY

The prophet Amos, as we shall see, belonged to Tekoa in Judah but was sent by the Lord to prophesy to Israel. We cannot tell to which kingdom Hosea belonged. From the exclusive way in which he speaks of Israel, it appears as if he were a native of the north. All the places mentioned by him are in Israel, such as Jezreel, Gilgal, Gibeah, Shechem, Samaria, Mizpah in Gilead, Tabor in Galilee, Lebanon, Ramah, and Bethel. It is worthy of note too that the word Ephraim occurs thirty-seven times. This is specially characteristic of his prophecy, and a key note to the understanding of it. (T. 247) On the other hand, Jerusalem is not referred to once. Amos and Hosea both prophesy to Israel. Their messages are, however, quite distinct. The leading feature of Amos' prophecy is the emphasis that he places upon the inevitable judgment which the Lord will bring upon Israel for their sins. "I will punish you for your iniquities: prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (Amos 3:2; 4:12) is the burden of his teaching. It is condemnation without mercy. Hosea condemns the nation in equally strong terms. His indictment is just as severe as that of his contemporary. But he also gives expression to the Lord's pity for the sufferers. Amos expresses sympathy for the poor of the land who were trodden under foot by their wealthy brethren, but not a word does he say on behalf of the fallen nation hastening to its doom. Hosea lays equal stress upon the love of the Lord, how that love is affected by the waywardness of His people. This is especially noticeable in chapter 11. Another marked distinction between the two prophets lies in their treatment of the restoration. Amos closes with the simple statement of the fact. (Amos 9:11-15) He does not say how it is to be accomplished. But what is taken for granted in reading Amos is most touchingly expressed by Hosea. The restoration follows the repentance of Israel. (Hos. 14) The messages then are distinctly different, as different as were the two men. Each of them was chosen by the Lord for that which he was qualified to furnish toward the completeness of His own Divine Word.

In Hos. 11:2, it is said that the people "sacrificed unto Baalim." These Baals were idols who represented the lords of the land. The word Baal means lord or master. When the children of Israel entered the land of Canaan, they were dependent upon the fruits of the soil for their maintenance. The heathen tribes who lived there worshiped Baalim whom they supposed able to control the crops. The Israelites readily followed their example, thereby manifesting their lack of trust in the Lord. This is especially clear from Hosea. (Read Hos. 2:6-13; "her lovers" are the Baalim.) "She [Israel] did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and her gold."

The reference in Hos. 11:4 to "lifting up the yoke on their jaws, and gently giving them to eat," is probably to the loosening of the yoke on the team of oxen after a hard pull, and feeding them, patting them gently, full of thankfulness for their patient labor. It furnishes a beautiful analogy of the Lord's treatment of His people in temptation.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Chapter 11 reveals to us that touch of Divine sympathy in our Heavenly Father which He holds toward frail humanity. There is no less love in the relentless condemnation spoken through Amos. The stern voice of truth is needed at times to awaken us from spiritual lethargy. At other times, however, we need to realize the "love that will not let us go," to strengthen the weak heart that clings helplessly to the Divine mercy. The knowledge that the Lord's love and patience cannot be exhausted renews our strength to persevere even when we are in the greatest distress—most conscious of our weaknesses, and the way in which these affect the Lord Our Savior.

The first verse of chapter 11 describes the beginning of spiritual life, an experience upon which we can all look back with satisfaction. As the prophets point Israel to the Lord's mercy in leading it out of Egypt, so the Lord now directs our attention to His goodness toward us in opening to us the heavenward path. Then our love is warm and full. But soon our interest wanes. "The more they were called, the more they went from Me." (Hos. 11:2) Then follows the worship of selfish and worldly ideals. In verse 3, the Lord describes how He cares for us, opening our understanding of the Word, supporting our weakness, and healing the ill effects of stumbling in the way. He treats us like children who often do wrong and suffer through ignorance. But even as children fail to appreciate what their parents do for them in saving them from the consequences of their mistakes, so do we lose sight of the Lord's kindness to us in healing our iniquities. "They knew not that I healed them." What thankless creatures we are! "Though I have redeemed them, yet have they spoken lies against Me." (Hos. 7:13) "I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness - they went to Baal-peor, and separated themselves unto shame." (Hos. 9:10) How little do we realize that the Lord feels and is pained by our perversity! Surely He is not indifferent when we do wrong! No parent who loves his or her children is indifferent when they go astray. The greater the love for the children and the keener the sense of wrong done by them, the greater the suffering on their account. Human pain caused by the wrong doing of others is often mixed with anxiety. This does not exist in the Lord, for He knows the issue, and works accordingly for the ultimate good of all. If children knew how their parents suffer when they do wrong, they would, if they love their parents, be more ready to give up their own way and do right. So if we could know and feel how it pains the Lord to see us bent on backsliding (Hos. 11:7), we would surely respond more readily to His will. How encouraging it is to feel that no degree of perversity on our part can ever shake His love for us. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim; how surrender thee, O Israel."" (Hos. 11:8) And He is ready to forgive at any moment, on the very slightest indication of repentance. "I will not execute the fierceness of Mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim, for I am God and not man." (Hos. 11:9)

The subsequent chapters (Hos. 12 and 13) again attack the evils in humanity, especially those consequent upon the misunderstanding of the Word arising from evil doing (Ephraim). But the fourteenth chapter again resounds with the unquenchable love of the Lord manifested in the richest gifts to His repentant children. What will not the Lord do to those who return unto Him? Through ignorance, thoughtlessness, and willfulness we fall. We reach the lowest depths of distress, depicted in Israel's captivity. We have slowly been gathering courage to renounce all that is selfish in spirit and wrongful in act. Now when we see all we are ready to renounce all, "and take words and return unto the Lord." (Hos. 14:2) We are prepared to acknowledge that all life is

from Him. Neither reasoning from self, nor self-derived intelligence can avail us any longer: nor shall we glory any more in our deeds. The Lord giveth us the power to do good. (Hos. 14:3; Deut. 8:16-17) How beautiful the promise of the life from the Lord freed from further oppression! "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for Mine anger is turned away from him." (Hos. 14:4) This refers to Ephraim. It pictures the state of people who have learned to take their understanding of the Word from the Lord, instead of following the dictates of their own will. And the words in which the blessing is framed all express qualities of a pure understanding of truth, namely, dew, lily, Lebanon (the rational), branches, beauty, corn, and vine. Ephraim's last confession, "I am like a green fir tree" (after parting with all idolatry), gives utterance to the perception on our part that when cleansed of pride in self-derived intelligence, our thoughts from the Lord are perennially fresh. The force of the phrase, "From Me is thy fruit found," lies in the word "fruit," the Hebrew for which is piri, from which the word Ephraim is taken. Ephraim means fruitful. "From Me is thy fruit found" means here, all intelligence is from the Lord alone. "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein." (Hos. 14:9)

## Lesson 57

### Joel: Judgment Foretold

#### HISTORICAL STUDY

Students of the prophets have been unable to assign a definite date to the book of Joel, as they have done, for example, to the books of Hosea and Amos. The reason is the paucity and vagueness of historical references. If written about the time of Hosea or Amos, then it contains no reference to the Assyrians. Nor does Joel mention Babylon. These two great nations were so prominent between 760 and 537 B.C. in their relations to Israel, that it seems hardly possible for anyone to write within that period and not mention either nation. Hence, some critics place the date of Joel's prophecy before 760 B.C., while others assign it to varying dates subsequent to the fall of Babylon, 537 B.C. There is not sufficient evidence to prove conclusively the one date or the other. But this is a matter of little moment. Its place in prophecy, however, is manifestly contemporaneous with Hosea and Amos, or pre-exilic. The strength of the prophecy is lost if we take it as belonging to any other time. For it is a prediction of the portending judgment. Surely it should be quite possible for a prophet in these days to be assured that a judgment awaits his people on account of their sinfulness, without referring to the particular sins (like Amos and Hosea), or the instrument to effect the judgment, but simply placing all emphasis upon the terrible nature of that judgment. This is just what Joel has done, and this also distinguishes his prophecy from the rest. He accentuates the horrors of the judgment, and says nothing about the cause or the instrument. To describe these horrors, he resorts to a great plague of locusts for an analogy. It is probable that he witnessed such a plague. At any rate, his description of the hordes devouring everything in their way and assailing the holy city - making allowance for his use of poetic hyperbole - is not considered overdrawn. The prophet uses several of the names given to locusts in Hebrew (Joel 1:4), evidently to describe more fully the destructive power of the insect. They are called palmerworm, locust, cankerworm, and caterpillar. The root meanings of the four words are respectively, to cut off, to be many, to lick or lap, and to devour. As they refer to the

same insect - the locust - they might be translated "the shearer, the swarmer, the lapper, and the devourer." The locust is a fit instrument to produce a plague. Its saw-like teeth attack everything that comes in its way. Its voracity is incredible. It proceeds in immense numbers. One African traveler says, "For the space of ten miles on each side of the Sea Cow River and eighty or ninety miles in length, the whole surface might literally be said to be covered with locusts." Another writer on South Africa says that "the whole air, to twelve or even eighteen feet above the ground is filled with the insects, reddish brown in body, with bright gauzy wings: - myriads of insects that blot out the sun above, and cover the ground beneath, and fill the air whichever way one looks. The breeze carries them swiftly past, but they come on in fresh clouds, each of them a harmless creature which you can catch and crush in your hand, but appalling in their power of collective devastation." They are worst in very hot summers, followed frequently by great drought and forest fires. Now read the description in Joel 1:2-10. Their work of devastation should surely waken the drunkards. It should cause mourning because it has cut off the daily offering, the symbol of the Lord's presence in worship. It has wasted their lands. It is also accompanied by destroying fires that affect the supplies for their cattle. It is a sad day: a picture of the day of the Lord, the day of judgment. The description of the havoc following the pest is continued in chapter 2. At 2:18, however, we read that the Lord had pity on the people. They are promised a release from the plague and restoration of their harvests, and after that a great manifestation of the Holy Spirit. (Joel 2:28-32) In connection with this passage, read Acts 2:14-21. The signs, the sun turned into darkness and the moon into blood, which were not fulfilled literally, were almost identical with those predicted for the second coming. (Matt. 24:29) Work out the significance of the symbolism: the sun being a type of love to the Lord, and the moon faith in Him. Joel 3 deals with the judgment upon the heathen which is to take place in the valley of Jehoshaphat. It is also called the vale of decision. (Verse 14) Jehoshaphat means "Jehovah judges." The name therefore is symbolic, though probably the subject for the picture of it was supplied to Joel in the valley of the Kedron, which is sometimes called the valley of Jehoshaphat. Tyre, Zidon, and Philistia shall suffer because they robbed the Jews and sold them into slavery. Egypt and Edom shall suffer for shedding innocent blood. The book closes with a beautiful picture of the restoration.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The chief feature of the book of Joel is the judgment awaiting Israel typified by the plague of locusts. "The day of Jehovah is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come." (Joel 1:15) "Locusts signify falsity from evil in the outmost things - falsities which are in the outmosts in man, and which are more earthly and corporeal than all other falsities; and by which men can be easily deceived and seduced." (A. 7643) They signify such falsities "as are with those who have become sensuous, and who see and judge all things from fallacies." (I.) Fallacious sensuous judgment! How easy it is to judge wrongly from appearances, in science, morals, manners, and even Divine truth as expressed in the letter of the Word! How easy to be misled! When we have misjudged another according to appearances and given open expression to our judgment or opinion, we do not always relish correction. (Work out an illustration.) If we refuse to admit correction and argue against it, the fallacy then springs from evil. How serious a matter this is when it affects the truth taught in the Word - not theoretical truth but living truth. This is the

theme of Joel's prophecy. Sinfulness creates the appearances that lay waste all the beautiful and useful ideas of conceptions in the garden of the mind. They destroy worship of the Lord. The devouring fire accompanying the plague is the picture of the consuming evil passion back of the appearance. This passion causes the good affections to suffer, and destroys the perception of truth (the trees of the field). What a day of darkness it is! The light of truth is cut off; love and faith in the Lord are blotted out of the soul. Yet after the righteous have suffered trial on account of their tendencies to give way to this evil, the soul of the regenerating person will be purified. Tyre and Zidon and Philistia, representing those in false knowledges, shall be judged. The spirit of judging by appearances readily takes hold of the knowledges of truth in the Word to support it, and scatters the good—"My silver and gold." (Joel 3:5) This tendency must be laid bare and condemned. We must fight against it to the death. (Verses 9-14) This we acknowledge as the Lord's work. He is the judge (verses 16, 17), who will thus remove all falsifications of the truth, and will restore the soul to its original purity. (Verses 18-21) It is useless to depend upon our own judgment for determining what is true and what is false. We can make whatever we please appear true or false according to our will. We must therefore resort to revelation - the Divine Word - for guidance, seek the truth from the Lord for the purpose of cleansing the life, and the Lord will grant the insight and the power to keep it. The restoration promised after the captivity is the picture of victory after temptation, when "captivity is led captive."

## **Lesson 58**

### **Amos 5: Insufferable Social Injustices**

#### **THE TIMES OF AMOS**

We remember that just before the revolt of the ten tribes, in the days of Solomon, the kingdom of Israel was at its zenith. King David had subdued all Israel's enemies, and had extended the borders of the land from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates (Gen. 15:18; I Kings 4:21), and there was peace in the land. But after the disruption, the nation rapidly declined. We recall the stern words of Elijah and Elisha. Now we come to the days of Amos. About forty years (798-760 B.C.) elapsed between the time of Elisha and that of Amos. But in this short period, important changes took place in Israel.

During the lifetime of Elisha, the nation suffered great losses. The Syrians under Hazael and Benhadad seized all territory beyond Jordan and some cities on the western side of it. Israel was greatly reduced in strength and consequently suffered also by the Moabite raids. (2 Kings 10:32-33; 13:3, 7, 20, 22) The nation appeared to be on the brink of destruction. But the end was not yet. A great revival was about to take place before the final decline. Jehoash recovered the cities taken from the hand of his father Jehoahaz by the Syrians. (2 Kings 13:25) Then followed Jeroboam II with greater victories. (2 Kings 14:25-28) He restored the border of Israel from Hamath between the Lebanons to the Dead Sea and eastward to Damascus. At the same time, Uzziah (Azariah) extended the bounds of Judah. So that during the reigns of these two long-lived kings, Jeroboam II and Uzziah, Israel enjoyed greater security, prosperity, and peace than they had known since the days of Solomon.

The Book of Kings does not refer to this great change. But when we turn to the contemporary documents of Amos and Hosea, we see how greatly the nation has advanced in civilization. The Books of Kings are little more than a record of the succession of rulers in the land. They view the history of the nation from the standpoint of the kings. But the books of the prophets treat the times from the people's standpoint. They furnish a real history of the nation. Amos and Hosea tell us faithfully how the people were affected by their increased prosperity. The primitive simplicity and equality had now disappeared to give place "to restlessness, greed and the indifference to the poor of a community making haste to be rich."

Note now some of the leading characteristics of the age as depicted by Amos. "The luxury of the rich was conspicuous. They had their winter and summer residences (Amos 3:13) which were built of hewn stone, paneled with ivory, and furnished with couches (Amos 5:11; 3:15; 6:4) where they feasted and drank to excess amid delicate perfumes, and soft strains of varied music (Amos 6:4-6). But these luxuries were obtained by means which Amos bluntly calls violence and robbery (Amos 3:10); by oppression of the poor and needy, who were even sold as slaves by their remorseless creditors (Amos 2:6-8); by dishonest trading, by false weights and worthless goods (Amos 8:4-6); by exacting presents and taking bribes (Amos 5:11-12). Engrossed with their own pleasures, the rich showed a callous indifference to the moral ruin of their country (Amos 6:6)." (Kirkpatrick) These are some of the serious charges made by the prophet against the people of his time, and forcibly describe how degenerate they had become.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

It is a lamentation or dirge over the fallen state of the house of Israel, and an appeal to seek the Lord, and live. Sad indeed is the state of Israel. She is fallen, and none left to raise her up. "The city that goeth forth a thousand shall have an hundred left; and she that goeth forth an hundred shall have left ten for the house of Israel." (Amos 5:3) She shall be depleted by war. Still sadder is her condition when she turns so heartlessly away from judgment and justice (verses 7, 10). What a weighty burden of sinfulness she has to bear (verses 11, 12), so that the prudent are rendered dumb (verse 13). Steeped in such sinfulness, her worship cannot be acceptable to the Lord (verses 21-23). She has been faithful in her worship in the wilderness, but now gone over to idol worship, which is the outward expression of her evils (verses 25, 26). Therefore, judgment is certain (verse 27). Still, an earnest appeal is made to seek good and not evil; to hate the evil and love the good; to establish justice, moral and civil, in her midst; to let judgment run down like waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream (verses 4, 6, 14, 15, 24).

We do not need to go very deeply beneath the surface for a lesson. The words are as applicable to the church - to Christians - today as they were to the Jews 2600 years ago. Everywhere we observe a gross abuse of the invaluable privileges and opportunities which modern civilization and wealth offer to all. We have here a powerful condemnation of oppression of the poor, bribery, luxury. We are all responsible for being absolutely just in dispensing that which is committed to our care. We cannot place all the guilt of oppression of the poor on the wealthy. We can surely find out ways in which we indulge our lustful appetites in little things, quite unconscious of the far-reaching consequences. The prophet appeals to us for a keener sense of justice and duty, for more

kindness and consideration for the poor, for a stronger hatred of evil in every form. But especially does he remind us to look to the Lord as the source of life; otherwise, we must perish. "Seek ye Me, and ye shall live" (Amos 5:4).

## Lesson 59

### Amos 7, 8: A Famine for the Words of the Lord

#### THE STORY

##### Junior

The Lord used a man named Amos to declare His message to the sons of Israel in the days of Jeroboam II, about the year 760 B.C. The personality of this man appears in the book through its language and personal references. These characteristics help toward a better understanding of the message he was called to deliver. The prophet belonged to Tekoa, and was a herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit (Amos 1:1; 7:14). Tekoa is twelve miles south from Jerusalem. Locate Bethlehem first. It is six miles south from Jerusalem. Now pass onwards to Tekoa, and you reach a wild desert in which by night the wild beasts howl. Beyond this, looking eastward, rolls the land of Jeshimon, or Devastation, which stretches over a sea of hills and disappears down the precipitous cliffs overlooking the bleak and barren Dead Sea. In this wild country, Amos herded a peculiar breed of desert sheep still highly valued for the excellence of their wool. He was also a dresser of sycamores. This tree is easily grown in sandy soil with little water. Its "fruit is like a small fig, with a sweet but watery taste, and is eaten only by the poor. Born not of fresh twigs, but of the trunk and older branches, the sluggish lumps are provoked to ripen by pinching or bruising, which seems to be the literal meaning of the term that Amos uses of himself - a pincher of sycamores." His home then was in the desert. He was a herdsman, and dresser of sycamores. He was "no prophet, nor son of a prophet." He was not educated in the schools of the prophets. The Lord simply "took him from behind the flock" to deliver His message to Israel. Hence that message bears many traces of the school in which he was brought up - the lonesome desert. His opening words are, "Jehovah roareth from Zion" (Amos 1:2). He speaks of the lion roaring in the forest over his prey, the snares set for the birds, the alarm sounding in the desert town, and the shepherd saving the remnants of the lion's prey out of its very mouth (Amos 3:4-6, 8, 12). He refers to nature's processes as one well acquainted with them (Amos 4:13; 9:5-6). How often also in the silent watches of the night must he have noticed the Pleiades (the seven stars) and Orion (Amos 5:8)! And now we picture this desert man go up to Bethel and behold there especially the evils of the rich and the false worship of the people. He is possessed by the Spirit of the Lord, and condemns the nation. "The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy? You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore will I visit your iniquities upon you. Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (Amos 3:2, 8; 4:12). This is the burden of his message, its final outcome. As a father sees his child disobey his voice, and foretells the consequence that must surely follow perversity, so the prophet perceives the inevitable result of indifference to the will of God. The sinful nation is doomed; its doom too is imminent. Amos does not say definitely how the punishment is to be effected, but predicts the impending fall with certainty (Amos 5: 27; 6:7; 7:17). The nation was rapidly declining. As already mentioned, Amos spoke in the days of Jeroboam II, about 760 B.C.

Very soon afterward, the Assyrians became Israel's most dreaded enemy. And in 722 B.C., Samaria fell before Sargon, and the land was depopulated.

We are now ready to understand better the chapters assigned for the lesson. They contain the visions of judgment. The final vision was that of locusts devouring the spring crop (Amos 7:1-3). The crop is referred to as "the shooting up as the latter growth, the latter growth after the king's mowings." It would be translated better as the spring crop. "In the Syrian year there are practically two tides of verdure: one which starts after the early rains of October and continues through the winter, checked by the cold; and one which comes away with greater force under the influence of the later rains and more genial airs of spring. Of these it was the later and richer which the locusts had attacked. 'And behold, it was after the king's mowings.'" These seem to have been a tribute which the kings of Israel levied on the spring herbage. (1 Kings 4:7) Everyone might reap his own after the king had received his share. If the remainder was devoured, there was no hope of any fodder till December. This calamity was averted. Then came the vision of fire (Amos 7:4-6), which calamity was also averted. Then followed the vision of the plumb-line (Amos 7:7-9) and of the basket of summer fruit (Amos 8:1-3), both of which were final. To set a plummet or a line with weights or stones over any city or people means judgment (2 Kings 21:13; Isa. 34:11). Originally, Israel was as "a wall made by a plumb-line" (Amos 7:7), but now it was so far off the plumb that it was unable to support the edifice. The structure must fall. "I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword." We can almost hear the prophet boldly utter these words before the people of Bethel in the very midst of their worship of the golden calf (1 Kings 12:28-29), and then turn at the derisive voice of the priest Amaziah challenging the Lord's prophet, and demanding that he betake himself to Judah and play the prophet there! The ring of truth is in Amos' humble reply, and terror in his closing condemnation. In the latter portion of chapter 8 (verses 4-14), he denounces the tyranny of the rich, and dilates upon the judgment. The ninth chapter continues this subject, but finally lets in a stream of kindly light. The Judgment is only for the sake of discipline (Amos 9:9). The nation will be restored to its pristine glory.

The leading characteristic of Amos is to be found in his use of the truth which relentlessly condemns the guilty. He may have felt sympathy in his heart for his unfortunate people: he does not give expression to it. In this respect, he is not unlike that other man of the desert who condemned the people in our Lord's time. (Luke 3:7 and on)

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

There are several strong lessons taught in these two chapters. First, there is one respecting judgment. The consequences of evil-doing are certain. We are inclined sometimes to forget the urgency of doing the Lord's will and the results of disobedience, even as children too, often forget their parents' wishes, and willfully take their own way in preference. When we see reason to reform - external reasons - we endeavor to change. But this is done before the world, and because of the world. The seriousness of breaking the Divine law is proved to be a matter of small moment to us by the careless way in which we consult the Divine law, and the indifference which we often manifest with regard to its application to ourselves. Still, the consequences are inevitable, whether we will or no. The Lord is certainly merciful. The plague of locusts or grasshoppers

suggests the presence of evil thoughts that devour heavenly ideas in the mind. The Lord does not utterly condemn such thoughts in the ignorant. The contention by means of fire which does partial damage is the ignorant and unruly outburst of fiery passions, without full intent of evil. The Lord spares the remnant even here. But in the case of the plumb-line and basket of summer fruit, picturing the crooked deed, evil intent in act, there is something that even the Lord cannot pass by. Amaziah the priest accuses Amos of treason. This voices the effort of the heart to overthrow the judgment of the truth, to twist it round and make it appear to be falsity. We do not like to be corrected: we object to being reproved or self condemned. The human resents it, but the truth cannot be silenced. It is irrepressible, and relentless in its judgment. Another lesson can be drawn from Amos 8:4-6. It is a sad lesson. It describes the pitiful condition of those who are under the clutches of the love of money. They hate the Sabbath day. It interferes with business. They are in great haste to become rich. The application, however, is not limited to the wealthy. It is the will of the Lord that we "keep the Sabbath day holy." How many can call that day a delight? (Isa. 58:13-14) How widespread is the spirit which is impatient of the claim that religion (which is taught on the Sabbath day) has relation to life - to business life! Many think, and even declare, that if they were to keep the Lord's commandments it would ruin their business. Better ruination than "trample the needy, and crush out the poor of the land." The consequences of sin are inevitable. They lead to a crisis, a judgment. But we are assured that that crisis for the righteous, for those who hate evil and love good, those who struggle to do the will of God, is only for purification, to sift the character, and finally separate all evil from the good.

## **Lesson 60**

### **Obadiah: Pity in the Place of Contempt**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

This is the shortest book in the Divine Word. It deals with one subject - the destruction of Edom. The only historical evidence appears in verse 11. This is the center of discussion for fixing the date of the prophecy. The verse speaks of the day when strangers captured Jerusalem, entered its gates, and cast lots upon the city. Many critics think that this can only refer to the overthrow of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. Other critics consider it more probable that the book was written in earlier times, and that the capture and plundering of the city by the Philistines and Arabians (strangers and foreigners) in the reign of Jehoram, about 846 B.C., could well have furnished the situation described by Obadiah. (2 Chron. 21:16-17) It is preferable to accept the earlier date. It harmonizes with other similar references to Edom in pre-exilic prophets, and relieves us of the necessity of disturbing the ancient order of the books, which certainly shows some regard to the time in which they were written. It can stand where it is.

Judah's misfortune is the occasion of Edom's exultation. (Obad. 1:12) For this cause Edom shall perish. His pride shall be humbled. He shall be brought low, and dispossessed; "and the kingdom shall be the Lords." This is the simple teaching of the prophecy.

The story of Edom's relations with Israel is a very sad one. Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. (Gen. 25:29) Jacob received the blessing of Isaac in place of Esau. On this account, Esau hated Jacob and sought to slay him. (Gen. 27:41) Jacob fled to Haran. Esau established a home in Mount Seir. This is the country lying to the south of the Dead Sea, stretching a hundred miles to the head of the Gulf of Akabah and extending for about twenty miles from east to west. This wild mountainous district is said to present the finest rock scenery in the world, a perfect haunt for banditti. In this wild fastness, Edom found a home, and looked with contempt and envy upon his brother Israel.

Twenty years after Jacob and Esau separated from their father's home, they met again as friends in Gilead. But the hatred that Edom bore toward Israel must have returned, never to burn out again, for the two nations are now continually at warfare. Edom's "anger did tear continually, and he kept his wrath forever." (Amos 1:11) His was "a perpetual hatred." (Ezek. 35:5) It manifested itself in the refusal to allow Israel to pass through his land. (Numb. 20:14-21) When Israel was established in the land, the two again came into conflict. Saul attacked them (1 Sam. 14:47), but it was left for David to subdue them. (2 Sam. 13:14) Later, Hadad the Edomite became an adversary to Solomon. (1 Kings 11:14) Still later, King Jehoram endeavored to quell a revolt of Edom. (2 Kings 8:21-22) But it is said that "Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day." Again Amaziah fought with Edom and took its rock city Petra or Sela. (2 Kings 14:7) The immediate cause of contention was most probably the command of Elath or Ezion Geber at the head of the Gulf of Akabah. At least we read often of the kings using this port, and we find that "it was restored to Judah" by Uzziah. (2 Kings 14:21-22)

This hatred in Edom continued throughout the history of Israel. Hence sprang the bitter prophecies against Edom in the days of the kings. Read Isaiah 34:5-8; Jeremiah 49:7-22; Ezekiel 25:12-14; Amos 1:11-12. Subsequent history records a continual renewal of the old warfare. And that ancient hatred against Israel seems also to have burned in the breast of Herod the Idumean (Edomite) and threatened the existence of Christianity itself. (Matt. 2) But the Lord did not allow the land of Edom to prevail. Edom has been judged. His name has disappeared from the pages of history, and "the kingdom shall be the Lord's."

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

It is only in the spiritual sense that we can look for the fulfillment of this prophecy. The word Esau means "hairy," the word Edom, "red," and the word Seir, "shaggy." These words express the quality of the representation "the good of the natural man." (A. 3518, 3527) In the good sense, "Edom signifies the good of the rational to which are adjoined the doctrinal things of truth. But in the opposite sense, he signifies the evil of the love of self to which falsities are adjoined." Esau and Edom both represent "those who turn aside from good by utterly despising truth, and who chiefly from the love of self, do not want anything of the truth to be adjoined." (A. 3322) This makes clear the representation of Edom in Obadiah given in the Prophets and Psalms: "those who are in self-intelligence, and who pervert the literal sense of the Word." Self-intelligence! It may otherwise be expressed by "learning which is from man's own intelligence." We sometimes think we know what is best for ourselves by our own reasoning, and require help from no one. We scorn the

interference even of persons of superior judgment. Likewise we often imagine that we can decide for ourselves the right course of life without consulting the Lord, without turning to His Word. This is the spirit which Obadiah deals with under the type of Edom. It is constantly at warfare with the regenerating soul; a constant enemy. We must fight against it (verse 1). It is contemptible when seen in its true light (verse 2). The conceit and pride which lie concealed within it are boundless (verse 3). But this pride will be humbled (verse 4). The false ideas of the heart will be searched out thoroughly (verses 5, 6). And it will be seen that we are then destitute of the truth (verse 7). Therefore, this spirit must be condemned and destroyed (verses 8, 9). For it hurts the church, it takes delight in doing violence to the teachings of the Lord (verses 10-13). It must be judged. "The day of the Lord is near."

This rebellious spirit is present with us all the time. Sometimes we are conscious of it. Then we must fight. It works within until it reaches a degree of opposition to our spiritual growth that threatens great harm. Then we must subdue it with the Lord's help. The pitched battles we have with it are pictured in Israel attacking and subduing Edom, already referred to. Each time the spirit manifests itself, it assumes a more dangerous attitude. But in time, it reaches its limits: it is seen in its entirety, in all its harmfulness and utter uselessness. Then it is finally judged and cast out (verses 15, 16). This enables us to enjoy the blessings of the church, in the spirit of humility, which readily turns us to the Lord for instruction, and prepares us for the reception of an increased knowledge of the truth. "Saviors shall come up on Mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau: and the kingdom shall be the Lord's."

## **Lesson 61**

### **Jonah: Give Light to All in the House**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

Jonah, the son of Amitai, lived in the times of Jeroboam II. From 2 Kings 14:23 we learn that he belonged to Gath-hepher, in Zebulun. (Josh. 19:13) He predicted that Jeroboam would succeed in recovering his lost territory from the Syrians. Thus, Jonah was a contemporary of Hosea and Amos (about 760 B.C., Hos. 1:1; Amos 1:1). His prophecy, however, does not refer to Judah or Israel, but to the nations or Gentiles, under the type of Nineveh. Jonah is commanded to pronounce judgment upon Nineveh for its wickedness. He fears that the Lord will be merciful, and that his message of judgment would be futile (Jonah 4:2), and therefore disobeys the command. He goes down to Joppa, and takes ship for Tarshish, or Tartessus in Spain. A storm overtakes the ship. The sailors cast lots to find out the cause of their misfortune. The lot falls on the unconcerned Jonah. He confesses his disobedience, and counsels the sailors to cast him into the sea. They seek to avoid this, but they are compelled at last to follow his counsel to save themselves. The sea becomes calm. A great fish swallows Jonah. He prays to the Lord, and after three days, the fish casts him forth upon the land. Again the Lord commands Jonah to go to Nineveh. He proceeds thither. The Ninevites repent, and the Lord has mercy on them. Jonah is angry because his mission seems to have failed. He goes outside the city and asks to be allowed to

die. The Lord prepares a gourd to protect the prophet from the sun's heat, for which he is very thankful. The gourd perishes the following night. Jonah has pity for it. Yet he has no sympathy for the ignorant living souls in the city.

That great city with its sixscore thousand inhabitants has a most ancient history. It was a great city even in the days when the book of Genesis was written. (Gen. 10:12) In the days of Jeroboam II, the city proper stood on the eastern bank of the river Tigris. It was a walled city, about nine miles in circumference, "the ruins of which still enable us to form some idea of what was for centuries the wonder of the world." Beyond these walls were suburbs, and beyond these again other towns, all so closely connected that they formed one place called in Scripture "the great city." Judging from the ruins still covering this territory, its circumference must have been about sixty miles, or three days' journey. (Jonah 3:3)

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The general teaching of this prophecy is plain, and has been rightly discerned by many commentators. It shows the reluctance of the Jewish nation to fulfill their mission to the heathen, and that the Lord's mercy is not limited to Israel, but to all who turn to Him in true repentance. Jonah is a type of his people. They had the Word, and were commanded to teach it to the Gentiles. (Jonah 1:1-2) They refused. The heathen were their enemies, and they did not desire the Lord's mercies to reach any others than themselves. Jonah asleep in the foreigners' ship well pictures the church's absolute indifference to the welfare of the heathen. The ship in danger is the threatened destruction of the heathen because of the unfaithfulness of the church to the word of the Lord. "By means of the Word the Lord is present everywhere throughout the whole earth." (S. 104) "The Word in the church enlightens all nations and people by spiritual communication." (S. 110) When the church therefore does not live up to the Word, the nations suffer. The nations - those who are in simple good - feel this, and pray for help to remedy it. (Jonah 1:4-6) Through enlightenment, they are led to perceive the cause, which rests with the church. (Verses 7-10) Jonah tells them that they will be freed from danger if they cast him into the sea. The Word instructs the nations that to be saved they must reject the falsities of the perverted church. They must not follow the fallen church's example in making the Word of God of none effect by their traditions and evil life. The nations try to save the church as it is. (Verse 13) But they have no peace until these falsifications are cast away. (Verses 14-16)

The church now suffers temptations. Jonah is taken up by a great fish in which he prays to the Lord. The fish or whale signifies "memory knowledge," "scientifics which pervert the truths of faith, and also, reasoning from fallacies, whence come falsities." (E. 654; A. 7293) The inner parts of these are as "the belly of hell." (Jonah 2:2) The church's temptation here is caused by being aroused to a sense of her situation and the presence of an endless train of false reasonings for excusing her indifference to the nations. As regards the Jews, they hated the nations, and were fearful that the Lord would show them any mercy. Were they justified? The Lord, when on the earth, felt this terrible condition of His chosen people, and was assailed by the fallacious justifications for it. That was a severe temptation to Him. The words of prayer in chapter 2 tell us

of the intensity of His suffering in it. Victory came with the confession, "Salvation is of Jehovah." (Jonah 2:9-10)

Then the church is ready to go to the nations, and preach repentance. (Jonah 3:1-4) And the Gentiles receive the Word, and repent. The Lord has respect for their change of heart, and saves them. (Jonah 3:5-10) But the church is not pleased at this extension of the Lord's loving kindness to her enemies. The church needs to be twice cleansed—in heart as well as in thought. Here the real cause of the dissatisfaction and anger is laid bare. It is the jealous heart. (Jonah 4:1-2) The utter baseness of such feelings is made manifest by representation. The lifeless gourd elicits the pity of Jonah. It had furnished shade to him yesterday, and he had been thankful for it. Now it has perished. That which gave him comfort - that for which he had not labored - drew forth his sympathy when it ceased to comfort him. But the thousands of people who were dying because of their ignorance did not touch his heart. Should not the Lord bless the repentant people? Surely!

It is impossible for a Christian to realize the fullness of his or her responsibility all at once. A narrow selfish spirit clogs the understanding. We are jealous for our own personal welfare, and think little of the effect of this spirit upon others. We desire to retain all the Lord's blessings for ourselves, fearful lest the gift of some to others would diminish our own. Above all we hate to have our enemies receive any blessings. They ought to be punished instead. Anyone connected with our misfortunes, or in any way antagonistic to our interests, is no fit subject for receiving blessings.

We desire to promulgate our doctrines, and sometimes think that we love the Gentiles, all outside our church, and would be only too glad to have them enjoy the blessings we have. We do not regard others as the Mohammedans look upon the Christians! We are sometimes deceived when we are put to the test, being brought into actual personal contact with one who differs from us. We are then tempted to put the letter before the spirit: to make more of the raiment than the body, or of the meat than the life. We are apt to place too much importance upon the letter. Unity is made to depend upon uniformity, harmony upon literal agreement. But charity or love is the only bond that will set at rest all difference of opinion, and draw the Christians to their supposed enemies. This cannot take place until Christians, upon whom the responsibility rests, overcome every taint of jealousy. Human nature prompts us to provide for self and one's own before others, and regardless of the well-being of others. It is reflected in the miserly, parsimonious, covetous spirit everywhere prevalent. We have to learn to live for the sake of others as much as for ourselves, learn to work in the spirit of doing unto others as we would that they should do unto us, not attempting to monopolize the Divine blessings. Then we appreciate more fully that every least act of disobedience to the Divine law as we know it affects the nations. It is like light put under a bushel and thus failing to give light to all that are in the house.

## **Lesson 62**

### **Micah 1; 4: A New Sense of Destiny**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

Micah prophesied "in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." He was thus a contemporary of Isaiah. The first chapter was evidently written before the fall of Samaria in 721 B.C. And the words in chapter 3:12 were uttered in the days of Hezekiah. (See Jer. 26:16-19.) This is a singular instance of one prophet referring to another prophet's work, and its salutary effect. Jeremiah was on his trial for threatening Judah with punishment for its sins, but was acquitted through the princes and people calling attention to the work of Micah.

Micah is called a Morasthite. This doubtless means that he was a native of Moresheth, which is generally identified with Moresheth-gath (Micah 1:14), a country village in the lowlands of Judah, about 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem. Micah proves himself to be at home in that district, for all the identified towns mentioned by him in chapter 1:10-15 belong to it. The little town lies about a thousand feet above the sea level and has a commanding view of the plains of Philistia and the Mediterranean. Close by are the towns of Gath, Lachish, Shaphir, Achzib, Mareshah, and Addullam, all mentioned in chapter 1. The prophet was therefore brought up in the country. And his sympathies are strong for his oppressed fellow countrymen who till the soil. He exposes and condemns the shameless methods of the prosperous, who covet fields and take them by violence, and houses and seize them (Micah 2:1-2). His denunciation of the leaders of the people is indeed scathing. They ought to know what is right: but instead they hate the good, and love the evil.

"They eat the flesh of My people, and flay their skin from off them: they break their bones, and chop them in pieces as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron." (Micah 3:1-3) It pictures how the fortunate abused their privileges as rulers to extract the last penny from their less fortunate neighbors. The wealthy were bent on increasing their substance even at the cost of human life. The conditions in which we now live are not very different. Further, "the heads of the house of Jacob judge for rewards, the priests teach for hire, and the prophets divine for money" (Micah 3:11). They who crush the poor of the land have corrupt servants who aid and abet their wickedness. For such evil, judgment must surely come upon the land. The evil is concentrated in the two great cities, Samaria and Jerusalem (Micah 1:5). They must be judged. "I will make Samaria as an heap of the field...and Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps." (Micah 1:9; 3:12)

In the first chapter, the prophet regards the judgment falling upon Samaria, and there pictures the enemy who has destroyed Samaria marching upon Jerusalem (Micah 1:9). Isaiah depicted the approach of the enemy from the north. (Isa. 10:22-28: see The Sower III:28.) But Micah selects the great war path by the plains of Philistia, and the valley road from Lachish past Moresheth, and through Beit-Jibrim to Jerusalem. A mournful cry rises from all the villages round Moresheth for the judgment come upon Israel. "Make thee bald and poll thee for thy delicate children enlarge thy baldness as the eagle: for they are gone into captivity from thee." Baldness is a sign of mourning. Well might they lament! Captivity was the fate that awaited those vanquished by the

Assyrians. Other enemies raided, burned, or slew, but Assyria carried off whole populations into exile.

The judgment was inevitable, but "in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it." Nothing could be brighter than this picture of the restoration (Micah 4); all the brighter by reason of its sharp contrast with the deep shadow surrounding the judgment.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The name Micah means "who is like Jehovah." This prophecy shows the greatness of the Lord in bringing good out of evil. This is clear from the last verses of the prophecy. (Micah 7:18-20) "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity," etc. They are beautiful words. At the outset, we have the dark side of life vividly presented to view. It is the judgment overhanging Samaria and Judah. The Lord visits His people: He descends to judge (Micah 1:1-4; A. 1311) The evil and falsity to be judged are examined at their core in Samaria and Jerusalem. (Verse 5; see A. 9156.) All false worship must be destroyed (verse 6). All false inventions of the heart and all the knowledges that have been applied in support of evils and falsities must be exposed and condemned. (Verse 7; E. 141, 695) Then will there be great grief and mourning (verse 8), for it touches the very heart of the evil - the affection for those old evil habits (verse 9). The towns in the following verses so far as they can be identified are on the borders of Judah. Their mourning suggests grief caused by suffering on account of evil penetrating to the walls of the heart. "Evil came down from the Lord to the gate of Jerusalem" (verse 12). Great is the pain produced by the revelation of wrong not only in thought, but in the intentions. Extreme mourning is pictured in verse 16. The delicate children or sons of delight there spoken of signify genuine truths from the Lord which are held captive by evils and falsities. (R. 47, 543) The evils which will destroy the whole church (Micah 3:12) are then analyzed in chapters 2 and 3. But "in the last days," when evil has reached its greatest depth, the Lord's work of salvation shall be recognized. A new church shall be established among the Gentiles or nations. The Gentile state in a person is one of simplicity and humility. Evils always produce pride and self-confidence. But a state of childlike innocence (H. 278), which is the Gentile state, or good signified by "the nations," is the means of restoring all that has been lost, all that has been injured. (Matt. 18:3-4)

The fourth chapter furnishes a remarkably clear picture of the future glory of the church of the Lord. All people will consider the good of others as much as their own, and love to the Lord shall be the supreme motive. (Micah 4:1) All who desire the welfare of others as much as their own shall readily learn in humility the will of the Lord from His Word (verse 2). They will take rebuke without resentment, and sacrifice, without contest, personal advantage, for the public weal (verse 3). Thus, they will enjoy in peace the fruits of a good spiritual and natural life (verse 4). Others may follow selfish ideals; we will be faithful to the Lord (verse 5). There all misdeeds committed in ignorance of the law (the halt) will be corrected, and the misdirected energy turned to greater use in good deeds (verses 6, 7). This correction will cause pain and suffering but will result in a fuller knowledge of the Lord's truth (verses 8-10). It will also disperse all attacking falsities, and

increase the blessedness of life (verses 11-13). "I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth." (See P. P.)

These visions of the future are a remarkable feature of prophecy. Every prophet furnishes one or more pictures of the restoration of the house of Israel. Views of judgment and redemption stand side by side throughout these latter books of the Old Testament. And the same two themes form the chief subject of the last book of prophecy, the Apocalypse. They are so placed in the Word by the Lord Himself. We cannot do without them. We cannot become too familiar with them. The restoration of the race can only be accomplished through the judgment of evil. Surely, when we behold the dreadful state of society today, and the persistent manner in which evil clings to ourselves in particular, we should have little courage to labor to destroy the power of evil were it not for the constant renewal of the vision of the future which is promised by the Lord. We trust in Him, do the little that lies before us today as faithfully as we can, and accept our daily portion of bread. It is sufficient to prepare us for the morrow's labor. Beyond that we cannot reach. But every least resistance of evil loosens its power in the aggregate and paves the way for the establishment of a more heavenly life on earth.

## **Lesson 63**

### **Micah 5; 6: "Wherewith Shall I Come Before the Lord?"**

#### **HISTORICAL STUDY**

##### **Junior**

Micah was a younger prophet in Judah at the same time with Isaiah. He continued after Hezekiah into the time when Manasseh was king. Micah was not of a leading family like Isaiah. He was a peasant from a village among the hills toward the Philistine plain. Micah, like Isaiah, rebuked the evil ways of the people, and he told them of the real worship which the Lord desired. If we can, let us say Micah 6:6-8.

Note what the first verse of Micah tells you of his date. "Morasthite" means that he was from Moresheth-gath, a village among the hills of Judah toward Philistia. He denounces the oppression of the poor and dishonesty in dealing. Read the beautiful prophecy in Micah 4:1-5, almost in the same words as Isa. 2:2-4, and the words which later guided the wise men to Bethlehem in Micah 5:2.

Micah is the sixth of the twelve minor prophets. When we mention the names of the first five - Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah - can we recall distinct characteristics of the messages connected with each name? The historical references in Micah are very general. Yet they are distinct because the period to which they refer is clearly marked. (Micah 1:1)

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

We have here one of the most remarkable prophecies regarding the Lord's Advent. The two statements in Micah and Matthew are worthy of close comparison. The former reads, "Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah! is it little that thou art among the thousands of Judah? Out of thee shall come forth to Me He who will be a Ruler in Israel." (Micah 5:2) The latter reads, "Thou, Bethlehem in the land of Judah, art by no means the least in the leaders of Israel, for out of thee shall come forth a Leader, who shall feed or shepherd my people Israel." (Matt. 2:6) Is Bethlehem little among the thousands of Judah? It is by no means the least among the leaders in Israel. That is the way in which the prophecy was understood by the chief priests and scribes of the people. Bethlehem means "house of bread," where He who is "the bread of life" was born. Bethlehem was little among the thousands of Judah. "The thousands Israel" and "captains or leaders of thousands" are occasionally spoken of in the Old Testament. The thousands refer to the people. Bethlehem was despised in the eyes of the Jews. "Truth conjoined with good (E. 449) is disdained by those in evil. Yet it is not despised by those in the spiritual truths of the Word (the leaders of Israel). The spiritual sense of the Word testifies of the Lord Jesus throughout. He is born there. He lives in the spirit of the Divine truth. (E. 700) We cannot admit the Divinity of the Lord apart from the acknowledgment of the living spirit of the Word. He is born in us simultaneously with this living acknowledgment - truth conjoined with good in our lives. That is least to the natural person who is only concerned about his or her own welfare, but not by any means the least to people who struggle to know the truth, and be governed by it.

There are other reasons why Bethlehem was the birthplace of the Lord. It was the birthplace of Benjamin. There Rachel died and was buried. She called Benjamin, Benoni, son of sorrow or grief. The power which truth gains through good is only acquired through hard struggles. (A. 4593, 4594) In the case of the Lord's birth, the pain occasioned by the sacrifice of self-life to procure the first degree of His life in us is expressed in the name of the mother Mary, which means "bitterness." Benjamin, the last of the children of Jacob - after the latter had received the name of Israel, soldier of God - was born at Bethlehem. So also was David. And Bethlehem was called the city of David. These two, Benjamin and David, represent the Lord. The former as "spiritual truth from celestial good, and thence power" (A. 4592), the latter as spiritual truth which overcomes and subdues evils in the spiritual self.

It is interesting in study of the prophets to learn what we can of the times in which they lived, and of the people to whom they spoke. This helps us to understand the clothing of their message. But continually as we read, we feel that the message bursts its local setting. Its rebukes and promises are spoken to us and to people of all times. From the little happenings of Judah shine out promises for the world, especially promises of the coming of the Lord.

Micah 6 is appointed for our study. Verses 6 to 8 of this chapter are one of several passages in the Old Testament where forms and figures fade away and the truth of Christian life and heaven shine clearly in the letter. Other passages of this kind are I Sam. 15:22; Ps. 5:16-17; Ps. 40:6-8; Jer. 7:21-23; Hos. 6:6. But none are more beautiful than these verses in Micah. Such passages are brought together in A. 922. They are passages from which doctrine can be drawn, for they are like the face and hands of a person, while other parts of Scripture are clothed. (S. 55-56) In the Sermon on the

Mount, the Lord revealed the laws of heaven and Christian life within the laws of old time. So in bidding the Pharisees to learn "what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice" (Matt. 12:7), He was showing what the laws of sacrifice contain. The offerings of gentle animals represented the affections of love to the Lord and to the neighbor needed in the beginning and close of every work, in seasons of penitence and in seasons of thanksgiving. As we gain more experience of these heavenly affections in their great variety, the laws of sacrifice will open and reveal their meaning. (A. 4772)

On "thousands of rams and ten thousands of rivers of oil," see R. 287; E. 336. The sacrifice of children was never acceptable to the Lord, as He showed to Abraham. What He desires is the humility which acknowledges every life to be the Lord's and every development of heavenly life to be from Him.

In the verses introducing this beautiful passage of Micah, the Lord appeals to the people to cease basing their life upon selfishness and pride and false thoughts. (A. 9024; E. 405) He has done all that Divine love and power can do to help them to choose the right way. He has showed His power to deliver from false things of the world (Egypt) and from evil pleasures which beguile (Moab). The heart is touched and cries, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" Not with sacrifice, nor with any showy service. "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Again we are reminded of the evil of which we must repent, of the scant measure and deceitful weights, the distorted judgments disparaging others and favoring ourselves, which can bring only misery and not blessing. We may labor in the selfish spirit, but we can never reap the harvest or enjoy the goodness and truth of heaven. Such are the statutes of Omri and the work of Ahab, which can lead only to desolation. The bright picture of the life pleasing to the Lord shines out from a dark setting. See the comment on the whole chapter in Prophets and Psalms.

The closing verses of the book revert to the Lord's Divine compassion and mercy. So far each of the six prophecies is brought to a close with a blessing.

## **Lesson 64**

### **Nahum: Excuse No Evil**

#### **HISTORICAL STUDY**

##### **Junior**

Long ago, the strength and power of a nation was centered in its capital. When that fell, the nation no longer figured as a ruling power on earth. We have had two examples of this kind already. The fall of Damascus in 734 B.C. ended the Syrian empire. And the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C. closed the history of the kingdom of Israel. Now we are about to note the fall of three other great cities, which materially affected the history of the Jewish people. First, the fall of Nineveh in 607 B.C. overthrew the great Assyrian empire; second, the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C., ending the kingdom of Judah; and, third, the fall of Babylon before Cyrus in 538 B.C., which destroyed the Babylonian empire, and released the Jewish remnant which returned to Judea. Of this remnant

the Lord was born. Put these dates on the blackboard, and mark opposite the first three the names of the prophets who lived about that time and referred to these events. These five dates furnish the great landmarks in the history of the Jews after the conquest of the land. Around them all other events can be readily grouped. The sins of Israel led to its ruin, which was consummated by the rise of Assyria. The sins of Judah effected its downfall, which again was brought about by the rise of Babylon. And finally the destruction of Babylon was necessary to liberate the remnant. All events were under the guidance of Providence.

In the prophet Nahum, we have the prediction of the fall of Nineveh. The event took place, as already noted, in 607 B.C. The prophecy must therefore have been written before that date. Nahum also refers to the destruction of No, otherwise called No-ammon or Thebes, in Egypt. (Nahum 3:8-10) This took place in 664 B.C. Therefore, this prophecy must have been written between the years 664 and 607 B.C. During that period, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoahaz, and Jehoiakim successively occupied the throne of Judah. This would make the prophet contemporaneous with Zephaniah (Zeph. 1:1), and Jeremiah (Jer. 1:3), and doubtless also Habakkuk.

The last prophet we studied was Micah, who lived in the days of Hezekiah, down to or about the year 700 B.C. We have thus an apparent break in the time of the prophets from 700 to about 600 B.C. It is only a break, however, as far as written prophecy was concerned. The Lord continued to send prophets to Judah. (See 2 Kings 21:10.) His voice never ceased to sound in Jerusalem while needed.

That great city, Nineveh, was described when treating of the prophet Jonah. Nahum depicts the terrible cruelties of the Assyrians, which have brought upon them the just vengeance of God. The first chapter speaks of the necessity of judgment upon the wicked as a justification of God's righteousness. The second and third chapters describe vividly the siege and downfall of the city. The last verse of the book exults over the fall of the tyrant. As she treated others, so shall she be treated. The destruction of the great city was complete, so complete that the site of it remained unknown for centuries.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

To understand the general meaning of this prophecy, we need to go back to the origin of the city of Nineveh. It is to be found in Gen. 10. (See A. 1130 and on.) Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. From Ham came Cush. "Cush begat Nimrod...And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel...in the land of Shinar. And out of that land went forth Ashur [Assyria], and built Nineveh...the same is a great city." Noah signifies the Ancient or Spiritual Church. Ham represents "external worship in that church corrupted." Cush or Ethiopia signifies the "interior knowledge of the Word, applied to confirm false principles." Nimrod signifies "those who have made internal worship external." Babel in the land of Shinar signifies "that kind of worship, of which the externals appear holy, while the internals are profane." Ashur coming forth therefrom signifies "that they who maintained external worship began to reason about the internals of worship" - thus false reasonings which confirm profane worship. And Nineveh signifies "the false of doctrinals" - the great system of reasonings that supports and excuses profane worship. The

derivation of Nineveh is thus traced to Ham. The source of false reasonings that countenance righteous living only as an expediency is to be traced to corrupt internal worship, the worship of self and of the world. External worship includes the whole sphere of conduct, business and social life as well as that which is strictly called worship, attendance at church, etc. In the proportion then that a person "is influenced by self-love and the love of the world, there is less of life and sanctity in his worship. In proportion as his selfish and worldly love is filled with hatred toward his neighbor, there is profanity in his worship. In proportion as his hatred is filled with malice, there is more profaneness in his worship. And in proportion as his malice is filled with deceit, there is in his worship still more profanity." (A. 1182) The system of reasoning which excuses this profane worship, and which grows slowly as the feelings of enmity and hatred develop, is what is signified by Nineveh. This whole system must perish.

How early the child learns the expediency of being good outwardly, but inwardly of a contrary nature, or rebellious! And how rapidly this habit takes possession of us so that we are able to maintain an outward appearance of goodness, and yet cherish all kinds of uncharitable feelings in our hearts. The specious reasonings that excuse this kind of life are worked up gradually into a perfect system, behind which we entrench ourselves secure from the attacks of the world. How cruel to the individual are these false reasonings, permitting the indulgence of murderous feelings that destroy the love of others in a most brutal fashion. As they have dealt by the good in us, so shall they be dealt by. They shall receive no mercy. We shall exult over their utter destruction. (Nahum 3: 19) This is the note of triumph with which this prophecy closes. It is not a promise of the restoration of Judah or Israel; yet, the restitution of the spiritual self is involved in this expression of rejoicing at the destruction of the wicked. A song of peace also closes the proem to the prophecy. (Nahum 1:15) And the name of the prophet bespeaks the happy state of the soul after the conflict. Nahum means comfort or consolation, and Elkosh means probably afflicted of God. The struggle to rid self of the exceedingly troublesome bitter thoughts about others whom we dislike is a sore one. But when we have dislodged them from our hearts, and got rid of them forever through the grace of the Lord, we rejoice in the happier thoughts which are given to us in their place. "All that bear the fruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee: for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually." In the letter, this breathes a spirit of resentful exultation. No angel could feel thus. The internal sense is therefore different from that of the letter. It means simply that when we think upon the dreadful nature of false reasonings, seeking to excuse and encourage feelings of hatred, we rejoice that the Lord has delivered us from their baneful influence. It is heartfelt thankfulness that "the wicked shall no more pass through thee: he is utterly cut off." (Nahum 1:15)

## **Lesson 65**

### **Habakkuk: Renewing Trust in God**

#### **HISTORICAL STUDY**

##### **Junior**

Our last prophet was Nahum. We fixed the date of his prophecy between the years 664 and 607 B.C. And Zephaniah, whose prophecy follows that of Habakkuk, appeared "in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah." (Zeph. 1:1) His reign lasted from 640 to 609 B.C. Therefore, we should expect to place the undated prophecy of Habakkuk somewhere between 664 and 609 B.C., as contemporaneous with Nahum and Zephaniah. And this is probably the time to which he belongs. The Chaldeans, who form the leading subject of the prophecy, were then gaining power in the East, and gradually preparing to overcome the Assyrians and the Egyptians. This they accomplished in 607 at the fall of Nineveh, and in 605 B.C. at the great Battle of Carchemish. Their methods of warfare were swift and cruel. The prophet describes vividly how they will attack Judah, and take the people captive. But this is not the chief burden of his prophecy. It is the great question—why does the Lord permit the righteous to suffer? "Wherefore lookest Thou upon them that deal treacherously, and art dumb when the wicked swallows him that is more righteous than he?" (Hab. 1:13) The prophet beholds in vision the approaching judgment of Judah, and the terrible sufferings which his countrymen will endure at the hand of the enemy. What a dreadful oppressor! He is swift in his movements, violent in his actions (Hab. 1:8-9), building up towns with blood, and establishing cities by iniquity. (Hab. 2:12) What mercy can the captive Jew expect? But why should the Lord allow such grievous oppression? That is the great question proposed. And the answer comes from the Lord. The pride of the Chaldean is the precursor of his fall - he shall perish - "but the just shall live by his faithfulness." (Hab. 2:4) They who, despite all adversity, trust in the Lord, shall be saved. (Hab. 3:17-18)

#### **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

##### **Intermediate**

It is difficult to treat of the letter without touching the spirit. For this shines through the letter almost throughout the whole prophecy. The problem of permitted wrong is here voiced with the urgency of a soul in great distress, and the difficulty is satisfactorily solved. "O Lord, how long shall I cry, and Thou wilt not hear! even cry out into the violence, and Thou wilt not save!" (Hab. 1:2) Injustice prevails everywhere. (Verses 3, 4) The Lord then answers that He is about to "work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you." He will raise up the Chaldeans to sweep through the land and take possession of dwelling places that are not theirs. Great will be the oppression and violence which will accompany them. (Verses 5-11) This increases the prophet's difficulty. How can the Lord, who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, permit the righteous to suffer at the hands of the wicked? Yea, why should the evil annihilate the Lord's people? (Verses 12-17) True to his office, the prophet mounts the watchtower and waits his answer from the Lord. (Hab. 2:1; cf. Isa. 21:6-10) The answer comes. It is to be written on

tables so plainly that even someone who runs may read. (Verse 2) It may be doubted, yet it is true. (Verse 3) The proud shall fall; the righteous shall live by faithfulness. (Verse 4) Verses 5 to 20 expand this answer. The terrible ruin wrought by pride (verse 5) is expressed in "a taunting proverb" against the Chaldean. This proverb consists of a series of five "woes." These are directed against the rapacious violence of the Chaldean (verses 6-8), his covetousness (verses 9-11), the cruel way in which he establishes his kingdom (verses 12, 13), the barbarous pleasure he takes in intoxicating his neighbor (verses 15-17), and his gross idolatry (verses 18, 19). These shall compass his own overthrow; "but Jehovah is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him" (verse 20); where the Lord is worshiped, there dwells His love with its power to impart peace upon earth to people of good will.

The third chapter contains "a prayer of Habakkuk." It is "a lyric ode, which, for sublimity of poetic conception and splendor of diction, ranks with the finest (Exod. 15; Judges 5) which Hebrew poetry has produced." (Driver) The prophet heard the report (Hab. 2:4), and feared its fulfillment, but implores the Lord to "revive His work in the midst of the years:...in wrath remember mercy." (Hab. 3:2) Then he pictures the coming of the Lord and its effect. (Verses 3-7) The purpose of His coming is depicted in verses 8-15. "Was the Lord displeased against the rivers?" Did He come to destroy falsities that spring from evil? Yea, He came to judge them, and to bring salvation to His anointed. (Verse 13) The trial of effecting the separation of evil from the good is great. (Verse 16) Yet, though it create despair, trust in the Lord will bring relief from the oppressor, and fill the heart with heavenly joy. (Verses 17-19)

This is the clear lesson which the prophet teaches. A more interior knowledge of correspondences does not alter it, but only intensifies it, adds power to it. It does this by defining more clearly the particular foe of our own household who is meant by the Chaldean, and the manner in which this foe oppresses us. "By the Chaldeans are signified those who are in a holy external, but are interiorly in falsity. They, like Babel, are those who vastate the church." (A. 3901) They signify "those who are in falsities, but in externals appear to be in truths; thus they signify the profanation of truth; but Babel signifies the profanation of good." (A. 6534) The spirit which uses truths for self-exaltation is a profane spirit. It is that of the Chaldean. It is in evidence whenever we boast about our knowledge of the doctrines. It is manifest when we use our knowledge simply in the attempt to keep others right. The spirit of fault-finding is prevalent in church life even as in social life. Too often pride in our own knowledge of truth harshly places the stamp of falsity upon the views of those who differ in opinion from us. We have the Divine Word and the writings of the church at our back, and all that differs therefrom is false. We should like to dictate to the world what it should believe. That is the extreme to which this selfish spirit of pride drives us, blinding us to the fact that absolute truth exists in the Lord alone - with all people, truth is relative. As regards those who are in falsity, we need to exercise the greatest sympathy and patience, for the perception of the truth best suited to each, depends upon the heart primarily, and not upon the head. "Whoever wills to do the will of the Father, shall know of the doctrine." "No man can come unto Me, except the Father draw him."

This spirit of pride, which profanes the truths we know, is sure to affect us in one form or other. Consciousness of it with a desire to be rid of it brings oppression and temptation. It adds to the afflictions of the heart - is indeed one of the greatest trials. It produces distrust in the Lord and causes the faithful soul to cry out in distress. But the Word of the Lord strengthens the conviction that it must perish in the end, and leave the soul in peace. The word Habakkuk means "embrace."

The trial is a sore one, but we are in the loving embrace of the Lord: "underneath are the everlasting arms." (Deut. 33:27)

## Lesson 66

### Zephaniah: A New Horror of Evil

#### HISTORICAL STUDY

##### Junior

Zephaniah is described as the descendant of Hizkiah. It is supposed that this Hizkiah is the same Hezekiah, king of Judah. There is no proof of it. The signification of the names, however, is the same. Our prophet lived in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, thus between the years 640 and 609 B.C. This is very shortly before the fall of Jerusalem - 587 B.C. - in the midst of the saddest days in the kingdom. A stream of sunlight burst through the clouds at the time of the reformation in Josiah's reign. (2 Kings 22:23) But the clouds closed in again, and grew denser and denser until the storm burst forth in all its fury, and devastated the land. Manasseh and Anion the predecessors of Josiah, were two of the most wicked kings of Judah. (2 Kings 21) These were very dark times, in which Zephaniah lived. The day of judgment is near at hand.

"That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness (Zeph. 1:15) This is the dominant note of the prophet's message. "Dies irae, dies illa." Yet it closes with the promise of a bright future for the Lord's people.

The prophecy of Zephaniah is somewhat difficult to follow in the letter. Yet the general outline is comparatively clear. It opens with an announcement of a general judgment. (Zeph. 1:1-3) It then turns to the particular judgment awaiting Judah and Jerusalem. (Verses 4-6) The heathen are invited to be present at the sacrifice prepared by the Lord on the day of judgment. (Verse 7) In the day of that sacrifice the Lord will punish princes, and all addicted to practices of corruption and intrigue. (Verses 8, 9) Then will there be great wailing in Jerusalem for her merchants are cut off. (Verses 10, 11) Then also the Lord will search the city and punish those immersed in irreligious indifference. (Verses 12, 13) That day will be a day of darkness and terror. (Verses 14, 18) The prophet calls for repentance (Zeph. 2:1-3), that the people may thus escape the doom which threatens the nations—Philistia, Moab and Ammon, Ethiopia and Assyria. (Verses 4-15) Again, he turns to the sins of Jerusalem: her impurity, disobedience, and distrust. (Zeph. 3:1-2) All her leaders—her princes, judges, prophets and priests—have turned aside from the path of justice, and do wrong shamelessly. (Verses 3-5) And she refuses to take warning from the sad end of neighboring nations. (Verses 6, 7) A judgment awaits all the kingdoms of the earth. (Verse 8) Then a new church will be established with the remnant, which shall become "a praise among all people of the earth" (Verses 9-20)

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

The outstanding feature of this prophecy is the terrible judgment awaiting the church at its end, and the new church here to be built up out of the remnant. It is the vastation or consummation of the old, and the establishment of the new. (A. 411) This subject has been quite frequently before us now. The description of the end always precedes mention of the new beginning. The darkness deepens before the light appears. Hence the picture of the end becomes more gloomy as prophecy advances, even as evil became more pronounced in the kingdom of Judah as its doom approached. It all depicts the growing consciousness of the evil hidden within sin. At first, evil appears simple and harmless. But as its nature is laid bare in the light of the Divine truth it is seen to be more full of depravity. All that is within must be fully vastated or removed before a person comes into full possession of remains. (A. 19) Remains consist of the things of innocence, and love, and mercy implanted in the soul of every person during infancy, childhood, and youth. (A. 561, 1906) Without these impressions made within the soul, people could not be saved (Isa. 1:9) The tenderest and most precious are the earliest impressions. As the world becomes more present to the growing child, the heavenly qualities that find their way inward are of a lower order. When the world exercises full sway over the youth, then all heavenly impressions are lost sight of. Yet they remain. Yea, they are continually being awakened and brought to consciousness by the angels. Then if we desire to consciously possess these heavenly qualities, we require to sacrifice that which is purely selfish and worldly. The removal of this evil to gain good is vastation for those who become angels. (A. 2959, 7984) This process of vastation or desolation is the subject treated of by Zephaniah in the first part of his prophecy. The recovery of remains is pictured in the latter part. Vastation always precedes the restoration of remains. In other words, it is impossible to regain heaven except through temptation and judgment. And the more latent remains a person desires to recover, the severer the trials. Our prophet presents a dreadful picture of the judgment - the day of wrath—and a correspondingly beautiful picture of restoration. The name Zephaniah means "what Jehovah hath hidden," and the prophecy seems to suggest the severe trial endured to reveal the remains which the Lord has hidden away in the interior, and restore them to life. "Sing, O daughter of Zion: shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. Jehovah hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, Jehovah, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more." (Zeph. 3:14-15)

## **Lesson 67**

### **Haggai: A New Church**

## **THE STORY**

### **Primary**

The thing which the people who came back to Jerusalem from Babylon had most in mind to do was to build again the temple of the Lord. King Solomon had built a temple of stones and cedar wood and much gold. It was very beautiful and very holy, but it had been thrown down and

burned by Nebuchadnezzar's soldiers when the Jews were taken captives to Babylon. Those who came back from Babylon found the temple a sad ruin, parts of the walls still standing perhaps, blackened by fire. They must rebuild the temple. It was what they wished to do, and what Cyrus especially charged them to do. But there were troubles and delays. All that they did at first was to rebuild the altar in the temple court where the holy fire could be kept burning and sacrifices could be offered. It would seem that they also among the ruins laid foundations for the temple; but the work got no further for a long time, for seventeen years, while the people were doing other things, and some of them were living in fine houses that they built for themselves. Perhaps they never would have found spirit and courage to build the temple if it had not been for two prophets sent by the Lord, Haggai and Zechariah, who stirred up the people and their governor Zerubbabel and the chief priest Joshua, and gave them courage from the Lord. Both prophets, but especially Haggai, encouraged them to the building of the temple. They went to work in the thought that it was a work that the Lord called them to do, and it was finished. The temple again was built. While we read some of the words that Haggai spoke, you can look at a picture of rebuilding the temple, and you can see in our little picture the very place where the temple stood. Read Hag. 1.

## **Junior**

Read what I have said to the younger children, and we will fill out a little more the history which is the background of the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah. Where did we first hear these prophets mentioned? See Ezra 5:1; 6:14. Who can describe to us the place, the people, and the conditions to which the prophets spoke? The place: Jerusalem. The people: the company of Jews come back from the captivity in Babylon. The conditions: the city and temple in ruins, which they came with the purpose to rebuild. (Ezra 1:2-3) But the people must make some provision for their families, and there was much delay in rebuilding the city and the temple. They did build the altar (Ezra 3:2-6) and seem to have made some beginning in laying foundations for the temple. Then long delay, seventeen years. What do you remember as the greatest hindrance to the work and the chief cause of delay? Interference by the neighbors? (Ezra 4; Neh. 4) What able leaders of the Jewish colony do you remember? In the pages of Haggai and Zechariah, we find Zerubbabel, the governor (a grandson of Jehoiachin, one of the last kings in Jerusalem before the captivity); and we find Joshua the chief priest (a grandson of Seraiah, who was chief priest at the time of the destruction of the temple). But the real strength and courage to take up the work on the temple in earnest and to carry it through came from the Lord by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. They were at the same time in Jerusalem. The date of Haggai's prophecy is very exactly given. He spoke four times, all in the second year of Darius. This was 520 B.C. It was in the same year that Darius found the decree of Cyrus and stopped the hindering of the builders. (Ezra 4:24) This Darius is the king who made the expedition against Greece and was defeated by the Greeks at Marathon, 490 B.C. We can read the whole of Haggai's message: it is short. It is all with one purpose, to help forward the building of the temple.

It was very necessary that the Jews should have a temple and a common place of worship if their religion was to be kept alive. It was the more necessary now that they were not independent in their government, but subject to a foreign power. The people have not prospered, and the prophet tells them that it is because they have neglected the Lord in not building His house. They have built their own houses and neglected the Lord's house. (Hag. 1:4, 9) In Hag. 2:3, 9, we find reference to

the former house. The old men weep as they remember it. See Ezra 3:10-13. But the prophet tells them that the temple they now build will be more glorious than the former temple. Who built the "former" temple that had been destroyed? Who can tell us something about that temple? The temple now building could hardly be outwardly as rich and beautiful as the temple of Solomon, although the prophet pictures it as to be adorned by gifts from many nations. But if it were built by the labor and self-sacrifice of people humbled in spirit, it would be more pleasing to the Lord.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Building and rebuilding the temple have for us a lesson in regard to the building of a heavenly character, for the temple represents every dwelling-place of the Lord: a person living a true life, a church, heaven, and the Lord Himself, the perfect dwelling-place of the Divine with humankind. The pattern of the temple, following the pattern of the tabernacle, reflects the order of a true life and of heaven. We see it in the most holy chamber, the holy chamber, and the open court, and in the furniture and service belonging to each part. We see it in the materials of the temple, the stone, the cedar and the gold. (A. 6637, 7847; E. 220, 630)

Such a lesson we see in the building of Solomon's temple, and in this rebuilding. But in rebuilding the temple, there is something more, the thought of building again a life which has been injured by coming under the power of evil. The evil must be repented of and rejected by the Lord's help, and a new effort must be made by the soul released from captivity, to build life by the Lord's commandments, with His help. It may seem to us that the injured life can never be beautiful again, and yet it can, if repentance is sincere and one is brave and patient in the work of rebuilding, with the Lord's help. It is the lesson of the Lord's mercy that we learned in the re-making of the vessel that was marred on the potter's wheel. (Jer. 18:1-10) Remember, too, what is said of the keeping of the Passover by Josiah after destroying idols and the places of idol worship. (2 Kings 23:22-23) To these Scriptures we may add the verses of Haggai about the glory of the latter house. (Hag. 2:3, 9) It is the lesson of the Lord's parables of repentance. (Luke 15) Read carefully the explanation of Haggai in Prophets and Psalms.

The prophecy opens with a message of encouragement to rebuild, and closes with the promise of making Zerubbabel, of the house of David, "as a signet," a means of attesting the Divine truth. He thus represents the Lord who "bore record of Himself, and whose record is true" (John 8:14, 18), who is the truth itself.

## **Lesson 68**

### **Zechariah: A New Manhood**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We are again in Jerusalem with the people who had come back from captivity in Babylon and were trying to build again the city and the temple which were in ruins. People of the country hindered them and the work was not getting on. The people also were doing other things, building their own houses and neglecting the Lord's house. The walls of Jerusalem were still in ruins when Nehemiah came to Jerusalem and rode out at night to see the walls. There were good leaders in the work, Nehemiah among them, but the real courage and patience to rebuild came from the Lord in messages spoken by Haggai and Zechariah. Here is the Book of Haggai. It is short; only two chapters. Zechariah comes next to Haggai in the Bible. How many chapters does it have? This prophecy also made the people feel that in building the city and the temple they were doing the Lord's work, and they would succeed. "Not by might nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." (Zech. 4:6) What they could build seemed poor, but the Lord would make it glorious.

Hear from Zechariah this beautiful description of Jerusalem made glorious by the Lord. Read chapter 8. The Lord will dwell with His people in Jerusalem and in Mount Zion, His holy mountain. It is no ruined city, which the prophet describes, but a city full of life. In it are old men and old women, every man with his staff in his hand, and many boys and girls playing in the streets and open squares. Let the people be brave to go on with the building of the temple as they were who laid the foundation years before. "Let your hands be strong."

But the city could not be beautiful unless the people would do right, speaking truth to their neighbors, dealing truthfully and in peace, not even in their hearts thinking evil or speaking evil of each other, "for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord." The worship of the Lord would be joyful. Strangers would feel how good it was to live so with the Lord, and would want to live with His people and be like them. As we read, the Jerusalem with ruined temple and ruined walls is forgotten, the beautiful city seems so real. The people who heard it from the prophet were encouraged to go forward with the work of building.

##### **Junior**

We think of Haggai and Zechariah together. They were at the same time in Jerusalem, giving from the Lord the encouragement needed by the people to go forward with the building of the city and the temple. The place and historical background are the same for both these prophets. Last week I told you; this week you can tell me about it. Where were these two prophets? Was it the beautiful Jerusalem that we used to know? Why was it in ruins? Who are these few discouraged people to whom the prophets are speaking? What difficulties have they had in trying to rebuild? What good leaders have they had? Who is now the governor, and who the chief priest? (Hag. 1:1) They were good leaders, but the people needed encouragement from the Lord, and it came by the two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah. We have read Haggai's prophecy. What was his message?

Zechariah's prophecy is longer and not so easy to read. But its first eight chapters have the same purpose as Haggai, to encourage the people in rebuilding. In the first eight chapters, Zechariah describes visions which were shown him and explained to him by an angel. The visions were of horsemen, of lamps and olive trees, of a flying roll, of chariots, and of other things. They all meant encouragement and led up to the description of Jerusalem made glorious, which we read today in the eighth chapter.

The thoughts that I have given to the younger children about this chapter may help you in the reading. As the people heard the words of Zechariah, they had the earthly Jerusalem in mind, and they thought of earthly glory. But the prophecy almost tells us to look for a spiritual fulfillment when it calls Jerusalem a "city of truth" (verse 3), and when it tells so plainly the things that we must do, not natural building but the doing of Christian works and thinking Christian thoughts which the Lord can love and bless. (Verses 16, 17) Does the picture of Jerusalem given by Zechariah remind you of another Scripture picture of a holy Jerusalem? In the later chapters of Zechariah, one verse stands out, Zech. 9:9. When did this prophecy have fulfillment? The people of those days did not know it, or knew it only very dimly, but all the bright prophecies were pointing forward to the coming of the Lord and to the blessing of His coming. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Rev. 19:10)

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The prophecies had fulfillment in the coming of the Lord, yet not a complete fulfillment in the Lord's birth and earthly presence. They are eternal promises and will be more and more fulfilled as the church develops and becomes more spiritual and heavenly. We say truly that the prophecies looked to the coming of the Lord ("As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began," Luke 1:70), and also we find Swedenborg interpreting them in relation to the Christian Church. Jerusalem as a type of the church did not have complete fulfillment in the Jewish Church nor in the first Christian Church, but is to find fuller realization in a New Church which the Lord is now working to establish in the world. The ideal moves on before the church, unfolding more and more its meaning. The picture of the glorious Jerusalem given by the Lord to inspire the Jews to the rebuilding of the city and the temple was given to inspire for all time those who are working with the Lord to build the city and temple of Christian character and of the church.

I comment on the eighth chapter as we read. The Lord will renew the consciousness of His presence with His church, making it as real and as full of power and blessing as it was with the first Christians. The old men and women in the city are types of the wisdom which will be with the people of the church. Age leaning upon the staff is the type of wisdom made more perfect by a sense of its own weakness and of dependence upon the Lord. The children are types of ever new developments of innocent affection and thought, and the playing is their joyful activity. The lack of hire and the destitution which had been before these days describe the poverty and unsatisfactoriness of natural life when unprotected from the attacks of evil, and lacking the inspiration from inward touch with the Lord. From this source even natural life will be blessed. (A. 2348; E. 652, 863)

"These are the things that ye shall do." It seems at first like a sudden transition to another plane of thought. As so often in the Scriptures, the truth seems to grow impatient with types and figures and comes plainly out with its message to spiritual life. It is what all this lesson of building is about.

That the fasts shall be feasts of joy declares that even the repentance and self-sacrifice in the Christian life will be made glad by the sense that it is in the service of the Lord. Compare the words of Isaiah in Isa. 58:5-8 and the Lord's words in Matt. 6:16-18.

The chapter closes with the inspiring picture of the inhabitants of many cities encouraging one another to seek the Lord in Jerusalem. Many people of the world will feel the goodness of those who live in love of the Lord, who are meant by Jews, and will wish to share that life with them. (E. 433)

"We will go with you, for we have heard [have felt] that God is with you." Read the interpretation of the chapter in Prophets and Psalms.

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: A New Church

Our last talk was on the subject of Babylon, that it means the love of rule or dominion, especially the love of dominating the minds and souls of others. It is this dreadful love of dominion which has caused the many wars for the enslavement and subjugation of other people. And we may well believe that it was owing to this love that the Babylonish empire came into existence. Nor can we doubt that it was this very love in the hearts of the Jewish people that led them to sin so much until they were punished by being taken captive and led away to Babylon.

When the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world, He came in order to lead people away from thoughts of dominion and the love of it. He did not wish to control others. He did not wish to make others His slaves. He taught people that instead of trying to control each other, they should love each other, and serve them. You may remember that He showed this very plainly by doing the lowest service anyone can perform for another: He washed the feet of His disciples. (John 13:4-17)

Before the Lord's coming, then, people, even those who had the Word of the Old Testament, and those other nations that had had the Ancient Word, thought of dominion and wealth and lusted after them. This removed people from the Lord and brought the Church to an end. Even the prophets did not themselves understand what was the real reason for the calamities that had overtaken Israel and Judah, and so the Lord could not, through them, teach people plainly about it: He could tell people only by pictures, or representatives. When He Himself came into the world, He taught them more plainly; but He also taught them through pictures, as through the picture of being born poor and in a stable; through the picture of not having a place to lay His head; through the picture of washing His disciples' feet.

It was necessary that people should know, hundreds of years before the Lord came, that He was going to come and to establish a new kingdom, and so the Lord told it through the prophets.

The prophet Zechariah, as you know, lived at the time when the Jews were in the Babylonish captivity, and when they were returning to rebuild the temple. The Lord made use of the pictures about Jerusalem and Zion that were in the mind of Zechariah to have him tell about things that were going to be done by the Lord when He would come into the world. Zechariah himself did not at all understand what the Lord's meaning was that He put into the words which Zechariah heard and wrote, and into the visions which he saw and told about in his prophecy.

But the Lord has taught us in the Writings of the New Church what He meant by Zechariah's prophecy.

You know that the name of our Church, "The New Jerusalem" means "the New Church." It is a name that was given by the Lord Himself, in the book of Revelation. "Jerusalem" means the Church. Wherever "Jerusalem" is mentioned in the Word, whether in the Old Testament or in the New, it means the Church, sometimes the true church, sometimes the false church. Now, you know what constitutes the Church. You know that having a church building, going to it on Sundays and other days, praying, singing, listening to the sermon, reading the Word and the Writings—that all this, important as it is, does not of itself constitute the Church. You know that the Church consists in doing all this, but for the purpose of learning the truth from the Lord, loving that truth, and living according to it every day.

There are therefore two things to a Church - one is the Lord's teaching received into our understanding, the other is the goodness received into our heart by loving the Lord and living according to the teaching.

These are the two essentials of the Church. We cannot have the one without the other, and be the Lord's Church.

Because it is altogether necessary to have both, therefore the Lord always refers to both. Over and over again, when He speaks of Jerusalem, He also speaks of Zion, for Jerusalem means the Church as to the truths of its doctrine, and Zion means the Church as to the good of its life. You will notice this in this chapter by Zechariah.

All cities signify teachings, or doctrines, for "doctrine" means exactly the same thing as "teaching." But a mountain, because it is a high piece of land, signifies love. Jerusalem is called a city. Zion is called a mountain.

The first three verses of this chapter therefore teach that the Lord would institute a church in which would be the doctrine of truth and goodness. He did not institute this Church when the Jews returned from the Babylonish captivity, rebuilding the temple and settling down again in Jerusalem and the surrounding country, but He instituted it when He came into the world five hundred years later. And because the Church He then instituted eventually became Babylon, therefore He again instituted the New Church, after the Last Judgment in the year 1757. All that is said in this chapter tells of what will be in the New Church, which is beginning very small, like a grain of mustard seed, but which in the course of thousands of years will grow like a tree; it will have all these beautiful things that are described in this chapter.

And what are these beautiful things? Well, beginning with the beautiful doctrines that we have, the "Doctrines of the New Jerusalem," when people generally live according to them with all their heart, there will be wisdom and innocence. Wisdom does not mean to know many things, it

means to act prudently in accordance with the true order of life; and innocence does not mean to be ignorant, but to be devoid of all deceit and guile, and of all desire to harm others in thought, word, or deed. Wisdom is pictured by "old men and old women who should dwell in the streets of Jerusalem," for old men and old women, who have all their lives worked hard to overcome their selfishness and love of the world, have become wise. Innocence is pictured forth by the "boys and girls playing in the streets," for little children are still surrounded by the innocent angels of the highest or celestial heaven.

As you grow older, you will love to study the spiritual sense of the prophecy of Zechariah, as it is glorious. But for the present, it may be enough to dwell on what we have been learning just now, and to think how very important the Lord thinks it is that there should be a Church in which people are wise and innocent, for He foretold it thousands of years before He could begin the institution of such a Church. You have the great privilege of being in this Church. You ought to realize that you need to become actually a member of it, and you become one by loving to read the Word, trying to understand its heavenly teaching, and then faithfully, persistently, and lovingly living according to it. Look forward to your old age, as being the time when, through having fought against evil and false thoughts and desires and words and actions, you will become truly wise and innocent, and so be able to perform the very highest and best use for people in this world, and for angels in heaven. Then, when you go to sleep for the last time, you will awake in heaven, your spiritual body will grow young again, you yourself will grow wiser and wiser and more and more innocent, finding the greatest happiness in doing some heavenly work to make others in heaven and on earth happy.

## **Lesson 69**

### **Zechariah 14: The Lord to be King**

#### **CONTENTS**

The first section of this prophecy (chapters 1-8) clearly deals with the great event of the rebuilding of the temple. The second section (chapters 9-14) is entirely devoid of historical references. Commentators have sought to assign a date to it mainly from the names of places and words used in it. They have endeavored also to identify certain obscure utterances as having reference to specific historical events. Thus 12:11 is supposed to refer to the national mourning for the death of Josiah at the battle of Megiddo. (2 Chron. 35:24-25) But all such identifications are merely hypothetical. The date for determining the age to which this section belongs and the circumstances under which it was written are very uncertain. "They elude us by their indefiniteness and baffle us by their inconsistency. The didactic element gives way almost entirely to the apocalyptic." The last six chapters are full of symbol and allegory or parable, and are with one exception not intended to be taken literally. That exception is the well known passage in chapter 9:9. (See Matt. 21.)

It is impossible to construct any connected statement of the parts of these chapters. They are not related to each other in any way in the letter. For this reason they are little read, and it is difficult to remember their contents.

The fourteenth chapter presents a vision of a day of judgment and redemption. Jerusalem is destroyed. Half her inhabitants are taken into captivity. Then the Lord comes to perform judgment. That day shall be a gloomy one - "not day nor night" - but "at evening time it shall be light." Living waters shall proceed from the city, and the Lord shall be made king over all the earth. "In that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one." Jerusalem shall be exalted, and people shall dwell safely therein. The enemies who fought against her shall perish by the plague and internecine warfare. But all who come to worship the Lord at Jerusalem shall be preserved. Everything within the temple shall be consecrated to the Lord: nothing that is unclean shall enter therein.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

"Behold the day of the Lord cometh." It is the time of judgment. The Lord fights against those who are in evil and disperses them. (P. P.; E. 405) That day is known only to the Lord. The state when humanity is ripe for judgment is known to the Lord alone. That day is "not day nor night: but it shall be that at evening time it shall be light." The time when the Passover was prepared was "between the evenings." (Exod. 12:6, marg.) That was a time of judgment. Likewise the cloud that preceded the children of Israel out of Egypt gave light by night to them but was darkness to the Egyptians. (Exod. 14:20) At eventide it is light means that "it is evening to the evil [their last state], but light to the good." (E. 405) When living waters proceed from Jerusalem, Divine truths proceed from the Lord. And He "shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one." This is one of the forcible passages in the Old Testament respecting the unity of the Lord the Savior as the only God in heaven and in earth. (L. 45) "In that day," when evil is subdued His Sole Sovereignty is clearly recognized.

The bells of the horses upon which were inscribed the words "HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD" present an interesting and beautiful picture. "The bells of the horses signify scientifcs and knowledges and thence preachings, which are from the understanding of truth: and since all understanding of the truth is from the Lord, and thence the knowledges and preachings themselves, therefore it is said that upon the bells of the horses will be Holiness to Jehovah." (E. 355) On the hem of Aaron's garment, there were pomegranates and bells of gold. "And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and his voice [i.e., the sound of the bells] shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not." (Exod. 25:33-35) The bells "signify all things of doctrine and of worship passing to those who are of the church, and this because by means of the bells the people heard and perceived the presence of Aaron in ministering." (A. 9921) When the Lord comes, all knowledges from the understanding of truth, and every lowest form of truth (every pot in Jerusalem) shall be consecrated to His service. And no Canaanite or merchant shall enter the house of the Lord. His house shall be a house of prayer and not frequented by any moneychangers, any self-seeking spirit. (Matt. 21:12) "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Rev. 21:27)

## **Lesson 70**

### **Malachi 3; 4: Preparation for the Lord's Coming**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Captives had come back from Babylon to Jerusalem, and with many troubles had built again the temple and the city walls which had been in ruins. Two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, encouraged them in the work.

A little time has passed, and another prophet is speaking in Jerusalem. He is called Malachi, "my messenger." The temple had been built, but the people and the priests were neglecting the sacrifices and the worship. They had grown tired of them. They called them wearisome, and said they were of no use. Malachi rebuked them and called on them to be faithful in their tithes and offerings. (The tithe was the tenth of increase which was the Lord's.) "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." (Mal. 3:10)

A still greater interest in Malachi is that this last book of the Old Testament looks forward so clearly to the New Testament and the coming of the Lord, and to John the Baptist who would come before the Lord, calling the people to repent of their evil ways and to be ready for Him. The Lord when He should come, the prophet said, would be like one who purifies gold and silver in the fire, and like one who washes cloth with soap. Some who heard the prophet began hoping for the Lord, and when the Lord came there were some people expecting Him, who were made glad by His coming. "But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings." (Mal. 4:2)

##### **Junior**

Which is the last prophet in the Old Testament? Malachi, which means "my messenger." The background of this prophet is nearly the same as of Haggai and Zechariah, but the time is a little later. What was the special message of Haggai and Zechariah? When Malachi spoke, the building was done, but the people were neglecting the worship. Malachi rebuked their unfaithfulness and urged them to be honest with the Lord. Look through the chapters of Malachi and see some of the ways in which the people and priests were unfaithful. They offered to the Lord animals diseased and lame and blind. (Mal. 1:13-14) They polluted their offerings by their spirit of irreverence, calling them contemptible, wearisome, worthless. (Mal. 1:12-13; 3:14-15) They robbed God of tithes and offerings. (Mal. 2:8-10) What were the tithes? (Gen. 28:22; Lev. 27:30-32) They were guilty of many sins (Mal. 2:5), and especially of putting away their wives, which is displeasing to the Lord. (Mal. 2:11-16) This also made their offerings unacceptable. They loved evil, their heart was not in their worship. The Lord would come to purify them, as with fire and soap. Compare Luke 3:16. (There are interesting descriptions of the refiner working at his furnace.) Then their offerings would be pleasing to the Lord, and great blessing would be poured out to them from heaven.

"Then they that feared the Lord." Who at the Lord's coming were waiting and expecting? The shepherds? The wise men? Simeon and Anna, and others like them. (Luke 2:25-38) "Burn as an oven." (Mal. 4:1) We remember Luke 12:28, and think of the earthen oven in which a fire was made with brush and stubble to make it hot for baking. "The healing wings" is a beautiful name for the beams of the rising sun. For "grow up" the Revised Version reads "gambol." The law of Moses and Horeb is especially the Ten Commandments. How shall we understand this promise of Elijah's coming? Who preached repentance, preparing people for the Lord? Yes, John the Baptist. John was not the man Elijah come again (John 1:21), yet the Lord said of John, "This is Elias which was for to come." (Matt. 17:12-13) The mission of Elijah and John the Baptist was the same, to teach people to keep the Lord's laws. The angel announcing the birth of John said, "And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke 1:17) The angel was quoting this prophecy of Malachi.

There were about four hundred and fifty years between the prophecy and the fulfillment, but the last words of Malachi are like a bridge across the years, connecting the Old Testament with the New, the prophecies with the coming of the Lord and of John the Baptist.

(Zechariah and Zacharias are two writings of one name, but it will help us to keep separate the prophet of the Old Testament and the father of John the Baptist to remember one as Zechariah and the other as Zacharias, as our Bible calls them.)

## Retrospect

It will be useful now that we have reached the last of the prophecies to glance over the names of all and see how many of them awaken distinctive recollections in connection with their prophecies. There is first the stern shepherd prophet Amos with his unrelenting condemnation of the children of Israel. Then comes Hosea with his severe indictment modified by expressions of pity and mercy for the sufferers. Next follows Joel who emphasizes the nature of the impending judgment and describes its horrors by the plague of locusts. Obadiah's short message concerns only the judgment of Edom. And Jonah turns the thought to the needs of the ignorant Gentiles. How shall we describe the prophecy by Isaiah? Two things at least rise into prominence immediately when his name is mentioned. The one is his teaching regarding the remnant, and the other the promises regarding the coming Savior, of the root and stem of Jesse. Micah pronounces judgment on Samaria and on Jerusalem. His name also recalls that beautiful passage beginning, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" Nahum takes us eastward to the judgment awaiting Nineveh. Habakkuk raises and at the same time answers the great question of the Lord's providence in permitting evil, in particular the evil about to befall Judah. The prophet Zephaniah emphasizes that dreadful day, that day of wrath. Then comes the sad martyr Jeremiah, rejected and finally carried captive into Egypt. Ezekiel reminds us of the captivity in Babylon, and the great vision of the temple. Daniel's experiences and visions in exile are not readily forgotten. The words of consolation and the bright promises of the restoration at hand by Isaiah bring the full light of a new morn on the same. Then come Haggai and Zechariah with their instructions to rebuild the temple, with added visions of the future from the latter prophet. And what now is the chief characteristic of Malachi? Since the rebuilding of the temple the services there had again become corrupt. The people also were marrying "the daughters of a strange god." Malachi condemns priests and people for their profanity and infidelity. He has also a special word regarding "my

messenger, who shall prepare the way before me." "Who may abide the day of his coming?" The word Malachi means "my messenger."

Can we now work out the approximate dates in which these sixteen prophets delivered their messages? First, however, let us recall the dates of the most important events to which prophecy largely pointed. Can anyone tell what took place in 732, 722, 607, 586, and 538 B.C.? These dates indicate the fall of the five great cities of the East. We may place Amos, Hosea, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah as prior to the first two; Nahum as immediately connected with the third; Isaiah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah as particularly associated with the fourth; Ezekiel, Daniel, and Isaiah as leading up to the fifth; and Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi as bridging over the period down to the coming of the Lord in 5 B.C.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

All the prophets addressed conditions of their day and promised deliverance, near at hand. But their words also looked forward to the great deliverance in the coming of the Lord. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Rev. 19:10) Of none is this more true than of Malachi, so that the last words of the Old Testament join it closely with the New.

Prophets and Psalms shows many indications of the spiritual condition rebuked in Malachi, a state in which hearts are evil and worship is profaned. There is contempt and loathing in the worship where there should be the soul's deepest joy. Instead of strong and pure affections, those that are diseased and lame and blind are brought as offerings. With other evils named is especially the putting away of wives, which represents unfaithfulness in the soul's deepest obligation to the Lord. Yet from all this they may be cleansed and the worship of heart and mind may again be pleasant to the Lord "as in the days of old and in former years," as in the innocent days of the Most Ancient and of the Ancient Church. (E.433; A. 10248)

This is to be at the coming of the Lord. The refining by fire and the cleansing by washing suggest purifying of heart and mind, of affections and thoughts.

The tithe is the Lord's part in any experience of life, what there is in the experience of eternal value to be laid up in the treasury of the soul. If there is in our days, in our work and pleasure, no thought of the Lord and nothing of eternal value, we are robbing Him of tithes; He cannot give His blessing. If we will cease to rob God and will in all things remember His tithe, each thing, each experience so used is an open window to His blessing. (A. 3740)

"Then they that feared the Lord." A beautiful picture is given. The close drawing together of those who fear the Lord is suggested. The books of life are opened, and the preciousness of these lives appears. There is separation between the righteous and the wicked. The judgment is marked by fire, the revealing of the heart's love, the Lord's healing love with the good, and their own selfish love with the evil. Compare Matt. 13:42-43; A. 9141; E. 279.

The keeping of the Lord's law, especially the Ten Commandments, is declared to be the needed preparation for the Lord and for the blessed life which He brings. The statutes are especially laws of worship, and the judgments are civil laws. The Divine law in its letter is personified in Elijah

and in John the Baptist, for their character and mission are nearly the same. As to the relation of Elijah and John, compare John 1:21; Matt. 17:12-13; Luke 1:17. Those who listened to John received the Lord. Those who rejected John did not receive Him. (Luke 7:29-30; 20:2-8) As explaining the "great and dreadful day of the Lord," we are told that because John's baptism represented repentance, it was the means of associating with people an influence of heaven, without which they could not have borne the Lord's presence. Turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their father means also the turning of love toward truth and of truth toward love. To a divided mind, the Lord's presence would bring torture. To a mind thus united, it brings blessing. (E. 724)

The study of the prophets has taken us through as it were a wonderful succession of days. Their messages depict the successive states of the church. And each individual is a church in miniature. Sometimes the days opened with bright sunshine: "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God" (Isa. 40:1); and possibly continued bright throughout. But often they became dark and cloudy. "That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress." (Zeph. 1:15) Frequently the angry clouds would break and let the sunlight through. "Who is a God like Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not His anger forever, because He delighteth in mercy." (Micah 7:18) But occasionally the storm burst forth, and it seemed as if total destruction awaited the inhabitants of the earth. "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers." (Isa. 1:7) Yet the night passes away, and the morrow, though gloomy, brings more hope. "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom." (Isa. 1:9) "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning." (Lam. 3:22) So day succeeds day. Thus passed also the days of the Lord's life; sometimes dark, sometimes stormy, and sometimes bright. (T. 104) And this is the pattern of our lives. The knowledge of this fact brings us out of the dark states through which we must pass into the brightness of His Own Loving Presence. "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings." (Mal. 4:2)

This is the great lesson of the Prophets. Evil may disturb our peace of mind and drag us down into the depths of despair, but it cannot conquer, if the Lord be on our side. Israel's enemies shall all finally be vanquished. The Assyrians and Babylonians may destroy Samaria and Jerusalem. They cannot stamp the nation out of existence. Jerusalem shall be rebuilt, but Nineveh and Babylon fall never to rise again. The returned remnant in Jerusalem may desecrate the temple and prove unfaithful to the Lord, yet this final test is but a preparation for the fullest reception of the Lord. It is the complete and perfect refining and purging of the sons of Levi, "that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." (Mal. 3:3)

The trials depicted in the prophets are necessary to lift a person out of the sloughs of selfishness and worldliness to "keep back his soul from the pit." They are the sole means of healing the soul of all its diseases, and redeeming the life from destruction. And this health and redemption are synonymous with salvation, which is the subject of the prophets. The name of the first prophet describes the message of them all. Isaiah means "Jehovah is my Savior." It is the same as the name Jesus: "He shall save His people from their sins." The end or purpose of suffering, in whatever form, is salvation. (P. 281) "The Divine Providence of the Lord has for its end a heaven from the human race" (P. 27), and all things are made to contribute to this end. Not everyone is saved. But "man himself is to blame if he is not saved." (P. 327) Therefore, we ought to cooperate with the

Lord, bear our trials in patience, shun whatever is evil, and so be prepared to abide the coming of "that great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5), pass through it uninjured, and rise victoriously with the risen Lord to live with Him in the place prepared for us by the Lord forever.

## Lesson 71

### Maccabees (Historical): Temple Defiled and Rededicated

#### HISTORICAL STUDY

##### Junior

We have learned how the Jews who came back from Babylon rebuilt Jerusalem and the temple, and began to prosper again in their old home under the favor of the king of Persia. When we open the New Testament, we find Herod king, and the great nation that gave him power was not Persia but Rome. The story of the time between the Old Testament and the New (about 440 years), which brought about this change, is told in part in the books of Maccabees, which are sometimes bound with our Bible, though they are not a part of the Lord's Word.

The greatest name among the Jews in the time between the Old Testament and the New is Judas Maccabees, who with wonderful courage and skill and trust in the Lord saved the Jewish people from the Greeks. You know how Alexander the Great went out from Macedonia in northern Greece, and conquered Egypt and Babylon and Persia, and most of the then known world. Alexander came to Jerusalem in 333 B.C. and the Jews submitted to him peaceably. When Alexander died in Babylon, he divided the conquered countries among his generals. Palestine was held now by the family of Seleucus reigning at Antioch to the north, and now by the family of Ptolemy reigning in Egypt.

The Jews prospered in an outward way, but their religion was becoming mixed with what they learned from the Greeks. There was danger that the worship of the Lord would gradually be forgotten. By and by, Antiochus Epiphanes (168 B.C.), who was king at Antioch, forbade the keeping of the laws of Moses. He defiled the temple in Jerusalem by sacrificing swine to idols and commanded the books of the law to be burned. Sad Psalms were sung in those days, some of them perhaps for the first time, like Ps. 74 and 79, and it seemed as if the nation and religion of the Jews would be destroyed. But really this persecution was useful, for it awakened the people to defend their faith.

A brave priest Mattathias in the little village of Modin, a few miles northwest of Jerusalem, refused to offer sacrifice to idols, and killed the officer of the king who brought the command. It was the beginning of a great revolt against the Greeks and of strict obedience to the law of Moses. Judas Maccabaeus, "the hammerer," a son of Mattathias, became the leader. His little band grew to an army, and he gained one splendid victory after another over much larger armies which the Greeks sent against him. One battle was at Bethhoren, where Joshua had gained his victory over the southern kings, and another was by the valley of Elah where David had killed Goliath. Judas remembered how the Lord had helped His people in the old days, and he had faith that He would help them still. His courage and skill and his grand faith inspired new life into the Jews. After

three great victories, Judas and his men cleansed the temple and built a new altar in place of the one that had been defiled, and dedicated it again to the worship of the Lord. It was on the fifteenth day of the ninth month, which was in the early winter and they commanded that a feast of eight days should be kept each year at this season in memory of the dedication. (1 Mac. 4:36-59; 2 Mac. 10:1-9)

But what of the Romans? Their first power in Palestine came about in this way. Though Judas Maccabaeus had gained victories and rededicated the temple, he met some defeats before his death. He saw that the enemies of his people were growing stronger, and that the Jews and their religion would yet be destroyed unless they had the help of some great strong nation. He had heard of the Romans, that they were strong and that they were true friends to those who made a league with them. So he sent messengers to Rome, which was a very long journey in those days, and an alliance was made between the Jews and the Romans, that they would help each other. (1 Mac. 8) Before the messengers came back, Judas had been killed in a battle, but the league was made and was renewed by the brothers of Judas. (1 Mac. 12:1-23; 14:16-24)

The new strength which began with Judas Maccabaeus increased for fifty years, and for a time the Jews were independent. It is sad to learn how the descendants of Judas' family lost the noble spirit of their fathers and quarreled among themselves. This opened the way to the Romans. Pompey took Jerusalem (63 B.C.), and Crassus plundered it. Roman power made Herod king, and his wife Mariamne was the last of the family of the Maccabees.

The courage and skill and faith in the Lord of Judas Maccabaeus saved the Jewish nation. The Scriptures were studied with new interest, and two classes of students grew up, the Sadducees and Pharisees. And as they studied the Scriptures, they began to notice more and more the promise of the Messiah, till all the people were looking for the King, and each year a feast was kept in memory of the cleansing and rededicating of the temple by Judas Maccabaeus. "And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch." (John 10:22-23)

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

It is interesting to notice the preparation for the coming of the Lord, and for preserving and spreading abroad the knowledge of His life. Not only was the work of the Maccabees useful, but the sending back of the Jews by Cyrus with much of the learning of the East, and the conquest by Alexander which brought the more worldly learning of the West and opened communication with Europe and the Roman power which spread a hush of outward peace and order over the world.

The yielding of the Persian power to the Greek is mentioned in the prophecy of Daniel, in the vision of the ram and the male goat, where it is said that the ram with two horns is the kings of Media and Persia, and the rough goat is the king of Greece. (Dan. 8:20-21) Persia and Greece, therefore, stand for the same elements of character as the ram and goat, which we know are charity and mere intellectual strength. (E. 66; A. 4769; E. 632) The temple is defiled by the Greeks when we trust in mere knowledge and live evil self-indulgent lives. Then we need to rise up with courage and with trust in the Divine strength and rededicate the temple.

Did the Lord also need to resist in people and in His own human nature this tendency to intellectual pride and self-indulgence? Does not the Gospel tell us so when it speaks of Jesus in the temple, in the winter, at the feast of dedication? Notice also the character of those who met Him there.

## Lesson 72

### Psalms 98: 4, 5, 96: The Psalms: Poetry and Song

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Do you like to sing songs, glad Christmas songs and Easter songs, in church and Sunday school? Many Psalms call on us to sing unto the Lord. "O come, let us sing unto the Lord." (Ps. 95) "O sing unto the Lord a new song." (Ps. 96 and 98) "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord...Come before His presence with singing." (Ps. 100) The Psalms speak, too, of praising the Lord with all kinds of music. (Ps. 150) Several kinds of musical instruments are named. Some of them would seem to us rude, and the music harsh. But it was made sad or joyful, soft or loud, according to the words that were sung. We can think of music in the earlier days, when we read the story of David's bringing up the ark to Jerusalem, in 2 Sam. 6:4, 15. Perhaps at that time they may have sung Ps. 24: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates." Afterward when the temple had been built by Solomon, there were choirs of singers, with musicians to teach and lead them. There was much singing in the services, sometimes one choir answering to another: and the words that they sang in the temple were the Psalms, the same that we can learn to say and learn to sing. Is there some Psalm that we can sing? Perhaps Ps. 24, and think that we are with David bringing up the ark. Or Ps. 122, and imagine that we are gathering with happy pilgrims in the temple.

##### Junior

The Psalms are poetry and song. How can we call them poetry? They have no rhyme, and they have no regular meter. But they have a rhythm and a balance of lines, which is instead of rhyme and meter.

"The heavens declare the glory of God;

And the firmament showeth his handiwork.

Day unto day uttereth speech,

And night unto night showeth knowledge." (Ps. 19)

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,

From whence cometh my help.

My help cometh from the Lord,

Who made heaven and earth." (Ps. 121)

Sometimes the lines are balanced in pairs, sometimes in threes or in fours. There are other parts of the Bible that are in poetry besides the Psalms: the song of Moses in Ex. 15; David's lament for Jonathan, 2 Sam. 1; the Lamentations; and many others. Some Bibles are printed so that we can see what is poetry when we read.

The Psalms also were sung. I have talked with the younger children a little about the music. The titles printed above many of the Psalms remind us that they are songs and were sung by the temple choirs. For example, the title of Ps. 4, "To the chief Musician on Neginoth." Neginoth means stringed instruments. The chief stringed instruments were a small harp and a larger psaltery. Ps. 5, "To the chief Musician upon Nehiloth." "Nehiloth" means wind instruments, of which the most important were the flute; the horn, made at first of a ram's horn and later sometimes of metal; and the trumpet, long and made of silver.

The titles of other Psalms indicate a familiar tune to which the Psalm was sung, as Ps. 22, "The Hind of the Morning"; Ps. 45, "Set to The Lilies." It is as if a song in our hymn-book were marked, "Sing to Jerusalem the Golden," or some other familiar tune. Other musical words occur in the course of a Psalm, especially "Selah," which you find several times in Psalms 3 and 4. The word is probably instruction to the musicians, to strike up more loudly, accompanying the singing, or during a pause in the singing.

Such indications in the Psalms keep us reminded that they are sacred songs and were sung especially by the choirs in the temple. We may think of such singing as arranged for when the temple was built by Solomon, and no doubt Psalms of David were then used. The music was greatly developed in later times.

These musical thoughts may make more interesting to us the singing of the Psalms. Remember, too, that singing can express feeling more fully than speaking or reading. We feel this in our worship when we sing heartily songs that we know and love.

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

We know the power of music to express and to awaken feeling of many kinds. The Psalms call upon us to sing unto the Lord. (Ps. 95:1; 96:1; 98:1) It is a call to let grateful affections go forth to the Lord with glad heart. (A. 8261; E. 612; R. 279) We sing a "new song" when with a new sense of what the Lord has done for us our hearts overflow with new thanksgiving. Thus, the "new song" sung by those about the throne (Rev. 5:9) means the joyful confession of the Lord in His Divine Humanity as God of heaven and earth. (R. 279; E. 326) "Sing unto the Lord," in its fullest meaning, is but the first great commandment in another form. It means to love the Lord with all the heart and soul and mind and strength. Love is the song; it finds expression not in the voice alone, but in obedience, and in every useful and kindly work. Such is the unending song of heaven. (M. 9)

Some characteristics of the Hebrew poetry adapt the Psalms to be a basis for their spiritual message, especially the couplets in which one line echoes or answers to the other. There is often

opportunity here for the expression of love and truth, which so often give rise to pairs of words or phrases in the Scriptures. Find the subject explained with many examples from the Psalms and prophets in S. 80-90. It is there said, "There are very often two expressions in the Word which appear like repetitions of the same thing. They are not repetitions, however, but one has relation to good and the other to truth: and both taken together make their conjunction, and thus one thing." See instances in Ps. 20:1-5; 72:1-3; 89:1-2; 90:6-9; and on every page of the Psalms.

In speech, the affection is expressed by the tone, and the thought by the articulation. This prepares us for the teaching that wind instruments like the trumpet represent an expression which is wholly from love of good, and stringed instruments, like the harp, expression which has in it more love of truth. One is more celestial, the other more spiritual. It is an indication of quality in a Psalm when wind instruments or stringed instruments are indicated for accompaniment. (A. 418, 4138, 8337; E. 323) Notice in the account of David's bringing up the ark that stringed instruments are mentioned at the beginning of the progress, and the trumpet at the close. (2 Sam. 6:5, 15) We may also see why the harp was David's instrument. David represented a spiritual understanding of truth appointed to rule the life. His music represents affection for spiritual truth and good, and confession of the Lord for these blessings. The music of his harp drove the evil spirit from Saul, for such confession evil spirits cannot endure. We may find the same protection in the Psalms.

## Lesson 73

### Psalms 23; 46; 14; 53: The Divine Names in the Psalms

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

There is one Lord, our Heavenly Father. "The first of all the Commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord. 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." But in the Bible, the Lord is called by several names. In the first Great Commandment that we just said, there are two names, Lord and God. We will say it again and notice the names. These are the two names of the Lord most used in the Old Testament. The name Lord means that He is very loving, and the name God means that He is very wise. In the New Testament, there are two other names which are most often used. "Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me." (Matt. 19:14) "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:11) Jesus and Christ are the names by which the Lord is most often called in the New Testament. The name Jesus means that He is very loving, and the name Christ means that He is very wise.

It is interesting when you read the Bible, or hear it read, to notice the names by which the Lord is called. Listen while we say Ps. 23: "The Lord is my shepherd." You hear the name Lord at the beginning and at the end of the Psalm, and no other name. Listen while I read Ps. 121: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills." The name Lord is the only name in this Psalm, used five times. I will read Ps. 5. In this Psalm, both names are used several times. If you are not tired, listen again to Ps.

14, and then to Ps. 53. Someone who has listened carefully asks, "Are not these Psalms the same?" Yes, almost the same, except that you hear the name Lord in Ps. 14, and only the name God in Ps. 53. Once more we remember that the name Lord means that the Lord is very loving, and the name God that He is very wise.

### **Junior**

The primary children have noticed that the one Lord is called in the Bible by several different names. What names of the Lord do you remember? A stranger reading our Bible and finding these several names might think that we believed in many gods. How could you explain it to the stranger? A name may call attention to some quality of the Lord, as that He is very loving, or that He is very wise; or names may refer to different works of the Lord, as Creator and Savior. What two names of the Lord are most used in the Old Testament, and what two in the New Testament? What qualities of the Lord are especially suggested by these names?

The name Lord is usually printed in our Bibles in small capital letters, Lord. This is to show that it is in place of the name Jehovah, which the Jews considered too holy to be pronounced. When we find Lord, we may think of the name Jehovah. (The name Lord, not in capitals, as in Ps. 110:5, is a different name.)

It is of great interest to students of the early chapters of Genesis to watch carefully the names Lord and God. In some chapters, as in Gen. 1, the name God is used: and in other chapters as in Gen. 2 and 4, Lord God and Lord are used. Literary students think this difference of name important as showing different sources of the chapters. But to us, the name is of greatest importance as emphasizing the love or the truth of the Lord. The name most used in a chapter sets the keynote of the chapter, showing its lesson to be more of truth or more of love. The names have this same value in the Psalms, and show the lesson of some Psalms to be more of truth and the lesson of other Psalms to be more of love. Sometimes we can plainly see this in the Psalms. Compare the loving character of Ps. 23, "The Lord is my shepherd," with the firm strength of Ps. 46, "God is our refuge and strength." Have the Divine names in mind in reading the Psalms, and this thought of their meaning.

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

We might greatly extend our study of the use of the Divine names in Genesis, and we should find great help in the Arcana. (A. 300, 2001) It is there shown that the name God emphasizes the Divine truth, and that it is used in describing spiritual stages of development: and that the name Lord emphasizes the Divine love and is used when describing celestial states of development. For this reason the name God is used in describing the six days of creation with their labors, but when the seventh day of rest, a celestial state, is reached, the name Lord is used. A beautiful example of the use of the Divine names is found in Gen. 22, which describes the temptation of Abraham. Through the story of the temptation, in which one must depend upon the defense of the Divine truth, the name God is used. But at the 15th verse, when consolation comes to Abraham, it is spoken by the angel of Jehovah. (A. 2822, 2841)

We may follow with the same interest the use of the Divine names in the Psalms, for they have the same importance. We shall notice many instances of the name Lord in tender loving Psalms, and of the name God in Psalms expressing the Divine truth and its strength, as in Psalms 23 and 46. In general, we find that the name Lord is used more frequently in Psalms near the beginning of the Psalm-book; for example, in Psalms 1-41, the name Lord is used 272 times, while the name God is used only 15 times. In the group of Psalms which follows, 42-72, the name Lord is found but 30 times, and the name God 164 times. Toward the end of the Psalm-book, the name Lord again strongly prevails, especially from Ps. 83:14 to the end. That verse reads: "That men may know that Thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Most High over all the earth." We shall be interested in this distribution of the Divine names in the Psalm-book when we study the Psalms more spiritually and recognize a celestial, childlike spirit in the early Psalms and a strong celestial spirit of thanksgiving in the closing Psalms, while in Psalms intervening between these two celestial groups there are many describing spiritual conflict in the power of truth. We shall think more of this in a future lesson on the Five Books of the Psalms.

The children have noticed that Psalms 14 and 53 are almost the same, with the exception of the use of the names Lord and God. Other instances of such repetition occur in the Psalter. Can we see a spiritual reason for such a repetition? We have in mind that the name Lord emphasizes the Lord's love, and the name God His truth. Is it possible that the same lesson may be given with emphasis upon its love or with emphasis upon its truth; in other words, that the same lesson may be given to those of a celestial nature and to those of a spiritual nature?

## **Lesson 74**

### **Psalms 119; 111; 112: Alphabetical Psalms**

#### **THE STORY**

How many Psalms are in the book of Psalms? There is one Psalm much longer than the others, Ps. 119. Can you find it? How many verses has it? Do you notice anything else unusual about this Psalm? It is divided into twenty-two parts or sections. How many verses are in each section? The little word over each section is the name of a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. You would guess that Aleph and Beth, the names over the first two sections, are like our A and B. You would notice another thing if you saw the Psalm in the Hebrew Bible. Each verse in the Aleph section begins with Aleph, and each verse in the Beth section begins with Beth, and so with the other sections through the Psalm. This might be shown by printing the Beth section of the Psalm in this way:

By what shall a young man cleanse his way?

even by ruling himself after Thy word!

Betimes have I sought Thee with my whole heart,

O let me not go wrong out of Thy commandments:

Behold, Thy words have I hid within my heart,

that I might not sin against Thee!

Blessed art Thou, O Jehovah;

O teach me Thy statutes.

By my lips have I proclaimed

all the judgments of Thy month.

Better is it to walk in the way of Thy statutes,

than to possess all manner of riches.

Before mine eyes are Thy commandments,

and I have respect unto Thy ways!

Blessed forever are Thy statutes,

I will not forsake Thy word.

There are other Psalms which might be printed in a way to show that they follow the alphabet.

Always will I give thanks unto Jehovah,

and His praise shall be ever in my mouth!

Boast thou in Jehovah, O my soul,

for the humble shall hear thereof and be glad!

Come with me and praise Jehovah,

let us magnify His name together!

Diligently I sought Jehovah and He heard me;

yea; He delivered me out of all my fear.

So this 34th Psalm goes through the alphabet, with one extra verse at the end. Psalms 111 and 112 are also alphabetical.

But come back to our long Psalm. It tells us how precious the Lord's Word and His commandments are. We will read a few verses:

Blessed are the undefiled in the way,

who walk in the law of the Lord.

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?

by taking heed thereto according to Thy word.

O how I love Thy law!

it is my meditation all the day.

How sweet are Thy words unto my taste!

yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,

and a light unto my path.

Thy word is true from the beginning,

and every one of Thy righteous judgments endureth forever.

## **Junior**

If a hymn-book were being made today, probably several smaller collections, some of them old and much loved collections, would be gathered into it. Much the same was done under the Lord's care in the forming of the Book of Psalms. The titles of the psalms suggest that there was a collection known as Psalms of David, and another of Psalms or Songs of Asaph, and another of Psalms and Songs for the sons of Korah. Asaph, Heman (Ps. 88), and Ethan (Ps. 89) are mentioned as three chief singers of David. The sons of Korah were other leaders of the temple worship. See how many Psalms you can find belonging to each of these groups.

Another group are called Hallelujah Psalms because they begin with Hallelujah or Praise ye the Lord. In this group, you will find Psalms 106, 111-113, 117, 135, 146-150. This includes the joyful songs of praise at the end of the Psalm-book. Another group have been called Royal Psalms, Psalms 93 to 100 (except 94) because they celebrate the Lord as King, several of them beginning with the words, "The Lord reigneth." One group of Psalms, the Pilgrim Psalms or Songs of Degrees, Psalms 120-134, are so interesting that we must take them for our next lesson.

There are the alphabetical Psalms. See what I have told the younger children about them. The alphabetical plan is carried out in various ways and more or less completely in nine Psalms. The most perfect example is the long 119th Psalm, the verses of each group beginning with the same letter, taking in order the twenty-two consonants of the Hebrew alphabet. One subject runs through this long Psalm; can you see what it is? Notice that almost every verse speaks of the Lord's law or word or commandments, testimonies, statutes, judgments or precepts, which all mean teachings of the Lord's Word. The whole Psalm is about the Lord's Word and its laws, telling how precious they are. Find a section of the Psalm which speaks especially of a young man and his use of the Lord's Word. What does the Psalm wear when it says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"? (Verse 105) Read the last verse of the Psalm; does it remind you of a verse in the 23rd Psalm? and may the Lord's commandments be the shepherd's rod and staff to protect us and lead us home?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

Shall we think of the alphabetical arrangement of a Psalm as a merely literary feature, or can it have a spiritual value? It suggests that the theme of the Psalm is applied to the whole range of

experience. The Lord is the Alpha and Omega (the first and last Greek letters), meaning that He is present in all things of life, from beginning to end, the first and the last. (Rev. 1:8, 11) Letters express human affections and thoughts, vowels especially the affections and consonants the thoughts. Our Psalm goes through the alphabet, pausing upon each letter. Its theme must apply to all human states, and the theme in this Psalm is the Lord's Word. (R. 38) In this number, direct reference is made to the alphabetical Psalms, especially to Psalms 119 and 111. It may be evident that the first section of Ps. 119 relates to childhood and to the use of the Word to children. The next section speaks of the young man and his use of the Word. It may not be possible to recognize the state described in each section of the Psalm, but they must cover the whole range of life and the value of the Lord's Word in each.

We should make some study of the several words by which the Psalm refers to the Word and its teachings. Swedenborg gives us much help, especially in his explanation of Ps. 19:7-9, where several of the same words occur. Law is a fundamental term meaning the Ten Commandments and other laws of spiritual life. Precepts are particulars of such truth. Testimonies are truths which bear witness concerning the Lord, especially the commandments in the ark. Judgments are civil laws and sometimes laws of ceremony, and statutes are laws of religious ceremonies and worship. It is especially important to associate law, precepts, and testimonies with the commandments and vital laws of spiritual life, and statutes with laws of religious ceremonies. (A. 8972, 9417; E. 392, 696, 946)

Should we expect this Psalm of the Lord's Word to close with some expression of the great power and glory of the Word; and is the last verse of the Psalm a surprise? Yet this verse may describe the deepest sense of need of the Word and the fullest dependence upon its power. The shepherd's rod and staff in Ps. 23:4 are Divine truth spiritual and natural. (E. 726)

The relation of the long Psalm to the Lord is indicated in Prophets and Psalms in these words: "That the Lord fulfilled the Law, that is, the Word from its first to its last things, and was therefore hated, and suffered temptation, and that thus He united the Human to His Divine."

## **Lesson 75**

### **Psalms 120-134: The Pilgrim Psalms**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The Psalms are songs. They were sung by the people in their homes and by the choirs in the temple in Jerusalem. Some Psalms were sung by pilgrims journeying up to Jerusalem and the temple. Many people from all parts of the Holy Land journeyed up to the great city each year to the feasts, especially to the Passover in the spring and to the Feast of Tabernacles, the harvest feast in the autumn. At these seasons, companies of happy people from one town and another met and journeyed on together. The Lord with Mary and Joseph and the friends from Nazareth went with such a company when the Lord was twelve years old. (Luke 2:41-52) Also, large companies of people who had been captives in Babylon journeyed back to Jerusalem when they were set free

and allowed to do so. Their happiness made the long way seem easy. We think of these companies journeying up to Jerusalem and the temple when we read Ps. 84.

We have in our Book of Psalms some songs which the happy pilgrims sang on their journeys to Jerusalem and the temple. There is a group of fifteen Psalms (Ps. 120-134) which we may call Pilgrim Psalms. You know some of these Psalms, and you will love them all the more as you think of the happy pilgrims singing them as they journeyed up together to Jerusalem and the temple. Perhaps some of them were sung by the company with whom the Lord went up from Nazareth when He was twelve years old. "I will lift up mine eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my help." "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

"Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and bless the Lord."

### **Junior**

The Pilgrim Psalms are a group of fifteen Psalms following the long 119th Psalm. Over each of these Psalms is the title "A Psalm of Degrees" or "of Ascents." As we read these Psalms, we see that they are songs of pilgrims journeying to Jerusalem. Pilgrims went up to the feasts kept in Jerusalem each year: the Passover in the spring, the Feast of Weeks or Firstfruits, fifty days later, and the thanksgiving Feast of Tabernacles in the autumn. (Deut. 16:16) We have learned, too, of a great company who had been captives in Babylon who journeyed back to Jerusalem when they were allowed to do so. (Ezra 1 and 2)

As we read the Pilgrim Psalms, they suggest the going up to Jerusalem, as does Ps. 84. Ps. 120 expresses distress from living among strange people. Then Ps. 121, which we love, about looking up to the hills. This would mean for the pilgrims especially the hills of Jerusalem. In Ps. 122, we have the glad call to go to the temple and the prayer for peace to the Lord's house. The looking to the Lord and trusting the Lord (Ps. 123-131) grows stronger with the pilgrims as they journey on. They think of peace in the Lord's house and of blessings for their own homes and for their harvests, which will come from Him. Ps. 132 reminds us of David's bringing up the ark to Zion, the same event which is celebrated in Ps. 24. In Ps. 134, the pilgrims have reached the end of their journey and lift up their hands in the temple to bless the Lord.

If we never make a pilgrimage to the earthly Jerusalem, what meaning have these Pilgrim Psalms for us?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

The last question asked the juniors opens a beautiful thought in relation to this group of Psalms. Our pilgrimage is our journey of life, our regeneration. It is a journey up from worldly states of life to spiritual and heavenly states. "Going up to Jerusalem" is everywhere the Scripture phrase, especially because Jerusalem represents interior and heavenly states of life and worship. (A. 3084, 4539) In connection with this ascent, have also in mind the lesson of Jacob's ladder.

More precisely, what is our spiritual Jerusalem? This is freshly in our minds from our study of the Holy City in the Revelation. Jerusalem is the church, called a city as to its doctrine, for its eternal

truths are as foundations and walls. This meaning of Jerusalem is in mind as we read Ps. 122 about the city that is compact together, its doctrine making a consistent whole, with prayer for the city's peace. (R. 880, 881)

Zion is mentioned in Ps. 125 and in several of the Pilgrim Psalms. Zion was the fortress hill, David's stronghold. The Spiritual Zion is the church's inmost love, and Jerusalem is its truth or doctrine. Love is the theme of Ps. 125, beautifully suggested by Zion and by the mountains round about Jerusalem, emblems of the Lord's loving care. (E. 375, 405)

The temple is the special goal of the pilgrimage. It is mentioned especially in Ps. 122, 127, 134. It represents a holy nearness to the Lord in life and worship, and in its fullest sense it represents the Lord in His Divine Humanity. He is the life and holiness of the Church, as the temple was the life and holiness of Jerusalem. Our going up, our pilgrimage, is our nearer approach to Him. (E. 220; R. 191)

What relation have the Pilgrim Psalms or Psalms of Ascents to the Lord's own life? This is the holiest aspect of all the Psalms. The ascent which represents our regeneration represents in its highest sense the Lord's glorification, which also He called His ascent and union with the Father. "I ascend to my Father and to your Father, and to my God and your God." (John 20:17; L. 33) Prophets and Psalms interpret these Psalms especially as expressions of the Lord's prayers and thanksgivings for His Church as it shall rise from earthly to heavenly states.

## **Lesson 76**

### **Psalms 41; 72; 89; 106; 150: The Five Books**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Who was "the sweet Psalmist of Israel"? What instrument did David play? Do you remember his playing for Saul? What makes the Psalms that David sang so precious that they are a part of our Bible? David said, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue."

Can you find some Psalms which have printed over them "A Psalm of David"? You will find more of them in the early part of the Psalm-book, among the first forty-one Psalms. This collection of Psalms perhaps was the first little Psalm-book which people used soon after the time of David, for singing in their homes; and when the temple was built by Solomon and services for the temple were arranged, this was perhaps the little Psalm-book that they used. It seems to end at Ps. 41:13, where we read, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, from everlasting and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen." This is called The First Book of Psalms, and is so marked in some of our Bibles. Afterward, more Psalms were collected, making a Second Book. You find the end of this Second Book in the last verses of Ps. 72. Still more Psalms were collected, until there were five books, which together make our Psalm-book. In all these books, you will find Psalms with David's name. He was always known as "the sweet Psalmist of Israel," and his Psalms were loved and remembered.

Among Psalms of praise to the Lord in the later books of Psalms much used in the temple, is Ps. 104, a beautiful song of praise to the Lord for His works in the world about us. It is especially a Psalm to read in the spring when the world is waking up to life, when trees and flowers are growing, and birds and animals of the hills and woods are making their nests and homes. Both the Psalm and the world about us call to us to awake and to be more truly the children that the Lord wishes us to be.

## **Junior**

Psalms were sung and read by the people of Israel in their homes and in the temple when temple services began. There was no temple in Jerusalem when David was king, but it was built by Solomon, David's son, who was king after him. Then probably services were arranged, and Psalms, mostly Psalms of David, were sung by the priests and temple choirs. We may think of the Psalms then used as the first Psalm-book. At later times, other Psalms were sung and written, and perhaps more Psalms of David were found, and these were added to the Psalm-book. This perhaps was done when Hezekiah was king in Jerusalem, and Isaiah was prophet. We know that Hezekiah did much to restore the temple worship. He took much pains to teach the people of Judah (2 Chron. 17:7-9); he appointed people to collect the proverbs of Solomon (Prov. 25:1); and he did much for the temple music. (2 Chron. 29, especially verse 30) It seems probable that the Psalm-book was at that time enlarged. There was also a time after the return of captives from Babylon when Ezra the scribe did much to teach the people and to develop the worship in Jerusalem. (Ezra 7:6-10; Neh. 8) Some of the Psalms seem to belong to this time of religious revival, and perhaps some even to a later day. Remember the three periods which have been named, of Solomon, of Hezekiah, and of Ezra, as important in the Lord's providence in forming the Book of Psalms.

We have some indication of this gradual formation of the Psalm-book in the five books into which it was anciently divided, a division which is preserved in our Revised Version. The end of each book is marked by a Doxology. Find these Doxologies at the end of Psalms 41, 72, 89, and 106; and Psalm 150 is a sort of Doxology to the whole Book of Psalms. Find and read these Doxologies. They mark the division of the five books.

In general, the Psalms of Book I, Ps. 1-41, are more simple and personal. They belonged to a more simple time, and among them are a large part of the Psalms that have David's name. Books IV and V contain many Psalms of thanksgiving and praise, adapted for the public temple worship, which received great development in the time of Ezra, after the return from Babylon. In which book of psalms do you find "The Lord is my shepherd"? "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills"? "O Lord. thou hast searched me and known me", the Psalm that we are learning?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

A series of studies of the Five Books of Psalms by several New-Church ministers is contained in The New-Church Review of 1897 and 1898. An introductory article in this series, having wider scope, may be found in The New-Church Review for October, 1897. The spiritual relation of the

Five Books of Psalms to human experience and to the Lord is presented in these articles in an interesting way.

The historical background of the Psalms is important as far as it is known, as a basis for their spiritual study.

Another still more important consideration is the use of the Divine names in the several Books of Psalms. From our previous study of the Divine names, we know that the name Jehovah expresses the Divine love, and the Lord's relation to us in loving states, and that the name God expresses the Divine truth and its relation to us in intellectual states. In Book I of the Psalms, the name Jehovah is used 272 times, and the name God 15 times. The states described in these early Psalms are childlike and celestial. In Book II, the relation is reversed, the name God occurring 164 times and the name Jehovah but 30 times; and this relation holds through Ps. 83. The Psalms of Books II and III, in which the name God prevails, describe conflicts in the power of truth resulting in the humbling of self-intelligence and self-love. But in Book IV the name Jehovah alone is used; and in Book V with few exceptions. These books describe states of deeper and maturer love, after the humbling of temptation. The article referred to in The New-Church Review leads to this concluding statement: "Thus the five books are the songs of regeneration, from the first beginning of rational choice to the full conjunction with the Lord. They are the songs of union of the Divine with humanity, the songs of every regenerating soul, the marriage songs of the race."

## Lesson 77

### Psalms 1; 23; 46; 139: Songs of the Christian Life

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Is there some Psalm that we all can say? Let us say it together. I think it begins: "The Lord is my shepherd." What is the number of this Psalm? Do some of us say as a part of our prayer at night: "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety"? It is a part of Ps. 4. These are very loving Psalms that help us not to be afraid or anxious, and make us feel safe and trustful in the Lord's care.

Say again Ps. 23, and notice how it seems to follow us through all our journey of life. It thinks of us as very little children when it calls us the Lord's flock in green pastures and beside still waters. It thinks of us as older children, learning and keeping the Lord's commandments when it says that He leads us in the paths of righteousness. The valley of death can mean times of trouble and temptation, but the Lord's words are the shepherd's rod and staff to protect and guide us. Even in hard times, the Lord prepares a table before us. He feeds our souls and sends us on our way to His heavenly home. Other Psalms have told us that we are pilgrims journeying up to the Lord's house. (Ps. 120-134)

Ps. 1, which some of us have learned, tells what to do and what not to do if we wish to be trees always fresh and fruitful. What is the river to give us life? You find this river mentioned again in Ps. 46:4.

Some of us are learning to find help in Ps. 139. We are never alone; the Lord is always with us, in the light and in the dark. "The darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." There are no better helps than Psalms like these for Christian boys and girls, for Christian men and women.

### **Junior**

The whole Scripture is the Book of Life, and from beginning to end it tells one story of life. Also, life's story is told in miniature in short passages of the Word. See how wonderfully this is true of Ps. 23, as I have suggested to the primary children. There is a wonderful spirit of trust and comfort in this Psalm. Perhaps no other words have brought the Lord's comfort to so many anxious souls, and to souls troubled by the thought of death, as this short psalm. Other Psalms are also full of help. That is why it is important to learn many of them and have them always with us. It is well to keep a list of the Psalms we know and to say them often, at bedtime or in Sunday school, to make sure that we do not forget them.

Ps. 23 brings a comfort and trust that a little child can feel. Ps. 46 brings help not so much for little children but more for older boys and girls and grown-up people who are having hard fights with temptations to do evil things and are much distressed about them. Then God is "our refuge and strength." He will give strength to overcome. He will help us by His word. (Verse 4) Disorders and conflicts in the world sometimes alarm us. The Psalm tells us not to be anxious but to trust. "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth." "Be still, and know that I am God." You will many times need this Psalm to help you not to be anxious, but to work on and trust.

Let us look once more at Ps. 139, which some of us have been learning. To know that nothing is hidden from the Lord is a warning to us to do nothing that would grieve Him, nothing which we would be ashamed for Him to know. We will not shrink from the Lord's searching knowledge. He can help us better because He understands, because He knows all. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

There are Psalms that tell of trouble and discouragement which are relieved when they are taken to the Lord. (Ps. 42; 107) And there are Psalms of victory and rejoicing. (Ps. 96; 100) Every experience of Christian life finds its expression in the Psalms. Notice how many Psalms end with thanksgiving, and the whole Book of Psalms. So it should be with life.

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

The intermediates have wider acquaintance with the Psalms, and we may speak of the Psalms in a more general way. No other book of the Old Testament reveals so much of the spirit of the Gospels. The Psalms have also the power of songs to touch the heart with humiliation and penitence, with courage and rejoicing. For thousands of years, the Psalms have been loved and their power has been felt. The penitence of David was external, the rejoicing of psalmists was largely for external blessings of victory and rich harvests; they had little definite thought beyond this World, but their expressions of penitence, of longing for God, of praise of His Divine perfection's, of thankfulness for His help are Divinely adapted to stimulate and to express

spiritual and Christian emotions. The Divineness of the Psalms will give them power to express the loftiest emotions to which human hearts can ever rise. They even express the emotions of the Divine Human life.

Question may arise in relation to Psalms which express fierce resentment toward enemies, and invoke horrible punishments upon them. Ps. 55, 69, and 109 are of this character. The question arising in relation to such Psalms is the same which may arise in relation to portions of the Jewish law, a question which the Lord answered in the Sermon on the Mount. He said, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil. I say unto you, Love your enemies." (Matt. 5:38-39, 44) The Lord came not to destroy the law or the prophet, but He stripped from them the harsh terms of expression due to the unspiritual state of people of old time, and presented the eternal truth in its Christian and heavenly form. People of the old time had not learned to separate hatred of an evil from hatred of the evil doer. The Lord taught this separation as He lifted the sayings of them of old time into the light of heaven. The hardness of the letter in certain expressions of the law and of the Psalms wholly vanishes in the spiritual sense contained within the letter, in the Word as it is read in heaven. Read the unfolding of the spiritual lesson contained in the harsh words of Ps. 137:5, 9, concluding with the statement, "It is hereby meant, that he is blessed who disperses the falses of evil springing up in the church, which are here signified by the infants of Babylon." (E. 411)

## **Lesson 78**

### **Psalms 22; 118: Songs of the Lord's Life**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

An old Bible is precious which mother or father or some dear friend has used for years. The well-worn pages show what Gospel chapters and what Psalms they have loved and read often for comfort and help. It gives a wonderful interest to the Psalms and makes them wonderfully precious to know that the Lord as a boy and as a man found strength and comfort in them. He could say more truly than anyone else, "O how I love Thy law! it is my meditation all the day. How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

There is one Psalm, the 22nd, which describes the crucifixion of the Lord almost as plainly as it is described in the Gospels. It begins with the words spoken by the Lord at that time: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" It says, "They pierced my hands and my feet. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." But later verses of the Psalm have a tone of victory and rejoicing. The Lord had gained a victory for all the world and for all time to come.

Do you remember when the Lord had kept the Passover and the Holy Supper with the disciples, it is said, "And when they had sung a hymn they went out into the Mount of Olives"? (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26) It was a Psalm that they sang, and probably it was Psalm 118, which was usually the last of the songs sung in keeping the Passover.

The psalms in their highest sense are songs of the Lord's life. Remember how on Easter Day, after walking with two disciples to Emmaus and opening to them the Scriptures, the Lord stood in the midst of the disciples in Jerusalem and opened to them in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the Psalms things concerning Himself. (Luke 24:44) The Psalms are songs of the Lord's life. They are full of His love.

## **Junior**

The Psalms are often bound with the Gospels. We feel that they belong together, there is so much of the spirit of the Gospels in the Psalms. Several facts also help to connect the Psalms closely with the Gospels:

1. On the evening of the Easter Day, the Lord opened to the disciples in the Psalms things concerning Himself. (Luke 24:44)
2. The Lord in His teaching referred to particular Psalms as prophetic of Himself. He said to the priests in the temple, "Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?" (Matt. 21:42) Find this in Ps. 118. In Matt. 22:41-45, the Lord quoted words of David as showing His Divineness. You find them in Ps. 110:1-2.
3. Some Psalms plainly refer to the Lord's life. What event of the Lord's life does Ps. 22 describe? Find reference to the same event also in Ps. 69:21. This link of connection between the Psalms and Gospels is strengthened by direct reference in John's Gospel to these crucifixion prophecies in the Psalms. (John 19:24, 28)
4. David, as we have often seen, represents the Lord, especially in His conflicts and victories. Developing this thought, this sentence stands before the interpretation of the Psalms in Swedenborg's work, Prophets and Psalms: "It is to be observed that since by David is understood the Lord, therefore wherever David speaks in the Psalms the Lord is signified in the spiritual sense, as in many other places which may be adduced." As we read the Psalms of David, with expressions of David's humiliation or rejoicing, with professions of his steadfastness and virtue, often we shall think not of David but of the Lord. It is to keep us mindful that the Psalms are about the Lord that the order of service in our Book of Worship suggests following the reading of the Psalm by the Doxology: "To Jesus Christ the Lord be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." The Psalms have a wonderful interest and power when we read them as songs of the Lord's life.

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

The style of the Psalms is spoken of in A. 66 as intermediate between the prophetical style and common speech. The same number also says, "The Lord is there treated of in the internal sense under the person of David as King." The fact that David represents the Lord is much developed in Doctrine of the Lord and in no. 44 with special reference to the Psalms: "He who knows that the Lord is meant by David may know why David in the Psalms wrote so often concerning the Lord

when concerning himself." Ps. 89 is quoted at length with reference also to Ps. 45, 122, 132. E. 205 cites Ps. 89:3-5 showing that the promise, "I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn unto David My servant, Thy seed will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations," is not applicable to David but to the Lord and His kingdom, the seed of David meaning those who are in truth from good from the Lord.

If we think of the Lord when we read the words of David and when David is mentioned in the Psalms, how fully the Psalms will be to us songs of the Lord's life! Ps. 16 had some meaning in David's experience, but it found its fullest meaning in the resurrection of the Lord. Ps. 18 and 101 contained expressions of steadfastness and perfection not applicable to David, but to the Lord. The Psalms went far beyond the experience of David or other Psalmists, to express affections of the Lord's life: and this could be because, as David testified, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue." (2 Sam. 23:2)

Read Ps. 22 as prophetic of the Lord's crucifixion. The verses of triumph at the close draw aside the veil and reveal a peace and strength of victory more than any Gospel shows. Can we read on and see in Ps. 23, which we love so well, an expression of the Divine peace following victory for the Lord? Can we read in Ps. 24 of the Lord's ascension and glorification?

Ps. 139, "O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me," is explained in Prophets and Psalms as a song of the Lord's life, revealing relations of the Lord with the Father, His union with the Father, and His sinlessness. Read as the Lord's, the last verses of the Psalm.

Read Ps. 118, which we have thought of as the hymn sung by the Lord and His disciples as they left the table and Holy Supper for Gethsemane. It is plain in its references to the Lord. This Psalm also is explained in Prophets and Psalms as a song in praise of the Father by the Lord for the church. It is magnificent in its expressions of victorious strength, especially when we think of it as the Lord's song on the night of the last Passover and Gethsemane.

## Lesson 79

### Psalms 95; 100: Use of the Psalms in Worship

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

We read and sing the Psalms in our church service. You remember that there were musicians in charge of the music in the temple in Jerusalem, and choirs of singers who took part in the services with the priests. Especially they sang the Psalms, sometimes answering back and forth, the priest and the choir, or one choir and another. Notice how many Psalms, like Ps. 95 and 100, tell us to sing unto the Lord. Can you find in Ps. 95 a sentence that we use in the church service?

After the Lord's ascension, His disciples went out to preach His Gospel and founded churches in many cities. Paul especially took long journeys and formed churches in far-off countries. They all had their services and learned to sing the Psalms. Paul especially charged them to be filled with the Spirit; "speaking to yourselves in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making

melody in your heart to the Lord." (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) And always in the Christian churches the Psalms have been read and sung.

Here is our own Book of Worship. See if you can find in it any Psalms. Yes, all the Psalms are here. There is music with each one: "chants" they are called so that the Psalms can be sung. Are there any Psalms and chants in our Sunday-school song-book, the Hosanna?

For many years in many languages people have read and sung the Psalms, not only by themselves at home, but in the public worship. We may think of three ways in which the singing helps. It helps us to express our reverent and grateful feelings. It helps us to speak the words together. It helps us to remember the words. If we can sing them, we are more sure not to forget them. We all can help the church worship by learning to sing the Psalms and hymns, and singing them heartily and reverently.

### **Junior**

A few more thoughts may interest you older children. In regard to the temple worship, keep in mind three times when much was done for the development of the temple services and music: First, when the temple was built and the services began in the time of Solomon. Second, in the time of Hezekiah. (2 Chron. 29:25, 30) And third, in the time of Ezra, and Nehemiah after the return from Babylon. (Ezra 7:7; Neh. 8) What indication do we have in the titles of the Psalms that they were to be sung? There is the common inscription "To the chief musician," the frequent mention of Korah and Asaph, leaders of the music, and many musical instructions as to accompaniment, etc.

If you have seen the Psalms in the Church of England or the Episcopal Prayer-book, you have noticed that the translation is different from the one that is familiar to us. It is an old translation made in 1540, which was so much used and loved by the people that when a new translation of the Bible (our present Authorized Version) was made and came into use in 1611, and even when the Prayer-book was revised in 1661, the Psalms in the Prayer-book were not changed but were kept in the old form and are still kept in the old form. It shows how people love the Psalms as they heard them as children and have sung them all their lives.

The Psalms have been much sung in the New Church. At one time, few hymns were used, and most of the singing in the services was of Psalms. With careful teaching and careful practice, our young people can learn to sing the Psalms with expression, and they can be a most beautiful and most effective part of our worship.

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

A reason which has led people of the New Church to sing the Psalms in their worship is our teaching that reverent reading and singing of the words of Scripture is a means of association with heaven. Angels who are near to us when we read the Scripture perceive the deeper spiritual and celestial meanings of the Lord's Word. This is a delight to them and reacts upon us with a sense of holiness in what we read. This association does not depend on our understanding the

spiritual meaning of what we read, but is effected when we read the letter reverently and when it is read with children. Read on this subject, S. 62-69. Read especially in S. 108 the account of the delight perceived by certain spirits and angels from the singing of Psalms of David by worshipers in Abyssinia.

Two Psalms are suggested for study, 95 and 100. Both call upon us to sing unto the Lord. What is the spiritual meaning of this call? Suppose we have no voice and cannot sing? Songs spiritually are the heart's affections going forth to the Lord, whether expressed by the voice or in works of service. Such are the songs of heaven. The charge to sing unto the Lord, made so often in the Psalms, should make us realize that the worship which the Lord loves is not only of the head but also of the heart. (A. 8261; E. 612; R. 279)

Read on in Ps. 95 and notice the pair of lines in each of the first seven verses. Why these pairs of lines? (S. 80-90) Can we see the meaning of the two lines in verse 6, which we use in our service as the invitation to prayer? The words in the second line are more expressive of affection. The first line is the call to worship with humble mind, and the second line is the call to worship with humble heart. (A. 5323; E. 365) We can remember this when the invitation to prayer is used in church.

In Ps. 95:7 is the beautiful picture of ourselves as the Lord's Sheep. You can recognize "people" in that verse as a more intellectual term (very often contrasted with "nation"), and "sheep" as a term very expressive of loving dependence. Turning to Ps. 100, we find the same double expression in verse 3, and the same beautiful picture of ourselves as the Lord's sheep. In Ps. 100, the appeal to worship the Lord with the heart's affections is strong in the first three verses, and the appeal to more thoughtful devotion in the last two verses. This is the explanation of the Psalm in Prophets and Psalms: "Celebration of the Lord, that He is to be worshiped from the heart because He is the former of the church, verses 1-3; that He is to be approached through the truths of the Word and acknowledged, verses 4, 5."

## **Lesson 80**

### **Psalms 23; 91; 121: Psalms That We Love**

#### **THE STORY**

Have we all learned to say the Lord's Prayer, and when we say the prayer at night do we say at the end, "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for Thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety"? It helps us to remember that the Lord and the good angels are with us when we sleep, and makes our sleep more peaceful. The words are the last words of Ps. 4. And when we repeat the prayer in church, we hear the minister say, "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker." You find these words in Ps. 95:6. The kneeling is to help us to be reverent before the Lord when we say the prayer. Are there any whole Psalms that we can say? We can say "The Lord is my shepherd," Ps. 23, I am sure; and perhaps "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills," Ps. 121; and perhaps "Blessed is the man," Ps. 1; and perhaps "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands," Ps. 100. And what other Psalms can we say?

Besides the Psalms that we can say, there are others that we love to hear read. Ps. 80 is one to read, about the vine brought out of Egypt and planted in the Holy Land; but its hedges were broken down and the boar and wild beasts spoiled the vine. Ps. 84 is another to read. Someone in a country far away, perhaps a captive, sees the little birds flying over, going so easily to the Lord's house. He also knows of companies of people going, so happy that the long hard way seems pleasant. He longs to go to Jerusalem and the temple.

Ps. 104 is a wonderful Psalm to read in the spring, when the trees are full of sap, and the birds and little animals are finding places for their nests. Ps. 107 is a wonderful Psalm of thanksgiving. It tells of times when people have been in trouble and have felt that the Lord helped them. They should remember this. The Lord could help them more if they would remember the Lord's goodness, and be thankful. The Psalm keeps saying, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men."

### **Junior**

Let us look through the Book of Psalms together and see how many Psalms there are which we know and love. Some are connected with the Old Testament story. We see the connection of some with the Lord's life. Some are used in our church service. Some we have learned and often say or sing.

We have learned Ps. 1, describing a man as a tree by the rivers of water. Ps. 5, verses 1-8 of this Psalm are used in church in our opening service. Ps. 8, the strength of babes. Ps. 15, a simple Psalm of the life that prepares for heaven. Ps. 16, the Psalm is beautiful, and familiar from the 5th verse. Ps. 19, the Lord's message through His world and through His Word. Ps. 20, you may not know this Psalm so well, but read it and you will love it. Ps. 22, the Psalm which speaks most plainly of the Lord's crucifixion. Ps. 23, "The Lord is my shepherd," the Psalm that we all know and love. Ps. 24, we think of David bringing up the ark to Zion. Ps. 25, verses 1-10 are used sometimes as the invocation in the morning service. Ps. 27, a Psalm that you will love, if you do not already love it; verse 4 is used in the opening of our church service. Ps. 34 tells of the loving care of the Lord and angels. Ps. 37, one of the most trustful of all Psalms. Ps. 43, thoughts for Sunday morning, a call to church. Ps. 46, a Psalm of the Lord's strength. Ps. 61, a Psalm of trust. Ps. 67, a Psalm to learn and remember. Ps. 72, power and peace from the Lord. Ps. 80, the vine out of Egypt, the broken hedges. Ps. 84, looking with longing toward Zion. Ps. 85, a Psalm to know, if you do not already know it. Ps. 91, safe in the Lord's care. Ps. 95, a call to love and worship; verse 6 you recognize. Ps. 96, strength and beauty from the Lord. Ps. 100, "Serve the Lord with gladness." Ps. 103, the Lord's great love and mercy. Ps. 104, the Lord's power in the world about us. Ps. 107, a Psalm of thanksgiving, a responsive service in our Book of Worship. Ps. 116, a grateful and penitent heart. Ps. 118, we have thought of this as the hymn sung by the Lord and the disciples, closing the Passover. Ps. 119, the long Psalm telling of the value of the Lord's Word to the whole range of human life. Ps. 121, looking up to the hills of strength for life's pilgrimage. Ps. 122, strength from the church and prayer for its peace. Ps. 127, building with the Lord. Ps. 133, life beautiful from within. Ps. 139, nothing hidden from the Lord. Ps. 145, "The Lord is good to all." Ps. 148, praise the Lord, the call to young men and maidens, old men and children. In giving us the Psalms, the Lord has given us a treasure whose comfort and blessing can never be exhausted.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

It is in using the Psalms that we shall grow to love them, feeling their help ourselves and seeing their help with others. It is useful to remember certain Psalms helpful for certain occasions, perhaps to note them in the back of our Psalm-book, so that we can quickly find them.

For Psalms to learn with children, see A Year's Lessons from the Psalms by John Worcester, fifty-two selections with notes of explanation.

Psalms of the Lord's care. 8, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" 34, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." 37, "fret not thyself." 42, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" 46, "God is our refuge and strength." 33, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee." 61, "Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer." 91, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High." 103, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." 121, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills." 143, "The Lord is good to all."

Value of the Lord's Word. Psalms 1, "His delight is in the law of the Lord." 19, "The law of the Lord is perfect." 119, "O how I love Thy law!"

Witness of nature to the Lord's power. Psalms 19, "The heavens declare the glory of God." 63, "Thou visitest the earth and waterest it." 104, "He causeth grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man."

Repentance and forgiveness. Psalms 13, "Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle?" 2, "Show me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths." 37, "Depart from evil and do good." 31, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit." 80, "Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts." 85, "Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of Thy people." 116, "I love the Lord because He hath heard my voice." 139, "O Lord, Thou hast searched and known me."

Encouragement to worship. Psalms 43, 84, 95, 96, 100, 122.

Help to thanksgiving. Psalms 67, 107, 145, 130.

Help in sickness. Psalms 23, 27, 91, 103.

Have also at hand Prophets and Psalms to suggest the relation of the Psalms to the Lord's life on earth.

## **Lesson 1**

### **Matthew 1: Birth of the Lord**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Every year when Christmas comes and all its happiness, we must go back and remember the first Christmas when the Lord was born. It was at Bethlehem, the little town of Judea south of Jerusalem, in the land of Palestine. The little stone houses were clustered thick together on a hill. Rich green valleys and hillsides were about it from which it had its name, Bethlehem, "house of bread." To the east it looked out over open hills that were more barren, though in the rainy season there was pasture there for sheep. Bethlehem was the town where David lived long years before and he tended his father's sheep on these hills. It was still called "the city of David."

At the time that we are thinking of, the first Christmas, many people were coming to Bethlehem who belonged to David's family, for they were all to be enrolled. Among the rest Mary and Joseph came from Galilee from their home in Nazareth, but the inn, the place where travelers rested, was full, and as people from long ago have believed, they rested in a cave in a hillside near by, where animals were sheltered. There are many such caves in the hills about Bethlehem, and they are often used as sheepfolds and stables and even as houses. Here the Lord was born, and His mother Mary wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, one of the little feeding-boxes from which the animals took their food.

Let me show you how the swaddling clothes were used. I lay this square of soft cloth on the floor. I fold one corner in and lay the baby's head on it, the feet toward the opposite corner. Now I fold this opposite corner over the feet, and fold the other corners over the baby from each side. Then I tie a band around the precious bundle toward the head and another toward the feet, and join the two bands by a cross-band above which makes a convenient handle by which the baby may be safely lifted. If you take a handkerchief and wrap your doll up in this way you will see how snug and comfortable it is. So the mother Mary wrapped the baby Lord and laid Him in a manger. We can imagine that we are there and feel the wonderful holiness that was about the Lord.

And as we stand by the manger, who are these men who come looking for the Lord and are sure that they have found Him when they see the Child wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger? They are the shepherds, for the angel came to them in the field as they watched over their flock by night, and told them the good news that the Lord was born. And they saw the multitude of the heavenly host and heard their song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Perhaps you can say the verses about the angels and the shepherds. (Luke 2:8-20)

##### **Junior**

Two of the four Gospels tell us about the birth of the Lord; which two are they? Both these Gospels tell of the angels and of their interest and their joy in the Lord's coming, for the angels knew better than people in this world who the Lord was, and what blessing His coming would

bring to the world. The angels knew that the Lord was not like other men; that even from the first God's own infinite life was the life of the Holy Child, so that He was truly "God with us." We read in Matthew how an angel told Joseph this, and in Luke how an angel told it to the mother Mary. (Luke 1:26-35) Years after, some who had known the Lord living and working as a carpenter in Nazareth, asked, "Is not this Joseph's son?" (Luke 4:22) But the Lord never spoke of any father but the Heavenly Father. (John 5:17, 18) Even at twelve years old when they found Him in the temple with the doctors, the Lord seemed gently to correct any misunderstanding as to who He was. Mary said, "Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing;" but He said, "How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:48, 49)

There is so much doubt and uncertainty in the world about the Lord's birth, so many people are thinking and saying that He was just a man like other men, it is important for us to notice carefully what the angels told about His birth, and what the Lord Himself told about it. In the New Church it is made very plain to us that the Lord Jesus Christ was not just a man like other men; He was the Heavenly Father, clothing His infinite brightness and power to come near to us in this world.

And the angels knew better than people in this world what a blessing the Lord's coming would bring. He would bring a power to cast out devils, to save people from evil and from all the unhappiness that evil brings. The whole world would feel the blessing of His coming. Remember the angel's message to the shepherds, "Good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people," and the song of the multitude of the heavenly host, "On earth peace, good will toward men."

All particulars about the Lord's coming and His life on earth, the country and town where He lived, the customs of the people, are full of interest to us. And first of all it is interesting to know about the family into which the Lord was born, the ancestors of Mary and Joseph. In Matthew a line of descent is given from Abraham to Joseph. As we trace it down let us see how many of the persons, or of the events of history mentioned, you recognize and can tell me about. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob you can remember; and Judas or Judah and his brethren. If you have ever read the Book of Ruth you will recognize names in verse 5, and you all will remember Jesse and David and Solomon. In verse 11 we read of the carrying away into Babylon; do you remember about that? So we come down to Joseph and Mary and have learned something of the family into which the Lord was born. This list of names in Matthew shows that the Lord was born in the line of the Jewish kings. He did indeed inherit David's throne, and a throne far greater than David's (Luke 1:32, 33); He was indeed a King (John 18:36, 37), far greater than David or any kings of earth.

1. How many Gospels are there? What are they called?
2. Who was Matthew who by the Lord's guidance wrote the first Gospel? (Matthew 9:9)
3. Where was Mary's home? Where was the Lord born ?
4. What does the name Jesus mean? The name Emmanuel ?
5. How many generations are counted from Abraham to Christ?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The difference between the Lord's birth and that of other men is beautifully and plainly told in Matthew and in Luke. The life of the Holy Child was not limited by human fatherhood; it was the very Divine life itself clothing itself with a human form and nature, and revealing itself to men. We cannot misunderstand the plain statements of Matthew and Luke upon this point. To claim as some persons do that these passages cannot be rightly a part of the Gospel is a pure assumption. Read L. 21; T. 83, 84.

We have spoken of the genealogy in Matthew as telling something of the history of the family into which the Lord was born. Remembering that Mary was probably of near kin to Joseph, the genealogy is also the genealogy of Mary, and tells of the human inheritance of many generations, which the Lord took upon Himself in coming to live with men.

But there is a deeper meaning in it all. We know that the Old-Testament characters represent elements in every regenerating soul. This series of names given as a genealogy of the Lord describes the building up of the perfect humanity in which the Divine could dwell, by learning and doing the Divine truth. We may trace the process here described from the first childlike learning of truth and obedience represented by Abraham, through the rational understanding and exercise of truth represented by David and the kings, to the deeper, humbler perception and acceptance of truth after experience of temptation represented by the captivity in Babylon. The genealogy is divided into these three periods: Abraham to David, David to Babylon, Babylon to the Lord, representing these three stages of development by which the perfect humanity was formed. And each period was fourteen generations; the work of each stage of development was thoroughly and perfectly done.

With this thought of the meaning of the genealogy in mind, compare the genealogy in Matthew with that given in Luke 3:23-38. The first difference that we notice is that the genealogy in Luke is given in reverse order, not from Abraham to Joseph, but from Joseph back to Abraham and to God. If the genealogy in Matthew represents the formation step by step of the humanity of our Lord to be the tabernacle of the Divine, this genealogy in Luke represents the filling of the humanity with the Divine as it was prepared to receive it. The genealogy in Luke is not placed at the beginning of the Gospel, but follows the account of the Lord's baptism and the descent of the Holy Spirit; it is describing this descent of the Divine into the humanity prepared for its reception. Other differences between the genealogies in Matthew and in Luke will also repay a careful study. See Matthew's Gospel, J. Worcester, pages 5-31.

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Birth of Our Lord

The work that the Lord came into the world to do is all summed up in The Faith of the New Heaven and the New Earth in the Universal Form, which you will find at the beginning of that great and noble and Divine work, The True Christian Religion:

"The Lord from eternity, who is Jehovah, came into the world, that He might subjugate the hells and glorify His human. Without this no mortal could have been saved, and they are saved who believe in Him."

Commit this to memory, will you not?

It is most important, for there are many people, even ministers (of the Old Church), at the present day, who believe that our Lord Jesus Christ was not born of God as His Father, but in the same way that other children are, and we need to hold on to what the Gospel teaches us, and try to understand it, so that we may not be led astray into thinking the same false thought about the Lord. Because the Lord foresaw that people would so think about Him, and even teach it openly, therefore He revealed the Writings of the New Church in which His servant Swedenborg, especially instructed by the Lord for the purpose, explains about the birth of the Lord, and describes what is taught about it in the spiritual world.

Let us read one of these descriptions, as it will show us that entrance into heaven depends upon our having a true idea about the Lord's birth.

"Since it has been given me by the Lord to see the wonderful things which are in the heavens and under the heavens, I ought to relate, according to command, what I have seen.

"I saw a magnificent palace, and in the inmost part of it a temple. In the midst of this there was a table of gold, upon which was the Word, and two angels stood beside it.

"About the table were three rows of seats. The seats of the first row were covered with silk drapery of a crimson color; the seats of the second row were covered with silk drapery of a blue color, and the seats of the third row with white drapery.

"Under the roof, high above the table, appeared a canopy glittering with precious stones, from the splendor of which there shone forth as it were a rainbow such as we see in the sky when it clears after a shower.

"Suddenly I saw clergymen sitting upon all the seats, all clothed in the garments of their priestly ministry.

"On one side was the vestry, where stood an angel, who was the keeper, and in it lay splendid garments, in beautiful order.

"It was a Council called together by the Lord.

"And I heard a Voice from heaven, saying, 'Deliberate.' "But they said, 'About what? '

"It said, 'About the Lord the Savior, and about the Holy Spirit.'

"But when they began to think about these subjects, they were not in enlightenment. So they prayed; and then light flowed down from heaven, and lit up first the hinder parts of their heads, and afterwards their temples, and at last their faces.

"And then they began their deliberations, and, as they had been commanded, they first deliberated about the Lord the Savior.

"The first subject proposed and considered was,

"Who assumed the human nature in the virgin Mary?"

"And an angel standing at the table, on which was the Word, read to them."

We cannot quote here all that this beautiful angel read to them from the Word that lay on the table of gold. But what will especially interest you to know is that among the many passages he read were verses 20 and 25 of the first chapter of Matthew.

He read not only from the Gospels but also from the Old Testament, showing that since Jehovah Himself came into the world and assumed the human nature through Mary, therefore He is called the Savior and the Redeemer in the prophets.

Now, when these passages from the Word had been read, the clergymen who sat on the seats said, all together:

"Jehovah Himself assumed the Human in order to redeem and save men."

And so they answered the question proposed.

Then they continued their deliberations, and among other things they all together agreed, and said with one mouth and one heart, that

"The Human of the Lord is Divine, and is to be approached, since Jehovah God thereby made Himself visible to the eyes of men, and approachable."

We have not the space in The Sower to tell all that took place in that wonderful council. Those of you who would like to read all of it will find the full description in T. 188, and also in R. 762, and in the Brief Exposition of the Doctrine of the New Church, 120; for this was such a very important occasion that the story is told in three different works in the Writings.

But there is one thing that we want to read about now, and that is what happened when the clergymen were through with their deliberations in that magnificent council.

"They rose up, and the angel who was the keeper of the vestry came out of it, and brought to each one who had sat upon the seats, splendid garments, interwoven here and there with threads of gold. And he said:

"Receive the wedding garments."

"And they were conducted in glory into the New Christian Heaven with which the church of the Lord upon earth, which is the New Jerusalem, will be conjoined."

By carefully reading all this, we see that the Lord from eternity, who is Jehovah, came into the world by making for Himself a wonderful little body in the body of Mary. When that body was born it grew and grew until it was as large as that of other human bodies. The difference between Him and any other human being was that the soul of a human being is from his or her father, and therefore merely human and finite; a human being is not Infinite and Divine. But the soul of Jesus Christ was the Infinite Itself, or God Himself. And so His soul was really the father of the body; or, the Divine Nature in Him was the Father of the human nature. For this reason He often spoke of the Father, meaning, not someone outside of Himself, but His own soul. And the Soul called the human nature, "Son."

We can also understand that God so clothed Himself with a human body, or a human nature, in order that people might see God and know that He is Man, and be able to love Him better, and understand Him better, knowing absolutely that He is their loving Father.

Another reason why He clothed Himself with a human nature was in order that He might come in touch with evil spirits and overcome them, and heal men of sickness and of sin.

All this shows that God is Love. "The Divine Itself, which is called 'Jehovah' and 'the Father,' is Divine Love, and was in the Lord from conception."

## **Lesson 2**

### **Matthew 2: The Wise Men**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

I shut my eyes and I see a great city built on its hills, with high walls and gates. Inside the walls is a beautiful great temple standing high above the valley. On a still higher hill there are strong towers that must, I think, be a part of a palace where some king lives. As I look I see a train of camels just going in at one of the city gates. They move along with swinging steps, one behind another, and seem tired, as if they had come a long way. They are beautifully harnessed with bright cloths and tassels, and some of the men who ride on them are richly dressed. The travelers stopped to ask a question of the guard at the gate, and now they have gone into the city. Do you know what this city is, and who these travelers are, and where they have come from, and what question they stopped to ask?

It was soon known through the city that these travelers had come. The question that they asked was passed from one to another and came to the old king, Herod, who lived in the palace with the strong towers on the hill. Herod was now an old man, in feeble health, with a thin, anxious face. He was a cruel man and suspicious, always afraid that someone was trying to harm him, or to get away his kingdom. You can imagine that Herod was troubled when he heard the question asked by the travelers,

"Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" And you can imagine that all Jerusalem was troubled with him, fearing what the king might do.

Herod could not answer the wise men's question. He would ask the priests and scribes who studied the Scriptures; they would know if any prophecy told where the Lord should be born. They looked in the sacred books and found a prophecy, which said that He should be born in Bethlehem. They told the king, and he gave the answer to the wise men. He asked them, too, a question. He asked what time the star appeared for he wished to learn how old the new king might be.

Now if we stand outside the city gate we see the travelers starting out again and taking the road to Bethlehem. They are rejoicing with exceeding great joy, for they see again the star, which they

saw in their country far away, which was the sign to them that the Lord was born. They are glad, for they know now that they will find Him. The beautiful star goes before them; it stands over Bethlehem and over the very house where the Baby Lord is.

We follow and look in with them. It is such a holy place, for the little Child is the Lord, and the little house is His home. The wise men who have come this long way to find Him are worshiping. And now they open their treasures and present unto Him gifts, gold and sweet precious gums from their country, frankincense and myrrh.

### **Junior**

Today we must all repeat the verses that tell the story of the wise men. First let me ask you a few questions to make sure that we understand the verses as we say them. Can you show me on the map Judea? And Bethlehem? And Jerusalem? Have you any idea where to look for the country from which the wise men came? It was in the East, perhaps beyond the Euphrates River. There were wise men there who had some knowledge of heavenly things handed down from long ago. They knew that the Lord was coming, and when a bright star shone out in their sky they knew that the Lord was born. There had been prophecies of a star in connection with his coming. See Balaam's prophecy in Numbers 24:17. The journey was a long one, no doubt they were some months preparing and on their way. The Gospel does not say how many wise men there were; some traditions say three, some more; we do not know. It does not say how they traveled. King Herod, called Herod the Great, was an Edomite by race. He was feared but not loved by the Jews. His suspicious, deceitful, cruel character is shown in this story.

The prophecy which names Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah, the promised King, you find in Micah 5:2: "But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Ephratah was an old name of Bethlehem. (See Genesis 48:7.) It seems to mean "fruitful," the same as Bethlehem, "house of bread." We are not told the wise men's answer to Herod's question about the time when the star appeared. From verse 16 we might infer that it was about two years before, certainly not more than two years. Frankincense and myrrh were fragrant gums, the frankincense from a tree, and the myrrh from a smaller shrubby tree.

You need your map again, to trace the journey of Joseph and Mary with the Holy Child to Egypt, and after their stay there back again to Nazareth. There are more prophecies for you to find. See Hosea 11:1 and Jeremiah 31:15. We have already been reminded of the association of Bethlehem with Rachel; how Rachel died near Bethlehem when Benjamin was born. A little building by the wayside north of Bethlehem is still called Rachel's tomb. It is as if Rachel were watching over Bethlehem and weeping for the death of its children.

You cannot find a prophecy that the Lord should be called a Nazarene. Samson and Samuel and others who represented the Lord were Nazarites. (Judges 13:5; 1 Samuel 1: 11) The words are similar and perhaps were regarded as the same in meaning: "separated" as holy.

Now we will recite the story. The visit of the wise men will come clearly to our minds. We shall feel the eagerness of their journey, their joy as they saw again the star, the holiness of the scene in Bethlehem when they worshiped and presented their gifts, the loving presence of the angels with

the infant Lord. It is describing not only what happened long ago, but our turning to the Lord today, eager to learn of Him and to make Him our King.

1. Who came first from the East, Abraham or the wise men?
2. What sign told the wise men that the Lord was born? Where did they stop to ask their way? Where did they find the Lord?
3. How did the wise men know the meaning of the star?
4. How did they find the town and the house where the Lord was?
5. What presents did they bring? Why did they choose these gifts?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

You will repeat the story of the wise men with the little children and enjoy it with them. At the same time you will have some thoughts of its deeper meaning, as describing spiritual conditions of the Lord's coming, and of our own acknowledgment of Him as our King.

In regard to the remnants of spiritual knowledge from the Ancient Church among the wise men of the East, read interesting things in A. 9293, 10252, and S. 23. Their knowledge that the Lord was coming was a part of this ancient wisdom; also the knowledge of correspondences which enabled them to choose gifts which were representative of love to the Lord in all degrees from highest to lowest. The gift of gold means the holiest love of all; the frankincense, which rose as a sweet fragrance with prayer, is an emblem of gratitude for all heavenly blessings; and the myrrh, a fragrant gum of a more common kind, represents gratitude for natural good things. (A. 9293, 10252)

The story brings into contrast two kings: King Herod ruling in Jerusalem, and the newborn King of the Jews. The Lord was King in the power of the Divine truth and love, which He brought into the world. King Herod stands for the power of falsity and evil, which held dominion in men's hearts. Well might Herod be troubled at the mention of the new King, as the devils often cried out at the presence of the Lord.

We seek the Lord as King and acknowledge Him as King especially when we learn His truth and allow it to order and rule our lives. Those who are seeking the Lord's truth are also spiritually wise men. The little knowledge that they have is their star; they follow it joyfully, and it will surely bring them to the Lord. (E. 422 end; S. 23)

In our study of the Old Testament stories we have thought of the meaning of Egypt. It represents a natural state, especially a state in which the mind is being stored through the senses with natural knowledge. A child is in this Egyptian state when his senses are acute and his memory is strong for laying up knowledge. This state with its store of knowledge is the necessary foundation for the development of a rational and spiritual understanding of truth. The development of the spiritual understanding from natural knowledge is described by the words of the Psalm, "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt." It is described also in the prophet's words, "When Israel was a child,

then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." And now this Scripture that describes the experience of every regenerating man is applied by the Gospel to the Lord, meaning that He too received through the senses natural knowledge as the basis of rational and spiritual understanding. This also was represented by His being taken as a child into Egypt and His coming up out of Egypt to the home in Nazareth. (A. 1462; E. 654; R. 503)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought A: The Lord Came into the World

You know that our Heavenly Father created the world in which we live, and indeed not only the natural world, but also the spiritual world. At first everything and everyone was good. People loved each other, and because they were so good, when their loved ones went to Heaven they could continue to talk with them. The Lord Himself would often appear to them and teach them. Those were happy, happy times. But after a long while people no longer wished to be dependent on the Lord. They did not like to think that they owed everything to Him, but began to think that what they had was their very own; that their bodies were their very own and that they could do with them just what they wanted without caring whether it was what the Lord, who gave them their bodies, would wish them to do; that if they were good, this was something that they made themselves; that if they were smart, they became smart of themselves. In this way they began to think what was not true, and of course loved what was not good. And so falsity and evil began in their hearts, and around them evil animals and poisonous plants began to exist. The people began to get sick and miserable, and unhappiness took the place of happiness. Men began to claim that what others possessed belonged to themselves; they took away the property of other men and made them their slaves.

Things went from bad to worse. The Lord did all that could be done, sending them prophets, who were teachers; giving them the Commandments; and in other ways trying to help them get right again. It is a long story. But at last the people to whom He had sent His servants, the prophets, grew so bad that there was hardly anyone left who knew what was really good or true.

So, when nothing else could be done, the Lord Himself came into the world. He did not step out of His Sun (that shines in Heaven) right into the world, because no one could have stood that. He is so grand and glorious. He is so bright and warm. His brightness would have blinded all. The heat of His infinite love would have burnt all. So He wrapped His great, splendid light up. How could this be done? Have you ever seen light wrapped up in a cloud? O yes! It can be done. He wrapped His bright light, His glorious, Divine truth, up in something that was real small and tender and soft and sweet. He did not want to hurt anyone, but came in a way that would bless all. He clothed Himself with the body of a dear, tender, little babe. You know the story. You know that, although He might have been born in a palace built of the finest marble, in a bed of gold, with clothes and covers of the finest linen and lace, He was willing to be born, not even in a house, but in a stable, with a manger for his crib. He did this for a reason. Do you know why? He did it to show that the people of the Jewish Church thought of the Divine truth as a poor little thing of not much value.

But, away off, far distant from the country of the Jews where He was born, were wise men, to whom a star appeared. Led by that star, they journeyed until they reached the humble dwelling of the Lord. Taught by the star, they knew that, although born in a stable, He was most precious, that

He was "born King of the Jews," and so they fell down and worshiped Him. Think of it! At the beginning of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ in the world, these men who were not Jews, yet believed Him to be their King; and at the end of His life in the world when He hung on the cross, the Roman governor, likewise not a Jew, believed the same thing, and hung on the cross the title, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." Both the wise men from the East and the Roman governor from the West knew that this title meant something more than that He was the king of the Jewish people, but they did not quite understand what it meant. We of the New Church have been taught what it meant; that He is the King or Ruler of those who were represented by the Jews of old - namely, of all who cherish a warm love for Him in their hearts. His Divine Truth clothed in that little body was King, and is King.

When everyone does as the wise men did, the world will grow good again, and even better than it was in the beginning. We must all go to the Lord in His Word, for Bethlehem means the Word. We must bow down before our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We must love to take in the Divine truth of His holy Word, and to obey it. Then He becomes our King, for His truth will rule all we love and think and say and do. Then we shall cheerfully and gladly treat everyone with love and consideration, enjoy thinking out the best ways to be of use to others, and take great pleasure in doing and saying what is just and right, and, we shall be very, very happy, both in this world and also in the next.

It is the Lord, our Redeemer and Savior, who helps us to do this. It is He who, from Himself, sends us this happiness as His great and everlasting Christmas gift to us.

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### **Leading Thought B: The Wise Men from the East**

You know the story of the wise men from the East. But what perhaps you do not know is where these men came from and how the Lord showed them the star which led them to the place where the Divine Child lay. Indeed no one can answer the question about them unless he has studied the Doctrines of the New Church, for they tell us about this as about everything else in the Holy Word.

Of course you know that the Jews, the people among whom the Lord was born, had been told from time to time, by the prophets, that He would be born, and the name of the place where He would be born. These prophecies were made from time to time during the entire duration of the Jewish Church. Even Moses prophesied about it. Moses was the man through whom the Lord established the Jewish Church, for it was through Moses that the Lord gave the Ten Commandments, and that was the beginning of the writing of the Old Testament.

But before Moses' time, and even before the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, there was a Church, which had a holy Word. We are taught to call that Church "the Ancient Church," and the Word they had, "the Ancient Word." Moses knew about that Ancient Word. He copied the first few chapters of Genesis from it, and also quoted from it elsewhere.

The Ancient Church spread over a number of countries, namely, Syria, Assyria, Arabia, Ethiopia, Egypt, Chaldea, Tyre, Sidon, and elsewhere. The people of that Church loved to study correspondences, that is, they loved to find out what spiritual thing every natural thing

corresponded to, and therefore represented. We have occasionally talked about correspondences, and so you will understand what it means.

Of course when we speak of a Church, we mean people who not only know about the Lord and about spiritual things, but who live up to what they know, who really and truly love the Lord and the neighbor, doing what the Lord tells them to do. When people gradually stop loving the neighbor as much as themselves, and stop loving the Lord above all things, then the Church dies. And yet they may continue to know what has been taught in the Church.

This is the way it was with the Ancient Church. It died out. And yet many of the people continued to study correspondences. No doubt a few of these were good, but most of the people in the countries where the Ancient Church had been were no longer spiritually "alive." (Why! We are using correspondential expressions ourselves now, are we not? "Dead" and "alive." You know what these words mean.)

In the Ancient Church they had many laws or statutes that described how worship was to be conducted in a correspondential manner. These laws were like the laws that we have in the books of Moses. They also had prophecies about the Lord's coming into the world. Indeed, very much of their worship was so conducted as to represent the Lord's future coming into the world, and the great work of redemption that He would then perform. When the Ancient Church died out, some of the people, especially those who lived in Syria, continued studying these representatives in their worship and their statutes, and so they knew about the Lord's coming. One of the most interesting stories of the Word tells us about this. You will find it in Numbers 22; 23; 24. What is told in that story happened while the children of Israel, under the leadership of Moses, were marching from Mount Sinai, where the Ten Commandments were given, to the land of Canaan, and passed through the land of Moab. The king of Moab called upon a man by the name of Balaam, who lived in Syria, to curse the Israelites. But instead of cursing them, he had to bless them, because he knew representatives, and the great encampment of the children of Israel with the tabernacle in the midst, represented Heaven. While blessing them, he was led by the Spirit to foretell that the Lord was coming into the world, which he did in these words, "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not nigh; a Star shall come out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall arise out of Israel." He saw the Lord, but not then, for the Lord was not born until nearly fifteen hundred years later. He beheld Him, but not near, because the Lord was not born in the land of Moab where the Israelites were then encamped, but in Bethlehem of Judea, a long distance off.

Men who, like Balaam, knew correspondences and representatives - that is, who knew spiritual things - were called "wise" in those days.

Although Balaam lived over fourteen hundred years before the Lord was born, yet the knowledge of representatives continued to be studied in Syria and Arabia down to the time of the Lord's birth, and it was in the same country that the wise men lived who followed the star to Jerusalem and then to the place where Jesus was.

The Lord is the East in heaven. And therefore they saw the star "from the east." Now a "star" signifies knowledge of what is good and true, and especially knowledge about the Lord. And because these wise men had knowledge about the Lord's Advent from the representatives that were among them, therefore they saw the star and it went before them. It went to Jerusalem first,

because that holy city represented the Church as to doctrine and as to the Word; and then it went to the place where the infant Lord was.

And because they knew correspondences and representatives, they presented Him with representative gifts, namely, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. For they used these things in their own worship, knowing what they represented, and they brought them to the infant King, because they represented the different kinds of goodness that He was going to raise up in the hearts of men forever after. Gold represents the highest and purest and best kind of goodness, such as the angels of the highest heaven have, and which is therefore called "celestial good." Frankincense represents the kind of good such as the angels of the middle heaven have, and which is called "spiritual good." Myrrh represents such good as the angels of the lowest heaven possess, and this is called "natural good."

We also have the star, the knowledge about the Lord, and we must follow that star and devote to the Lord's service all the good that He gives us.

## **Lesson 3**

### **Matthew 3: John the Baptist**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Today we are standing by a river. It is the Jordan, the river of the Holy Land. It makes one border of the land, and you may remember how it opened before the ark to let the children of Israel in. Years and years afterward something else was bringing crowds of people to the river. They came from the country far and near, and from the great city of Jerusalem, and from the pastureland beyond the Jordan. Among the crowd there were some dressed in fine robes, who were Pharisees and Sadducees; there were soldiers and publicans or tax gatherers; there were farmers from the fields and fishermen from the Sea of Galilee.

And why were all these people here? They were listening to a man who was standing by the river and speaking to them. It was John the Baptist. He was a rough-seeming man, like the old prophet Elijah. His hair was long, and he wore a coarse cloak of camel's-hair cloth, with a belt of leather. He had lived most of his life in the desert, and he ate the large locusts, as the poor people in that country do, cooking them or drying them in the sun. He ate, too, the honey that the wild bees gathered from the desert flowers and laid up in their combs among the rocks.

He was saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He spoke sternly to the proud Pharisees, and when soldiers and publicans asked him what they must do, he told them plainly what wrong things they did which they must stop doing to be ready for the Lord. He told them they were like trees that would be cut down if they did not bear fruit. He told them they were like the grain that the farmers piled on the threshing-floors near every village, and when the grain had been beaten out they threw it into the air with their big wooden fans or shovels till the light chaff was blown away.

Those who listened to John and were ready to repent, to stop doing wrong and to do right, he baptized in the river. The washing with water was a picture of making their lives clean.

And the Lord, for whom John was preparing the people, was nearer than they knew. He had been born in Bethlehem and had been living for years in the little town of Nazareth, in Galilee. And He was even then among the people who were listening to John. The Lord came and was baptized; it was a sign that He was making His life clean. And when He was baptized the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him. John saw it, too, and it was a sign to him that this was the Lord.

Now listen, and I will read the story just as it is told.

### **Junior**

Today it will be well to draw neatly a little map to show the river Jordan and its relation to the Holy Land. Show the mountain where the Jordan rises, the sea through which it flows, and the sea into which it empties. Show Judea and Galilee and Jerusalem and the country beyond Jordan. Show Nazareth, the Lord's home, and the wilderness of Judea, bordering the Dead Sea, where John had lived. At what place on the Jordan the Lord was baptized we are not told. If it was at Bethabara "where John at first baptized," it was probably at the fords of the Jordan some fifteen miles south of the Sea of Galilee.

When we first read of John the Baptist in Matthew's Gospel, he is a grown man, a hardy man of the desert, entering upon his work of preaching repentance and baptizing, preparing the people for the Lord. We learn in the first chapter of Luke's Gospel how John was promised by the angel to Zacharias and his character and work were foretold, how he was born in the hill country of Judea and named John, and how "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." (Luke 1:80.) The preaching of John is described with somewhat greater fullness in Luke 3. The vision of the dove is mentioned also in John 1:29-34, and its meaning to John the Baptist as a sign that Jesus was the Lord. Who is the prophet Esaias? and in what chapter of that prophet is John's work described? (Isaiah 40.)

What was the substance of John's preaching? He was preaching repentance, the confessing and putting away of evil from the life in preparation for the Lord and His kingdom. John himself with his hardy desert life, shows the bold, self-denying spirit in which the work of repentance must be done. The washing of baptism pictures the washing of repentance. As we read of John's work we see our own duty to examine our lives and to be brave in cutting off for the Lord's sake every habit that is wrong. We imagine ourselves with the others who came to John, asking, "What shall we do?" And the Lord's commandments show us the things that are wrong and must be given up. Do you know one wrong habit in your life that John would condemn? Have his courage to stop it now. Make no excuse. Make no delay.

If this is the burden of John's teaching and the meaning of his baptism, does it seem strange that the Lord should come to be baptized? We feel, as John seems to have felt, that He could not need to repent. The Lord had not done wrong, but He had in His human nature all the tendencies to wrong that we have. He must meet them all and overcome them. This was the work of repentance which He must do, and which He had been doing with perfect courage all the years in Nazareth. This was pictured in His baptism. And the effect was pictured, too, when the Spirit of God was

seen descending upon Him. By His repentance the way was opened for the Divine Spirit to come down into His life in all its innocence and power.

1. Where is the Jordan? Where does its water come from? Where does it go to?
2. Who was the prophet Esaias? Why was baptism the fitting sign to accompany John's teaching?
3. Why was the Lord baptized? What was seen when the Lord was baptized? What was heard?
4. Write the burden of John's preaching. And as you write it think of some wrong thing in your life, and resolve for the Lord's sake to put it away.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

You easily recall the geography of the chapter by a glance at the map of Palestine in Gospel days. You complete the story of John's birth and preparation and ministry, by reference to Luke 1 and 3, John 1 and Isaiah 40. All that you learn from the Scripture about John and his preaching and his baptism helps to make clear the duty of repentance as the necessary preparation for the Lord and the blessings of His kingdom. Notice some particulars of the story.

John was in the deserts and preached in the wilderness. It suggests the state of the Jewish Church before the coming of the Lord, barren of all heavenly beauty and fruitfulness, and the state of every life before the way is opened by repentance for life that is fruitful from the Lord. (E. 405, 730)

John wore a cloak of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins. Remember the Lord's reference to John's raiment (Matthew 11:8), for it was significant. One's spiritual clothing is his thought, his intelligence, which brings his affection forth in form. The soft raiment of those who are in kings' houses is an interior, spiritual intelligence such as angels have in heaven; but the coarse, strong raiment of John the Baptist is the strong natural intelligence of one who is learning and applying the literal commandments of God's Word. (E. 619; A. 9372.)

John's food was locusts and wild honey. The insects are types of powers of the mind that are comparatively weak and superficial. Locusts often represent powers of thought so superficial as to be wholly false and hurtful; but here, in their best sense, they represent true thought from the letter of the Word. The honey of wild bees is the pleasantness of learning and applying the truth of natural order and usefulness. (E. 619; A. 5620, 9372)

It is easy to see that washing and baptism represent the cleansing of repentance. The water for this spiritual cleansing is truth that teaches what is right and what is wrong and enables us to recognize and separate the evil. There is truth from many sources which can be used for cleansing, the life, but the perfect truth and that with fullest power is truth from the letter of the Word. This truth is represented by the water of Jordan, the river of the Holy Land and the gate of entrance to all its blessings. This was why Naaman in the old days must wash in Jordan and in no other stream, and why John baptized in the Jordan. (A. 4255) The baptism of the Holy Spirit and

fire is the interior cleansing and renewing of the soul by Divine truth and goodness from the Lord when the way is prepared for it by repentance of external evils of life in obedience to the literal precepts of the Word. (E. 475)

When the Lord came to John's baptism it showed that what takes place in some small measure in every man who repents and is regenerated, took place in fullness in His glorification. "By submitting to be baptized, He testified to the cleansing of the natural life by the truth of the Word. The dove descending and lighting upon Him testified to the reception of the Spirit of God in the Human, according to its purification. The voice from heaven testified to the Divine satisfaction in the human work among men." ("Matthew's Gospel," pp. 40,41; T. 144)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### **Leading Thought: John the Baptist**

The story in the Old Testament closes with the captivity of the Israelites. The kingdom of Israel had been carried away into a permanent captivity; the kingdom of Judah had been carried away to Babylon for seventy years (and the number 70 also represents a permanent state). Although the return of the Jews to Canaan was promised by the prophets, yet we learn about their actual return and about the rebuilding of the temple from other books, but, strange as it may seem, not from the Word. There is a reason for this. It is that their whole history represented states of the church, and if their return from Babylon were related in the Word, it would signify that they themselves returned out of the state of evil into that of good. The Jews as a nation never made such a return. And yet a new church was to be established. Mankind were to return to the Lord, and a few of the Jews were to begin this church as a nucleus. This new, or Christian Church, was established by the Lord's own coming into the world. Instead, therefore, of having the story of the return of the Jews from Babylon to Canaan, we have the story of the Lord's coming into the world, and of the institution of the genuine or Christian Church.

Unless we understand this, there would seem to be no continuity between the Old Testament and the New, but a serious gap.

In order that men may return out of an evil state, such as that which is represented by the worship of Baal and other idols, and by the final captivity of the twelve tribes, they must repent. This is the reason why in the beginning of the gospel story we read about a man who told people to repent - namely, John the Baptist. In order that the church, the Lord's kingdom, may be in you, repent: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

It shows us how closely the New Testament really follows the Old, when we realize that the prophets foretold about John's preaching as in Isaiah (40:3) and Malachi. Indeed, the very last words of Malachi, and thus of the Old Testament, refer to John, who is there called Elias or Elijah: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." And as this prophecy closes the Old Testament, so, its fulfillment is told in the opening chapters of the New.

When people are sinful-when they care nothing for the Lord and for love for Him -when they are utterly selfish - then, no matter how much they may know, how rich they may be, how beautiful outwardly their lives, how splendid their temple, how carefully they observe all the details of external worship, they are nevertheless like a desert - a waste, dreary country, where there is little or no grass, and few, if any bushes or trees. And this is the reason why John the Baptist preached in the wilderness.

In order to become good, people need to learn the truth. In order to become better, they need to learn still higher truths. When people have no truths whatever, they must first be taught the simplest and plainest truths - truths that are very general. And as John was telling sinful people, who had no truths, to repent, he had to teach them the simplest and plainest truths, just such as are in the literal sense of the Scriptures, as in the Ten Commandments. For this reason his dress was very plain and rough. He had on garments of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins. The camel's hair represents the plainest truths we all must first learn to know, some of which sound rough, and the leathern girdle shows that these truths are very general and hold together the deeper and more particular truths. And because the first truths we learn also nourish our spiritual life, and are pleasant, because they lead us to heaven, therefore his food was locusts - the winged insects that are much eaten by the poorer people in the Orient -and sweet honey of the fields. These foods again represent the low, external, but vital, truths that are found in the literal sense of the Word.

And then we are told that they were baptized of John in Jordan confessing their sins, because baptism, which is a washing, of the body, represents the washing of the spirit, that is, removing the evils that make a person spiritually unclean. And the Jordan, running in its low bed, at the boundary of the land of Canaan, also represents the literal sense of the Word, which is the lowest boundary of Divine truth, and also marks the boundary of the church. For, as one crosses the Jordan to enter the Holy Land, so we have to accept the Sacred Scriptures in order to enter the holy church.

We learned that Malachi foretold that John would come, and that unless he did come and convert people, the land would be smitten with a curse. Now we can understand this. For, unless people repent of their evil, unless they are converted by the Divine truth, they remain evil, and to be evil is to be accursed. To be good is to be blessed. The keeping of the Ten Commandments, whereby men turn away from evil and do good, therefore divides mankind into two great classes, the converted and sinners; or sheep and goats; or good and evil. The Word calls such a classification a "judgment." And if you will read carefully what John said, you will find that he spoke of this judgment. Trees mean men. Men who do not listen to the Divine truth, and do not bring forth fruit, are like trees at whose root is the axe which cuts them down, for the axe means truth.

The Lord Jesus Christ was Himself baptized, in order to show by His Divine example, that we must be baptized, and also because there were things in His human nature which He had put on like a garment, from Mary the mother, which were not Divine, and which were again to be put off, as impurities are washed from the body by water.

When you think of your baptism, remember that it means that you were baptized as the Lord was baptized, and that you are to do as He did: fight against evil and overcome, by always doing what the Word of the Lord teaches.

## **Lesson 4**

### **Matthew 4: Tempted in the Wilderness**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Sometimes when we read of all the good, kind things that the Lord said and did we think, "O yes, it was easy for the Lord to do right." But it was not always easy, and our story today is one of the stories that show us that the Lord was tempted as we are to say and do things that were not good, and that there were times when these temptations made Him unhappy. The story shows, too, how the Lord did when He was tempted, that He was prompt and strong in refusing to do wrong.

It was after the Lord's baptism at the Jordan. There was desert country near the Jordan, especially on the west side toward the lower part of the river, and to the west of the Dead Sea. This was a very wild country of bare, rocky hills and valleys, with little that was green or beautiful. It was called the wilderness of Judea. This was the desert in which John the Baptist lived in the early part of his life, and it may have been in the same desert that the Lord was for a time after His baptism, where He was tempted. The rough old cliff near Jericho (called Mount Quarantania, or Karantel, in memory of the Lord's forty days of fasting) has been thought of as the place of the temptations, and hermits have gone to live there in the caves, feeling that it was a holy place. The desert country where the Lord was in this time of temptation was a sort of picture of the desert within.

And who brought the unhappiness to the Lord? Angels did not do it, but evil spirits, who are called the devil and Satan. Evil spirits try to make us do wrong and to make us unhappy, and they tried still more to make the Lord do wrong.

But the Lord refused. He would not do wrong. He did not hesitate or delay, but answered the tempter promptly and surely. And He did something else that made Him strong. He repeated the words from the Scripture, which told that the thing was wrong. There is a power in the words of Scripture which evil spirits cannot stand, but which angels love. "Then the devil leaveth Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him." What the Lord did shows us what we ought to do when we are tempted to do wrong. If we answer promptly as He did, and remember the commandment that says, "Thou shalt not," the Lord will help us and make us strong. Let me read you verses 1-11.

Let me read a little more about the Lord, and how He called some of the men who would be His faithful disciples and go with Him and help in His teaching and good works. The Lord was walking by the Sea of Galilee, for He had left Nazareth and made His home in Capernaum. This was a busy town where traders were passing back and forth, where farmers lived who had gardens in the rich meadows near by, and fishermen who caught fish in the lake. Sometimes they sailed out on the water in their boats, and then they drew up by the beach to throw their nets from the shore or to dry and mend their nets. This is what the fishermen were doing as the Lord walked along the shore, and He called them to come. He called first two brothers, Simon and Andrew, and a little farther on two other brothers, James and John. They came quickly when He called, and they went

with the Lord, to learn what He had to teach them and to help Him in His work. Read verses 18-25.

## Junior

Today let us read verses 1-11 of our chapter and then talk a little about them.

"Then" was Jesus led into the "wilderness." It was after the baptism in the Jordan. We do not know just what part of the wilderness it was, but a picture of the old cliff near Jericho brings to mind the desolate, barren character of the country bordering the lower Jordan and the Dead Sea on the west.

"Tempted of the devil." "Get thee hence, Satan." The names mean evil spirits of hell, who tempt us by stirring up the evil in our minds and hearts. The name "devil" means especially spirits who delight in evil that is opposed to goodness, and "Satan" spirits who delight in falsity which is opposed to truth. Notice how it is said that when the devil left the Lord, angels came. They do not bring temptation, but comfort and peace.

Notice the three temptations: to make stones His bread; the temptation from the pinnacle of the temple; and the temptation from the mountain. What is said about the pinnacle of the temple and about the mountain from which was a view of all the kingdoms of the world cannot be meant literally; the account of the temptations is a sort of parable in which the Lord described to the disciples temptations which came to Him not only at this time but at many times in His life. The temptations seem little in the story, but they represent deep interior conflicts. Such temptations came to the Lord continually, from childhood on, and were more severe than any man can conceive of or believe.

The Lord gives us an example in temptation, in the promptness and decision of His answers, and in His use of the words of Scripture which condemn the wrong and bring strength to resist it. How little our temptations are in comparison with the Lord's! And yet, how we hesitate and delay! Are we not ashamed to be so weak and cowardly? And remember how the Lord stood alone in resisting the strength of all the hells; but He shields us from their power, and if we trust Him and do our little part He gives us victory.

Turn to your map as you read of the Lord's change of home from Nazareth to Capernaum. And look at the map that shows the tribes to see where the lots of Zebulon and Naphtali were. Read Isaiah 9:1, 2, and notice the still more familiar prophecy of the Lord in verses 6 and 7 of the same chapter. The Lord went to live in Capernaum and began His public preaching, when He heard that John was cast into prison. Do you remember the story of John's imprisonment? You find it in Luke 3:18-20. This Herod was the ruler of Galilee and Perea, the region east of Jordan; and the place of John's imprisonment (so Josephus tells us) was the fortress of Machaerus in the mountains east of the Dead Sea. Notice that the Lord took up the work which John laid down, in the very words of John, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The walking by the shore and the calling of four men from their nets brings before us the beautiful Sea of Galilee and its fisher people which figure so much in the story from this time on. The Lord calls us all to be disciples, and in a sense we all must leave our nets to follow Him. It may not mean the giving up of natural occupations, but giving them up as merely natural occupations

and using them as means of doing the Lord's heavenly work. The last verses of the chapter give a picture of the life of busy usefulness that the Lord lived on earth. Peter once summed up the story of the Lord's life in the saying that He "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38), and John's Gospel testifies that the world could not contain the full record of the things that He did. (John 21:25)

You need your map again as you read of His fame going through all Syria (the region to the north and east of Palestine, sometimes including Palestine itself), and as you see the people gathering from Galilee and Decapolis (ten cities, mostly east of Jordan), and Jerusalem, and Judea, and from beyond Jordan.

1. What words will be especially useful to us when we are tempted to be unkind? Untruthful?
2. What other times do you remember when angels ministered to the Lord?
3. How long had the Lord's home been in Nazareth? What city was now to be His home?
4. Which of the Lord's disciples were fishermen? What were they now to be?
5. Please draw me a map of the Sea of Galilee.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

What particulars that are told of the scene of the Lord's temptation are plainly representative of the spiritual state? He was in the wilderness, which suggests the barrenness and unloveliness of the state of conflict. One Gospel adds that "He was with the wild beasts" (Mark 1:13), and the beasts were the evil passions, and the devils who aroused them, which He overcame. Forty days and forty nights are mentioned. Forty, and especially forty nights, is often associated with temptations. For example the forty days and nights of rain which caused the flood, the forty years of Israel's desert journey. (A. 730, 8098; E. 730)

Think of the three temptations; they are representative of all the Lord's temptations. The first, to make the stones His bread, represents in general the temptation to be satisfied with a natural life rather than with living the Divine truth - every word of God. The temptation in the holy city, on the pinnacle of the temple, represents the temptation to be puffed up with intellectual pride and to use the Divine truth for personal honor. A city and temple are associated with intellectual strength. The temptation on the exceeding high mountain is the temptation of self-love and the desire to rule over others. A mountain is a type of exalted affection good or bad. (A. 2813, 9003; E. 405)

John was cast into prison, which represents the larger truth, that good life in obedience to the commandments was rejected among men. The Lord then came forth to embody in His own person and to teach the repentance and obedience that is the necessary basis of heavenly life. He went into Galilee, which represents the plane of outward life; He left Nazareth for Capernaum, the sphere of inward labor, for that of outward use and conflict in the world. Zebulon (union) suggests the bringing down of the Divine into human life, and Naphtali (strife) suggests the conflict through which this must be accomplished. The position of Capernaum by the sea is in keeping with this coming of the Lord with Divine help into the affairs of outward life, for the sea

represents these lower states and interests. And this is emphasized when presently we read of the Lord's walking by the sea and calling fishermen to be His disciples. (E. 447) The abundant fruitfulness of the Divine power which the Lord brought into the plane of practical life is suggested by the good works enumerated in the last verses of the chapter, and its availability for people of every kind by the multitude gathered from places near and far.

Give a closer thought to the Lord's calling of fishermen to be disciples, and to His promise to make them fishers of men. As it had been their work to draw fish from the sea, so it would now be their work to lift men up from a merely natural life to a realization of heavenly use and blessing. The men called to be disciples were representative of the several faculties of mind that can be of service in this work. Simon and Andrew are intellectual powers, the power of learning the Lord's truth and of obeying it. James and John are the heavenly loves for the neighbor and for the Lord. They are brothers, two and two; and all are partners. (Luke 5:10) The powers of intellect are first called, and the heavenly loves when the Lord has gone on a little further. (E. 820, 821)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Temptations

As you well know, Jesus was God Himself who is Purity and Goodness and Truth itself. But in order that He might convert sinners and make them good and true, He wanted to come down among them. Indeed He could not otherwise have redeemed and saved them. So He clothed Himself with a human body, a human nature that was just like the body or the nature of the people among whom He was going to do His great and merciful work of teaching and saving. But all during His stay on earth, He constantly removed the impurities that were in His human nature, and in their place He put on pure Divine affections and thoughts, Divine truth and Divine good, from His own Divinity. He did this in a way like that in which He helps men from being full of sin and iniquity to become full of justice or righteousness.

You know that although you may feel inclined to say what is not true or to do what is not good, yet you can overcome this; you can gradually, by trying very hard and always resisting wrong impulses, become so that you will at last never feel like saying anything but what is true, and doing anything but what is good. In this way you become angelic, although it takes a long while. In the same way the human nature of the Lord became Divine.

Now, you learned in the last lesson that when Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the river Jordan, this was done to represent that He Himself, the Lord, would wash away with Divine truth (which the water represented) all the impurities which He had taken on with the human nature of the body. And when He had been baptized, and went out of the water, at once the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him; and lo, a Voice out of heaven saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.'

The human nature of the Lord was just as distinct from His Divine nature, as your body is from your spirit. While you live in the natural body you cannot see your spirit, nor the beautiful heavenly scenery and the angels and spirits around you. The two worlds are quite distinct. The human part of Jesus was just as distinct from His Divine part. But on this occasion the heavens were opened to His human part, so that He could see the dove which was not material, but

spiritual; and just as the dove came down and rested upon Him, so the Divine Spirit or influence of His Divine Part was to flow down into His Human part and rest there, making it Divine. And then the Divine influence went out from His human nature to regenerate men and women; that is, make them angelic. His Spirit flows from Him, just as the sunbeams flow down from the sun; and it makes men and women angelic just as the sunshine makes of a hard unripe apple a mellow, sweet and fragrant fruit.

Do you notice that there are three things that we think of in regard to the Lord? The first is His Soul, which was the Infinite Jehovah, or His very Divine Nature Itself; from this came the "Voice." The second is the human nature, which the Voice called His "Son." And the third is the Spirit of God, which flows forth from Him. These three things are called "the Divine Trinity." They are spoken of in the Word -the one as the "Father," the second as the "Son," and the third as the "Holy Spirit."

Since the baptism of Jesus showed that there were at first things in His human nature which had to be washed away, and that then the Divine influence would flow down into it from the Divine Itself and make it the Divine Human, therefore we are told how that, immediately after He was baptized, He was driven into the wilderness and fasted there forty days and forty nights, and afterward He was tempted of the devil. All this showed that He actually did what His baptism had represented; that is, He actually removed every wrong thing out of His Human, His body.

Forty days and forty nights also mean temptation. Indeed, the number forty is often used in the Word to mean temptation. And what is temptation? It means trial. The Lord was tried. The devil tried to make Him do things that were not right, by promising Him very agreeable and pleasant things. But Jesus always answered the devil by telling Him that the Word of the Lord teaches us to do the very opposite of what the devil wants. Never throughout all His life, did the Lord do what the devil tried to make Him do, no matter how much it seemed as if it would be pleasant to do it; and the devil tempted Jesus from His babyhood even until the crucifixion.

We all must undergo temptation. That is what the water of our baptism and also the cross made on our forehead and breast, when we are baptized, mean. The Lord said that we must take up our cross and follow Him (Matthew 10:38; 16:24); that is, we must undergo temptation and do as He did.

All evil spirits and devils taken together are meant by the devil; all the hells fought against the Lord. But He overcame them all. Now, in our case, whenever any devil or evil spirit whispers in our ear, to try to make us do something which seems very pleasant, and which we would like to do, but which we know is wrong, we must do as the Lord did: We must say, "No, I will not, because it is a sin against God." Indeed, we may use the same words that the Lord did, and say, "It is written."

For instance, if you are inclined to be disobedient, say, "It is written, Honor father and mother."

Or, if tempted to say or do what is hateful, or angry, or mean, say, "It is written, Thou shalt not kill."

Or, if tempted to think or say or do things impure, say, "It is written, Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Or, if tempted to want to have what belongs to others, say, "It is written, Thou shalt not steal."

Or, if tempted to be discontented, say, "It is written, Thou shalt not covet."

You will find the greatest power against the devil when you use the words of the Lord, because the Lord Himself is back of them.

And just as, after the temptation of Jesus, angels came and ministered unto Him, so, after we have fought off the devil with the Lord's words and help, angels come to minister to us and make us happy and contented and blessed.

## Lesson 5

### Matthew 5: The Blessings

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

We once stood with the Lord by the shore of the Sea of Galilee where the fishing-boats were anchored, and heard the Lord call four fishermen from their nets to be His disciples. Do you remember who they were?

But look back from the shore. Here is a beautiful meadow, green with orchards and gardens. Beyond the meadow is a valley, with steep rocky sides, leading up into the hills. Great flocks of pigeons fly out from the cliffs and settle down in the meadow to find food. The valley is called the Pigeon Valley. Looking up this valley from the shore and the meadow where we stand, we see a beautiful mountain. The top is broad, rising a little at either side, which gives it its name, the Horns of Hattin. Hattin is a little town near by.

On a day long ago a great company of people were moving toward the highland beyond the plain, and perhaps to this very mountain. The Lord was leading the way. In the mountain they were away from the noise and hurry of the towns; they could look up to the blue sky and down on the meadow and the shore and the lake and away to the distant shore. There the Lord sat down with the twelve disciples whom He had chosen to be always with Him, and the people gathered around; and He spoke to them the Blessings and many lessons about the life that He would help them to live with Him. This is called the Sermon on the Mount.

Nearly every one of the Blessings was a surprise, for the Lord called things blessed or happy which they had never thought of as blessed before. He would show them how to find new happiness.

It will be the best thing we can do today, if we learn to say the Blessings. First let us see if you can finish each Blessing when I begin it:

- Blessed are the poor in spirit ...
- Blessed are they that mourn...

- Blessed are the meek...
- Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness ...
- Blessed are the merciful ...
- Blessed are the pure in heart...
- Blessed are the peacemakers ...
- Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' ...
- Blessed are ye ...
- Rejoice and be exceeding glad ...

When we are sure that you can finish each Blessing when I begin it for you, let us make sure that we can say them in their order. It will help those who can read if I write in a column on the blackboard the first words of each Blessing, or just the important word of each - poor, mourn, meek - as you tell them to me in their order. Have we left out any? Have we ten in all? Now say the Blessings for me with this help on the blackboard. Now let me rub out the words, and see if you can say them just as well. Now that we have learned the Blessings we must say them often.

## **Junior**

I hope that you drew a map of the Sea of Galilee with our last lesson. Keep it before you as we read of going into the mountain with the Lord.

How different it was from the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai in the desert, when the people were commanded not to go into the mountain, nor even to touch it! (Exodus 19:10-20:18) Yet the Lord said that He came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. The Blessings are really the same laws as the Commandments. The Blessings show why the Lord tells us not to do wrong things. It is so that we shall be able to enjoy good and happy things.

Give a thought to the several conditions which the Lord says are blessed. To be poor in spirit is to be conscious of weakness and the need of help and guidance from the Lord. It is the opposite of the state of self-confidence, which the Lord calls rich, which cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. The mourning that is blessed is sorrow for what has been done wrong, and a sense of pain from the consciousness of evil in the heart. The meek are those who are willing to be taught and led. They hunger and thirst who earnestly desire the goodness and truth that make the spirit strong. The exercise of mercy opens the heart to know the great mercy of the Lord. To be pure in life and heart opens the soul to the light of heaven - to the Lord, and to see everywhere what is good and pure from Him. A life of selfishness leads to strife and has nothing from the Lord in it, but if one is just and considerate and unselfish, a true peacemaker, one lives from the Lord and becomes more and more His child. The persecuted, like those who mourn, are they who are pained by the consciousness of evil. The persecution is the pain of deep conflict and temptation. The Lord's words, "Blessed are ye," bring to the disciples and to us in a very tender, personal way the safety through everything of those who are faithful to Him. This was perhaps the first intimation by the Lord to the disciples of what they would suffer for His sake - not to be looked forward to as a

hardship, but a blessing. Rejoice, because resisting temptations in the power of the Lord's truth, His prophets, one enters upon a life that will increase in strength and joy forever.

After giving the Blessings the Lord told the disciples that they must show by their example how to keep them. Then they would be "the salt of the earth" and they would be making their light shine.

He told them also that they must keep the Commandments not only in their actions, but in their thoughts and feelings. We must not hurt other people, and we must be kind to animals. We can hurt people without touching them with our hands. We can hurt their feelings by what we say, or by neglect. We must not do this. And the Lord says that we must not let ourselves feel angry, nor think unkind thoughts; for these do people harm. Feeling angry, and saying "Raca" or worthless fellow, and saying "Thou fool," mean three degrees of unkind feeling, each worse than the one before it. The more unkind the feeling is, the more wrong it is.

We may learn to keep this commandment so well, that wherever we go we shall not hurt people and make them feel unhappy, but they will feel better and stronger and happier for their being there. We can feel kindly and be useful even to those who are unkind to us. Then we begin to know the meaning of the words, "Blessed are the merciful."

1. Where were the Blessings spoken? Who heard them?
2. When the Lord gave the Blessings did He do away with the Commandments? What relation have the Blessings to the Commandments?
3. What Blessing teaches the same lesson as the Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill"? What does this Commandment forbid besides natural killing?
4. How ought we to feel toward one another to make worship acceptable to the Lord? How ought we to feel toward those who are unkind to us?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Why did the Lord speak the Blessings and the Christian law to the people in a mountain? The mountain represents the interior, heavenly state into which He was leading them to learn these heavenly lessons. When the Commandments were spoken the children of Israel stood in the plain and were forbidden to touch the mountain. What does this show in regard to their spiritual state? (A. 795, 6435)

A person of lovely Christian character is often called one of the salt of the earth. But salt in the Scriptures has a definite spiritual meaning. It assists the union of food with the fluids of the body, and in turn excites thirst for fluid to unite with the food. This suggests that it represents the principle that truth must be united with goodness in life. It was commanded, "With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt" (Leviticus 2:13); because worship must not be of the thought alone, but must be joined with affection in good life. The words about the salt immediately following the Blessings, mean that the Lord's disciples must put this truth in practice, must join it with goodness. Salt has lost its savor and is worthless, when truth is separated from goodness. Setting a city on a hill, and a lamp on a stand, has much the same meaning; that the principles that we

profess must rest on the basis of a good life. Then the world will see their goodness. (A. 9207; E. 223)

The "jot" is the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and the "tittles" are little points and horns on some of the letters. Every part of the Lord's Word is holy and Divine. "Till heaven and earth pass away" is a very strong way of saying that the Lord's Word will stand forever. (Matthew 24:35) It means also that no human attainment on earth or in heaven is absolute. Men and angels may go on learning forever, but can never exhaust the wisdom of the Lord's Word. (A. 9349)

The phrase "and teach men so" joined with the mention of breaking or of doing the Lord's commandments, suggests the force of bad or good example. It also means what is done knowingly, with full understanding of its quality. (E. 746)

The verse reads "angry without a cause," as if it were sometimes right to be angry. Real anger is never right, but sternness and even severity, which may seem like anger, are sometimes right.

The duty to be reconciled with our brother before offering our gift to the Lord, shows that love to one another and love to the Lord go together; they are parts of one thing. We cannot love the Lord nor worship Him acceptably while we allow ourselves to feel unkindly toward one another. This must be made right first. (1 John 4:20) The charge "Agree with thine adversary quickly," and the warning, "lest thou be cast into prison," should remind us that now in this world is the time to overcome, with the Lord's help, angry feelings and wrong feelings of other kinds. If we do not make a beginning and try to overcome them now, they will fasten themselves upon us, and in the other world we shall not be able even to wish to be free from them. They will hold us in a bondage that is worse than a prison. And even now in this world, hard and angry thoughts if they are cherished and become fixed, limit and restrain the soul's free life. There is no relief except in complete repentance of the unkindness, the payment of the uttermost farthing. (E. 1015)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Ten Blessings

Do you notice any similarity between the giving of the Ten Blessings, as we have come to call them, and the giving of the Ten Commandments? Where were the Commandments given? On a mountain, Mount Sinai or Horeb, in the wilderness. And while Moses was on the top of the mountain, receiving the Commandments from the Lord, the twelve tribes of Israel were below around the foot of the mountain, Moses afterward telling the people what the Lord had commanded. The Ten Blessings were also given on a mountain, a beautiful one in the fertile land of Canaan. The Lord was on this mountain, and He called His disciples close to Him, while the multitudes of the people were farther down. The giving of the Ten Commandments was followed by the giving of many other commandments and laws and statutes. So the Ten Blessings were followed by many other beautiful teachings of the Lord, all of which together we call the Sermon on the Mount, and we find it written in the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of the Gospel according to Matthew. In the Ten Commandments and the other laws given to Moses, people were told for the most part what they should observe outwardly in their conduct. But in the Ten Blessings and the whole Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus Christ led people to think more of the spirit, or soul: what they ought to be in spirit.

Take the first Blessing, for example. "Blessed are the poor in spirit." That means to be humble. Now, a person may think that he is humble if he behaves in a humble way, by not showing himself proud and vain and conceited, but being respectful to other people, and especially bowing low before the Lord, and kneeling to Him on the ground. But the words that the Lord used are "poor in spirit," which make us think at once of what our spirit should be, rather than of what our body acts out.

But how can we be poor in spirit? Perhaps you can understand this, if I remind you of a story or parable which the Lord told. It was about a rich man who went away and left sums of money with his servants. To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to a third, one. He gave this money to them not to be theirs, but to trade with for him. Now, they were to use the money in trading just as if it belonged to them, and two of them did so. Yet they always remembered that the money belonged to their master, and were glad that they could earn more money for him. You may read the whole parable for yourself in Matthew 25:24-30 and Luke 19:20-26.

These two servants knew that they were poor; they knew that the money would not have been in their possession to trade with, if their master had not let them have it. And yet they were really rich, for they had the confidence and love of their master, and could dispose of the money just as if it were their own.

Now, let me ask you a question. Has your spirit any wealth? Yes, you are rich when you know much, when you have many knowledges about the Lord and heaven, and the church, or the Lord's kingdom. But where do you get your knowledge from? From the Lord Jesus Christ, our Master. And where do you get the power to see with your eyes, and so to read the Word, and to hear with your ears, and so to hear the Word and the Doctrines? And the power to learn and keep things in your mind? It is all from the Lord, is it not? And if He should stop for one instant giving you the power to see, you could not see; or the power to hear, you could not hear; or the power to learn and keep in your mind, you could not do it. So you are really like the poor servants. All you have in your spirit is the Lord's; all your spiritual wealth is His. And yet you are rich, for you can use your eyes and ears and mind and use the knowledges you learn as if they were all absolutely your own.

Are not, then, all men poor, compared with the Lord?

Certainly.

Why, then, does the Lord speak as if there were only some people who are "poor in spirit"?

Because, not all realize that they can know things only from the Lord's power. Many think that they know things from themselves. They think that they are rich, that their knowledges are their very own and that they can do with their knowledges anything, good or bad, and so they do not try to learn what the Lord wishes them to do, and do not make a good use of their knowledges, their riches.

But those who realize that they do not know anything from themselves are those who are meant by the "poor in spirit." They are truly humble as to their spirit. But what they have is never taken away from them: more is all the time added, because they are the Lord's servants and there is no end to the knowledge and wisdom He has and gives to His servants. Indeed, they have all "the kingdom of the heavens." But those who think that they know things from themselves, after death

lose the knowledge they had had here. Swedenborg tells us that some who were the most learned people in the world in their day, after death knew nothing at all.

This will help you to understand how the Blessings teach us about the life of the spirit, or the spiritual or inner life, and we will barely touch on the rest.

People mourn when they have lost a friend, or when they do not have something they would like. So those who "mourn" or feel very badly because they have lost truth, or cannot get hold of the truth of something in the Word, are comforted by the Lord, by His giving them the truth, and explaining the Word, for by their mourning they show that they really want the truth and love it.

To be "meek" means to be good and gentle, and to love the neighbor. To "possess the earth" means heaven and the happiness of heaven, for the earth or land of Canaan represented heaven.

You remember what the Lord said to Satan in the last lesson, about man not living by bread alone, but by every "Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." That helps us to understand that to "hunger and thirst after righteousness" means to have a strong desire or wish to learn what is right and to be right, and so to do what is right.

It is not necessary for me to tell you what it is to be merciful. The more merciful we are, the more mercy the Lord implants in our hearts.

Notice how the Lord teaches us not merely to wash our bodies, as the Jews were careful to do, but we must be clean of heart.

"Peacemakers" means not only to make peace between others, but especially to love peace ourselves, and keep all angry thoughts and feelings out of our hearts.

It is not only evil-minded men and children who "persecute" those who believe in God and say mean things to them or about them, but it is also evil spirits who try to make us ashamed for trying to be good. This is the "persecution" meant in the Blessings. We shall read in Acts later on how the Apostles were persecuted for their belief in the Lord, and were even killed. But they became angels, of whom we read great things in the Writings of the New Church.

## **Lesson 6**

### **Matthew 6: The Prayer**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

The Sermon on the Mount occupies three chapters of Matthew's Gospel, the fifth, sixth, and seventh. In the sixth chapter the Lord taught that there must be a heavenly spirit in what we do, to make it really good. In giving to those who need help, does it make any difference whether we really feel kindly and want to help, or whether we do it for show, so that we shall be thought very generous and good? The Lord calls such givers hypocrites, for the goodness is all on the outside. But He cares more for the spirit that is in the giving. Every small gift with love in it, like the

widow's mites, is more precious than a great gift given for show. It is the same in any useful thing we do. It is the kind, loving spirit that makes it precious, and we must not let any thought of "How good we are!" "People will praise us for this!" come in to spoil what we do.

And so when we pray, does the Lord care most for the words we say, or the thoughts and feelings in our minds? If we say the best prayer and are thinking about other things, and perhaps are even feeling unkindly toward someone, it is really no prayer at all. We must go into our closet; that means we must shut out the outside things and turn our thoughts to the Lord and mean what we say; then it is a real prayer. There is one prayer that is the best of all, for the Lord taught it to us. I hope we all can say it, and do say it every morning and night; but when we say it we must be very careful to shut out other thoughts and to think what the words mean.

In old times when people were in trouble they fasted, and sometimes veiled their faces or let them go unwashed, so that others would see that they were in trouble and pity them. And when things go hard with us we sometimes complain, so that people will pity us; but that is selfish. If we are in trouble we should be patient and cheerful, and we can be cheerful when we remember that every trial will do us good if we take it patiently.

We have been learning about the heavenly spirit in doing good, in praying, and in bearing trouble. All other things that men work for, money, honor, praise, fail when we go to the other world, if not before. But the kind, patient spirit no one can steal away, and it will go with us into heaven and make life happy forever. Shall we serve God or mammon? (Mammon means wealth and it stands for all selfish rewards.) Which is best? Which shall we choose? The Lord tells us how wonderfully He can take care of us if we choose Him as our Master. He takes care of every little bird and flower, and He will take still better care of us. The little birds are not idle. Watch them and see how busy they are when they are building their nests or feeding their little ones; the flowers are not idle; but they are not anxious, and we should not be, for the Lord will take care of us. We should not be anxious about tomorrow and what may come in the future. The Lord will give us strength to meet each thing as it comes, but He cannot give it before. We remember this when we pray for "daily bread."

1. What is meant by giving alms? In what spirit ought they to be given?
2. What is the best of all prayers? What is meant by entering into the closet to pray?
3. How can we keep the command to anoint the head and wash the face when we fast?
4. What treasure may we lay up which no one can ever take away from us?
5. We ought to be like the birds and flowers: does it mean that we ought to be idle? What does it mean?
6. It says, "Take no thought for the morrow"; does it mean that I must not think about tomorrow? What does it mean?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

In giving alms, which means also doing any good work, the Lord says, "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." The two elements, affection and thought, which enter into deeds are represented by the two hands; affection by the stronger and more spontaneous right hand, and thought by the left. In the present case the right hand means the doing of good works from love for being useful, and the left hand means the selfish thought and reflection that so easily creep in to spoil the works. Remember the parable of the sheep and goats (Matthew 25:33), where the character of those on the shepherd's right and left hand is clearly shown. (E. 600)

In prayer we are to enter into our closet. A man's mind is often in the Scriptures called a house. The evil spirit goes out of the house and returns with others worse than himself. The Lord stands knocking at the door; He bids us to prepare to eat with Him in the large upper room. We enter into our closet for prayer when we pray with our inmost thought and feeling. (A. 5694)

Why is prayer useful, if the Lord knows what things we need before we ask Him? It helps to prepare us to receive the help and blessing which the Lord is so ready to give. It helps us to see clearly what we need. Remember how the Lord, before healing the blind man at Jericho, asked, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" It makes sure also that we are looking to the Lord as the source of help, and not trusting in ourselves. This is very necessary. (A. 1618, 2535)

The Lord's prayer is the perfect prayer. It covers everything, as the Commandments and the Blessings do. You can see how the first words, "Our Father, Hallowed be thy name," are like the first two Commandments; and how the words toward the end, "Deliver us from evil," are like the later Commandments which forbid all kinds of wrong. "There are more things contained in that prayer," Swedenborg says, "than the universal heaven is capable of comprehending." (A. 6619, 8864)

Our eye must be single. The eye of the spirit is the understanding. The understanding is double when it is turned upward by knowing intellectually what is true, and is turned downward by loving what is evil; it cannot then be bright in regard to things of heaven. The eye of the spirit is single and full of light when the intellectual conviction of truth makes one with the perception of a good heart. (E. 313)

The Lord cares for the birds and flowers, and He has a special care for the things in our minds which birds and flowers represent. The birds are the affections that look up to heaven and love to think of good heavenly things. The flowers represent sweet thoughts of friendliness and usefulness of a thousand lovely kinds. These may be little things and many may come and go in a day, but they are all precious to the Lord.

The Gentiles are said to seek the things of the world. They mean the natural faculties that need attention in their place. These outward good things are not wrong and the Lord loves to give them, and He will give them in all abundance in the other world to those who have the heavenly spirit.

## **Lesson 7**

### **Matthew 7: The Golden Rule**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

We are still listening to the Lord's words on the mountain by the Sea of Galilee, where He spoke the Blessings and told the disciples and the multitude how Christian people ought to live. If someone does wrong ought we to get angry and blame him and treat him unkindly? We cannot judge calmly and truly when we are angry, and the anger may be much worse than the fault that we see in someone else. If we are angry when we try to correct a fault in our brother, it is like trying to take a mote, a little speck, out of his eye when there is a beam, or a log, in our own eye. We must overcome our own wrong feeling and judge kindly before we can help each other to do better. (Read verses 1-5.)

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." This is the Golden Rule. The Lord says that it is the law and the prophets; it sums up all the Commandments and the teachings of the whole Bible. It means that we must think of other people and not merely of ourselves in everything that we say and do. We must think what other people want, and what we should want if we were in their place. That seems easy. It stops our doing wrong and unkind things, and it often shows us that we ought to do things that we do not like to do. But it is not hard, for the Lord will help us if we really want Him to. We know how kind our fathers and mothers are in giving us food and clothes and other good things. The Lord is still more kind in helping us to keep the Golden Rule. The strength that He will give is compared to bread and fish, the same food with which he fed the multitude to represent the strength of heart and mind which He was giving them in His teaching. (Read verses 7-12.)

How could a man be outside like a sheep and inside like a wolf? Sheep's clothing is the kind, gentle, loving words and ways that are the true expression of an innocent, loving spirit. But if the spirit within these gentle ways is cruel and selfish, it is a wolf hidden in the sheep's clothing. Really the inner spirit of kindness or unkindness goes into every word and action, as the life of a tree goes into all its fruits. The fruit shows whether a tree is good or bad, and the things that a man does show whether he is good or bad, if we can look deeply and see the spirit that is in them. The Lord sees the spirit in everything we say and do. (Read verses 15-20.) If we say that we love the Lord and talk about being good, but do not do good things, can the Lord take us into heaven? Or even if we do such things as the Lord's disciples do, but do them for show and without the good spirit in them, can the Lord take us into heaven? We have no acquaintance with what is really heavenly. We could not feel at home, nor even breathe the air, where everything is full of the heavenly spirit. (Read verses 21-23.)

Through all the Sermon on the Mount the Lord was teaching the rules of Christian life. But there were two ways in which people might take these rules. They might let them lie in their minds as something to think about; they would then be like loose sand with no strength in them. Or they might obey the rules; then they would find the strength and protection of the Lord in them, which no trial or temptation could shake. If we obey it, the law, which the Lord gave in the mountain, is

like a rock on which we build our houses; and they will stand strong and safe through life in this world, and forever in heaven. (Read verses 24-29.)

1. In what book of the Bible shall I find the Sermon on the Mount? In what chapters?
2. Where did the Lord speak it? Who heard it?
3. How does the Sermon begin? How does it close?
4. What is the right way and the wrong way to help a brother to correct a fault?
5. What is the Golden Rule? Can we keep it?
6. What does the Lord wish us to do with the rules that He has given us in His teaching on the mountain?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The mote in a brother's eye means some little fault. But more exactly, what is the spiritual eye? Then the mote in the eye is some fault of understanding, and this is far less serious than an evil purpose, which is meant by the beam. (A. 9051; E. 746)

Giving holy things to the dogs and casting pearls before swine may mean giving precious heavenly things to people who will not treat them reverently. But it means still more using holy truth to excuse and serve evil feelings and actions in ourselves. The pearl which is formed to protect the oyster from some irritating thing, represents in the best sense the knowledge of the Lord's saving power which protects us from all harm. This is the pearl that makes the gate of the Holy City. But suppose we say, "The Lord has saved us, we can be as evil and self-indulgent as we please!" Then we are casting the pearl before swine. The pearl is spoiled by being given a false meaning, and our heavenly life is hurt too. (E. 1044)

Asking, seeking, knocking. The words describe three kinds of effort to find the good things of heaven. What faculty is used in seeking? In knocking? We ask when we desire goodness from the Lord; we seek when we wish to be taught by Him; we knock when we ask with our hands by doing what is right and desire to enter into interior life.

The way of good life is called a strait or narrow gate, because it is naturally hard for us; and the way of bad life is called broad, because it is naturally easy. The "many" and the "few," as we have learned, do not refer so much to number; but "many" means the outward things of religion and proper life, which may have nothing of the spirit of heaven in them, and "few" means the true heavenly spirit. (Revelations 17:14; R. 744.)

What are the thorns and thistles in our minds? Remember the parable of the sower. The useful leaves of good plants represent thoughts that are busy preparing for good deeds. What kind of thoughts are meant by the sharp points that prick and scratch? What are the grapes and figs, which are never found on these selfish plants? Good, kind uses; the grapes, uses that are more

spiritual and intelligent, for this is the meaning of grapes and wine; the figs, uses of a more external sort, natural kindness and benevolence. (E. 403; A. 5117)

What is meant by the floods that beat upon the house? And what by the winds? Remember the winds and waves that the Lord rebuked on the Sea of Galilee. The dangerous waves and floods are false thoughts that crowd in upon the mind in a time of temptation, and the winds are the unseen influences of hell that come with them. Notice that they beat upon the strong house as well as on the weak one, but it is able to resist them. (E. 644)

As one having authority. The Lord did not repeat traditions as the scribes did. He spoke from His own life, to tell the disciples, and to tell us, of the ways of life that He knew from experience are the only good and happy ways.

## Lesson 8

### Matthew 8: 1-17: Healing the Sick

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

The days that the Lord spent with the disciples and the people of Galilee were busy days, full from morning to night with good kind works - healing the sick and comforting those in trouble. Let us go with the multitude who followed Him as He came down from the mountain where He had spoken the Blessings. One of the first to meet Him and to kneel before Him asking His help was a leper, a poor man, sick with a disease which was considered most unclean, who was not allowed to live with other people in the town but must stay outside and cry, "Unclean!" to warn anyone from coming near. This poor leper made bold to come to the Lord, for he felt that the Lord could make him clean. And the Lord did not drive him away, as many others would have done, but He "put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean," and the man was healed.

And soon they were at the gate of Capernaum where the Lord now lived, and they were going through the streets of the town. Now another man came asking the Lord's help. He was a centurion, the commander of a band of soldiers. He was not one of the Jews, but a stranger, called by the Jews a Gentile. This made it the more remarkable that he came or sent messengers to the Lord asking His help. And he was not asking for himself, but for his servant who was lying at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. Those who had the palsy could not control their motions. Sometimes they could not move at all and sometimes could not stop the working of the muscles. The centurion could command his soldiers and his servant and be obeyed, and he believed that if the Lord would but speak the word his servant would be healed. And it was so. The Lord spoke the word, "and his servant was healed in the selfsame hour." The Lord's touch and even His word had power to heal.

And there were more sick people healed that day. In Peter's house the mother of Peter's wife was sick with a fever. The Lord touched her hand and she was well. And before the day was done many people were coming to the Lord bringing friends who were suffering with something worse than sickness. They were "possessed with devils"; evil spirits had power over them and made them do

and say what the evil spirits pleased, and often they made them do harm to themselves and other people. How sad! How pitiful! And what could anybody do to help them? But the Lord could help. The evil spirits knew His power, and when He told them to go they must go. That evening in Capernaum many who were possessed with devils were set free by the Lord, and many sick people were healed.

We must read the story, and it will leave in your minds a picture of the busy usefulness which filled the days the Lord spent on earth with His disciples.

## **Junior**

In the Sermon on the Mount the Lord taught the motives and principles of the Christian life. Then coming down from the mountain He showed in His own abundant good deeds the working out of these principles in practical life. We must study the story carefully, and while we learn of the natural good works that the Lord did we shall remember that they are also a sort of picture of deeper works that He was doing and is doing for men's souls.

The healing of the leper. Learn what you can about this disease that we read of so often in both Old and New Testaments. It affected especially the skin, making it white or discolored in spots or over the whole body, and sometimes breaking out in sores. You can read the Jewish law about the lepers in Leviticus 13, and about the offering required when a leper was cleansed, in the following chapter. For the man in our story to make this offering would be an acknowledgment on his part that it was by the power of God that he was healed.

Before going further with the story glance at the map of the Sea of Galilee, and trace the way from the Mountain of the Blessings to Capernaum.

Compare the account of healing the centurion's servant in verses 5-13 of our lesson with the account of the same event in Luke 7:1-10. Often two accounts of the same event in different Gospels make the picture more complete. The real reason for the differences is for the sake of the spiritual meaning, different parts of the spiritual lesson being emphasized in the different Gospels. "Centurion" in the Roman army was the title of an officer, whose command, when full, numbered a hundred men. The centurion in the story was no doubt in the service of Herod, the Governor of Galilee, and the story makes it plain that he was not a Jew but a Gentile. Still he asked the Lord's help with a humility and a faith more than was shown by the Jews; and we shall find this true of other Gentiles as we read on in the story of the Lord's life. Ignorant, simple-hearted people who are humble and obedient are more ready for heaven than those who are learned in holy things and self-satisfied. For this reason, we learn in Heaven and Hell many heathen at the present day come into heaven more easily than Christians.

Peter's house was now in Capernaum. At an earlier time Bethsaida, a town near Capernaum on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, was the city of Andrew and Peter. (John 1:44) The Lord healed one in Peter's house, and then at evening His power went forth to the multitudes who gathered at the door. (Mark 1:33) So each day the little family of the disciples felt His power; and it reached forth more remotely and obscurely to many who stood as it were without in evening shadow.

Find the prophecy referred to in verse 17. (Isaiah 53) The chapter of prophecy brought by this reference into the Gospel story at this point, shows that these blessed works were fruits of deep

inward conflicts in our Lord's life; it shows also the Divine tenderness and sympathy in which the Lord received and healed the people who pressed about Him.

1. "When he was come down from the mountain." What mountain? What had the Lord done there?
2. Why did the leper meet the Lord outside the town? What leper have we learned of in the Old Testament, who was healed by the Lord's power?
3. The centurion had soldiers under him: how many? Do you think he was a good man?
4. Who were healed at Peter's house?
5. In what other form do we know the name Esaias? In what verse of chapter 53 do you find this prophecy?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

You can enjoy with the little children the glimpse of the busy usefulness of the Lord's life, when He came down with the multitude from the mountain to show them the practical working out of the Christian law. Can we also see something of the deeper, spiritual works represented by this series of miracles?

What is one of the first effects upon yourself of a careful study of the Sermon on the Mount? Does it not make you feel that your conduct and your worship have been shallow and lifeless? You feel that you are a spiritual leper. The Lord can heal your leprosy, can help you to make life genuinely alive by filling it with Christian spirit. (A. 6963)

The healing of the centurion's servant pictures another kind of help in practical living out of the Sermon on the Mount. The centurion's words suggest that he stands for that trait so characteristic of the Romans, obedience to law in outward conduct. The palsy of his servant represents failure to realize this obedience in practical details. But the Lord gives power to be perfect in obedience. The Lord's words about the centurion and the many from the east and west who sit down in the kingdom of heaven, show that faithful obedience in life is a necessary preparation for heaven, and there is often more of such preparation among the heathen and among those who make little pretence of spiritual life. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob stand for the degrees of spiritual life, which in heaven are enjoyed from the Lord. (A. 3708; E. 252; H. 324)

The sickness in Peter's house must represent some weakness in that element of life of which Peter is the type. Peter, who spoke for the disciples in declaring their faith in the Lord (Matthew 16:16), is the type of faith in the Lord, as John is the type of love for Him. (A. preface to Genesis 18 and 22.) The fever in Peter's house pictures an excitement or disturbance of mind that prevents faith's activity and enjoyment. Notice that in healing the mother the Lord touched her hand, the power of active service, and that when healed she arose and ministered unto them. (See study of the passage in "Matthew's Gospel," J. Worcester.)

In what way did the Lord take our infirmities and bear our sicknesses? and how has this passage been misunderstood? (A. 1846)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Healing Diseases

What is it that keeps our bodies in health? The body is a wonderful piece of machinery. There is nothing like it. What keeps it up? What is it that causes the blood to furnish all the materials needed in every part of the body? What keeps the hinges oiled, the ropes and cables strong, the telephone wires always up and connected, the electric batteries constantly in order, and the countless other things in such condition that the work of the body can be carried on smoothly and perfectly? We call this health. Where does it come from?

You say, "From the Lord."

That is true. Yet the Lord makes use of linemen to keep the telegraph wires in order on earth. He makes use of people's intelligence and care to see that locomotives and tracks are in running order and safe. And so He employs people to keep the powerhouses, the factories, the stores, the roads and the thousands of other things in the body in order. But these are not people who live on earth. They live in heaven. The Lord keeps the body in order and thus in health through angels. Heaven is constantly inflowing into the body and into every part of it, keeping it in the best, condition possible. What then causes trouble in the body? What brings about pains and aches, and malignant diseases?

The opposite of heaven, that is to say, hell.

Ordinarily hell is not permitted to affect the solid parts of the body. But there are conditions when it can. Some of these conditions are brought about by ourselves. If you overload your stomach with candy or ice cream, you are liable to have a pain after a while. You have introduced disorder into the stomach, and evil spirits can act upon it, and may even bring about a fever and other troubles. If you play too hard, or if you study too long, going beyond your strength, you are again bringing about disorder in your body, with similar results.

All diseases come from hell. And just as there are many kinds of diseases, some light, others worse, and some deadly, so there are many different kinds of hells. In fact every disease answers to some kind of evil in hell.

We read in today's chapter about several kinds of diseases which the Lord healed. He came into the world in order to free men from hell, for at that time hell was like a cruel tyrant who held all mankind in slavery to himself, and in very many cases people were sick even as to their bodies from this cruel influence and power of hell. So the Lord healed them; and in this way He showed us, that He heals men also of the evils to which the diseases corresponded, and which, therefore, they represented.

First came the leper. Now you know that leprosy is carefully described in the Old Testament in Leviticus 13, 14, and that it was a very loathsome disease, causing the skin to be sore and to be covered with small white scales or scabs. It represented the worst kind of evil: profanation, which

is to believe in the Lord's truth and live according to it, and then to live against it and make truth seem to teach that it is right to live such an evil life. Leprosy was contagious: that is, people would contract the disease if they touched one who had it. Therefore it was forbidden to come near a leper. But when this leper prayed to the Lord Jesus Christ to heal him, and believed that Jesus could do it, because He was the Lord, then Jesus actually touched him and, instead of the leprosy cleaving to the Lord, by the touch, the leper himself was healed by it. Such power the Lord has to heal even those who sin the most, the profane, although it is very rare that those who profane the truth are saved.

The next disease was the palsy. When a person has the palsy, or is paralyzed, he cannot move his arms or feet, or whatever the members are that are paralyzed. What would this correspond to in our souls? Our wishing to do what is right, and yet not being able to do it, because our mind is not in order. The will and the understanding are not united. They are disjoined. That is the case with many outside of the Church. They wish to worship God who created them and keeps them alive, but they have not the true religion and so they cannot do it right. Notice that it was not one of the Jewish boys who were taught to read the Hebrew Scriptures, but the son of a "centurion," a Roman soldier, who was sick. And the Lord healed him, without going near him. So the Lord sends help to those who are far away from the Church. He sends His Word of Truth and heals them.

The third disease was a fever. In a fever, as you know, the body grows very hot. Did you ever notice a soul get hot? Yes, hot with anger. Hot with a feeling of "paying back," or revenge. Hot with a love to quarrel. Hot with an impure love. The evil spirits who cause the fever of the body are those who love the evil things we have just mentioned. They are in such unclean heats. The fever in our lesson represented such infernal evils. And the Lord, with His powerful hand, through which flowed the health of His pure and infinite love, took hold of the woman's hand, and fever left her, so that she could wait on her Lord and on those who were with Him. So if we are inclined to be hot with such unclean loves as anger, revenge, quarreling, impurity and the like, if we pray to the Lord, and wish to serve Him by doing His will, He will heal us.

Of those possessed with devils, or, more correctly speaking, with "demons," we shall learn in our next lesson.

Notice, that while the Lord taught the beautiful and lofty beatitudes (as the Ten Blessings are called) on a high place, a mountain, He met the sick when He had come down from the mountain, and the great number of those that were possessed of demons were brought in the evening, as it was growing dark. We are told all this in the holy Word, to show that disease and evil are low things, and that they have to do with dark states, or states of ignorance and falsity.

## **Lesson 9**

### **Matthew 8: 18-34: Casting Out Devils**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

(If possible show a picture of a fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee.) This is the shore of the Sea of Galilee, where the Lord used often to walk with His disciples. This is just such a boat as the fishermen had in those days, and often when they were not sailing the boats were anchored near the shore. Some of the Lord's disciples were fishermen (Do you remember who?) and they had their boats. See the sail to use when the wind is good, and the long oars for rowing when it is calm, or the wind is against them. Sometimes the Lord went with the disciples in their boats and they crossed to the other side of the sea. Our story tells us of such a time.

It was toward evening on a day when the Lord had been teaching the people. The disciples were with Him in the boat and they turned from the shore to cross to the other side. It is a 'beautiful sail when the wind is fair. The water is bright and clear, and around the sea are the pretty hills that shut it in. There is snowy Hermon far away to the north. But it was evening as the Lord and His disciples set sail. The night came on and with it a storm, for the winds come suddenly on the Sea of Galilee and make fierce storms. The waves grew high and were breaking over the boat. The Lord was asleep on a cushion in the hinder part of the boat. The disciples were afraid and awoke Him. "Why are ye fearful?" He said. Then He spoke to the winds and the sea and there was a great calm. The disciples wondered when they saw that even the wind and the sea obeyed Him.

And now they were at the other side. The town of Gergesa was near, which stood by the lake at the mouth of a little valley which led up to the hills. There were caves in the sides of the valley that were used as tombs. As the Lord and the disciples came from the shore, "there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way." Evil spirits had power over these poor men and made them fierce, and so strong that no one could bind or tame them. But when they met the Lord the evil spirits cried out with fear; they knew that He had power to send them out. There was a great herd of swine feeding not far away, at a place where the hills slope steeply to the sea. When the Lord said to the evil spirits, "Go," they left the men and entered into the swine. What happened then to the swine, you will see as we read the story. The word went quickly to the city of what the Lord had done, and the people came out to see Him. Were they glad that the poor men were healed? Did they ask the Lord to stay with them and do more such works among them? "They besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts." Read verses 23-24.

##### **Junior**

There may be some break between verses 17 and 18 of our chapter. Other things may have happened here, and Mark seems quite definitely to connect the story which follows with the day when the Lord sat in the boat and spoke many parables to the people gathered on the shore. (Mark 4:35-41) Recall what you already know about the fishermen and their boats, especially the fishermen who were called to be disciples.

Read carefully the Lord's words to those who thought that they were ready to follow Him. (Verses 18-22) The foxes and birds are the selfish feelings and thoughts which are so apt to make their holes and nests in our minds. While these are there, there is no resting place for the Lord. Another would go with the Lord, but wished first to go and bury his father. The father who was dead means the old natural life in ourselves that is dead because it is selfish and evil. Going first to bury the father means a lingering fondness for the life that we know is dead, and a clinging to it still. You see what the Lord's words mean to us: "Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead." Leave what we know is wrong; leave it at once; leave it wholly.

The calming of the storm shows that the forces of nature are in the Lord's power. It is also a promise of the Lord's power to calm for us stormy, troubled states of mind.

We are now at the eastern shore, the country of the Gergesenes. The ruins called Kersa at about the middle of the shore seem to mark the place. The town stood at the mouth of a little valley which led from the lake up to the highlands above. This probably was the way that was unsafe to pass on account of the fierce men living in the tombs that were cut in the sides of the rocky valley. We can picture the whole scene: the two men possessed by devils, so fierce that none could tame or bind them; the terror of the evil spirits when they felt themselves in the presence of the Lord; the swine near by on the steep hillside; the man healed and safe in the Lord's presence - "sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind." (Mark 5:15.) It is a grand picture of the Lord's power rebuking and controlling the evil spirits who had grown too strong for men to resist, setting men free from their power. It is a picture of the whole work of redemption which the Lord came into the world to do. But how little men cared for this help!

You will wish to add Kersa to your map of the Sea of Galilee, and a line across the sea to it from Capernaum.

1. "Unto the other side." The other side of what? "A certain scribe." What is a scribe?" The whole city." What city?
2. Do the words, "The Son of man hath not where to lay His head," remind you of something which is told us about the Lord's birth in Bethlehem?
3. What other miracle showed the Lord's power to control the sea? (Matt. 14:26.) (See Ps. 107:23.)
4. What did the Lord find on the eastern shore? What did He do? What was the result?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The miracles on the sea and on the eastern shore represent the carrying of the spirit and power of the Sermon on the Mount into still more external states; for the sea is always a type of lower, external states, and so is that farther shore, outside the borders of the Holy Land. The stormy sea represents a tumult of natural and worldly thoughts and feelings, such as may often be aroused in us by influences from hell. We must experience the Lord's power to rebuke the tumult and the unseen influences which arouse it. (E. 419, 514; T. 123.)

The offer of some to follow the Lord, and His words to them, introduced by Matthew at this point, suggest the greater difficulty of allowing the Lord to come with His redeeming power into the most external things of life, into the enjoyment of natural pleasures, of food, of recreation, of rest. Though we have gone with the Lord and felt His power and blessing in some things, it is harder to keep near Him in these external things. When we attempt it we find that the foxes and the birds have their holes and nests in us, and that there is little place for the Lord. We find that there is still a clinging to the things that are dead. But if we are to be truly the Lord's disciples we must follow Him here also, and leave quickly all that holds us back. Here is a test and a time to prove whether we are disciples or not. "And when He was entered into a ship, His disciples followed Him." (A. 6138.)

The Lord was asleep in the storm. Did it mean that the Lord did not care for the disciples' danger, or that He would not help them? Is the Lord ever forgetful? Is He ever careless? Does He leave us in a time of danger? No, and yet it may seem sound does seem so at the time. For He must conceal His presence enough to leave us free, enough for us to realize that we need Him, and to turn to Him and earnestly ask His help. This seeming absence of the Lord in a time of temptation is represented by His sleeping in the storm. He is really nearer than at other times to help us quickly and to give all the help we need. (T. 126.)

The Gergesenes possessed by devils represent ourselves when bodily pleasures and appetites have gained control of us, making us like fierce beasts and swine, driving us to live in the tombs, in ways which have nothing of spiritual life. The Lord alone has power to control these fierce spirits which no man can bind or tame. He shows them in their true light, as swine, and restrains their power. Can we be indifferent to such power at hand to save us from being swine and to make us men? Or, do we prefer the swine, and beseech the Lord to go away and leave us to enjoy them? (A. 1742; E. 659.)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Casting Out Devils

We stopped in our last lesson with the story about the Lord, when there were brought to Him many possessed with demons; and He cast out the demons with a word, and healed the sick. That there were so many possessed with demons, or evil spirits, shows how fearfully enslaved by hell mankind was at that time, and it also shows the necessity for the Lord's coming into the world to save men. Had He not come, this slavery and captivity would have grown so bad that at last no one could possibly have been saved, but all men would have become worse than beasts.

You may wish to know how the demons possessed these people. You know that your spirit is in your body, and in every part of it, so that it really is the spirit which makes the body move. If you wish to see anyone, you turn your head in his direction, and your eyes in your, head, so that you can see him. If you wish to shake hands with him, you make your feet move so as to bring you near him, and you make your arm and hand and fingers move so that you can shake hands with him. All this is done, by your spirit, which is yourself, in your body. But when a person is possessed by an evil spirit, then this evil spirit so takes possession of the person's body that the person himself cannot control his body, but the evil spirit makes the body and the parts of the body move, as if they were his own. This of course is very wrong, for the Lord wishes everyone to

make use of his body himself. That memorable evening, in Peter's house, when so many that were possessed with demons were brought to Jesus, He cast them out with a word, and then, the people regained control of their bodies and could use them again. While possessed by the demons they would act like the insane, because spirits who want to possess the bodies of men, are always evil spirits, very low down, and they like to make man ridiculous. Sometimes spirits took possession of the bodies of people, and made them do foolish things, but did not hurt them. But those spirits whom the Lord cast out were of such a nature that they liked at the same time to hurt the bodies of which they had taken possession.

The present lesson makes us think of all these things, because it tells of two very sad cases, and shows very clearly what manner of spirits they were that possessed the bodies of men.

These two men came out of caves. Caves, as you know, are dark, hollow places in the sides of hills or underground. So the hells in which the evil live appear like caves and like ditches or pits, where they are "far removed from the sunlight. The demons would lead the men whose bodies they possessed to go into caves, because there they felt at home. But when they came into the presence of the Lord, they knew Him and His power, for He had been fighting evil spirits and devils from His childhood up, although the general judgment, when all the evil spirits in the world of spirits were cast into hell, did not take place until about the time of His crucifixion. Recognizing the Lord and knowing His power, they were afraid and asked for permission to enter into the swine. And the Lord cast them out with just one word. He said, "Go," and they at once left the two poor men.

They wished to enter into the swine, because the swine are evil animals who love to root in the ground destroying vegetation, to eat unclean things, and to wallow in the mire, and so they correspond to the evil states of the demons. And then these demons made the swine go into the sea, for the sea, when it is stormy and destroys life, represents hell. This we can understand if we remember that the disciples, on their way across the lake to the country where the two demoniacs were, waked the Lord up to save them from the destruction which they feared would come upon them from the tempestuous sea. The Lord's speaking to the wind and causing a calm, represented that the Lord saves men from the power of hell.

We are taught in the heavenly doctrines of the New Church that these particular demons wanted to go into the swine, because they were people who when they had lived in the world, had been misers, and mean misers like things unclean, and appear to themselves in the other world to be among swine.

You can see from this whole story what great authority and power the Lord, even in His human nature, was obtaining over the hells, and even over the lowest and most unclean hells.

At the present day there are very few such possessions of the body, but there is something which is even worse, and that is the possession of the mind by evil spirits. They can take possession of the mind just as they formerly did of the body. But owing to the authority and the power which our Savior Jesus Christ has over them, and owing to the very tender and watchful care He takes of us all, the evil spirits cannot enter into our minds if we do not allow them to. If we keep our ears and eyes and hearts open to what is mean and unclean or false or evil in any way, then they can enter in and dwell there, just as evil spirits entered the swine. Yet the Lord has given us a safeguard. He has given us His Word, and if we use the Word aright, we can always keep our hearts and minds closed to evil, and no matter though a thousand demons should try to enter,

they cannot, for the Lord is in His Word and He is Almighty. As He drove out demons with a word in Gospel times, so He can do it now by His Word when we have it in us. You see from this one reason why your teachers are so anxious that you should read His Word, and indeed commit it to memory, so that you may have it ready at any and all times, when you are tempted to think or love or feel a pleasure in what is wrong.

The worst demons are those who know what the Lord says in His Word, and yet so twist it as to make it appear that it is right for them to do what is wrong.

How thankful we ought to be to the Lord that He has redeemed us from the power of hell and given us the true understanding of the Word, and gives us strength to live as it teaches! Thus He saves us from hell, and helps us to learn what is true and beautiful, and to be glad and happy in being of use to others.

Read again the beautiful verse 17, which quotes Isaiah 53:4, "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses," which means, that "by His temptation-combats and victories, He overcame the hells, and thus alone, even as to the Human Essence, sustains the trials with believers." (A. 1846.)

## **Lesson 10**

### **Matthew 9: 1-17: Forgiving Sins**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Capernaum was the city where the Lord lived after leaving Nazareth, and it was now "His own city." It stood probably at the northern end of the plain of Gennesaret, a rich meadow watered by springs and sheltered by the hills. In those days it was filled with gardens and orchards which were famous for their early fruits. There were busy towns here where the farmers lived who kept the gardens, and fishermen who sailed and fished on the lake. Capernaum was one of these.

We have learned already how the Lord healed in Capernaum the centurion's servant, and Peter's wife's mother, and many more who were sick and possessed by devils.

The Lord came again to Capernaum from across the sea, and the boat drew to land. Other people were waiting to be healed.

One was a man sick of the palsy. The Lord was teaching in a house, perhaps speaking from a porch or balcony to people crowding into the courtyard below and about the door. (The story is more fully told in Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:18-26.) Four friends came carrying the helpless man on his light bed or mat. They could not come near, not even to the door, the crowd was so great, but they climbed to the roof, perhaps by outside stairs, and tearing up the part of the roof above where the Lord was standing, let down the sick man before the Lord.

All the people watched and listened! The Lord said to the man, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." His friends perhaps hoped only to see his body healed, but the Lord cared even

more to heal his soul, and spoke first of that: "Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." And the Lord wished also to make his body strong, and presently said, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." At once he was strong and arose and went to his house. The people wondered and praised God. Let me read the story: verses 1-8.

Let me read on a little: Verse 9: "A man, named Matthew." Do you know that name? Have you heard it before? It is the name of the disciple who wrote this Gospel, this story of the Lord's life. We learn now how he was first called to be a disciple. He was not a fisherman like some, of the disciples who were called from their nets, but a publican, one of those who received the taxes collected at Capernaum, and was sitting at the place where taxes were paid. "Follow Me," the Lord said. "And he arose, and followed Him." Then Matthew made a dinner at his house (Luke 5:27-29) for the Lord, and many other publicans were there. The proud Pharisees thought it was strange that the Lord should eat with publicans and sinners. By sinners they meant persons who did not keep the strict laws of the Jews as the Pharisees did. The Lord often ate with these people and taught them. They were more ready to listen and to be helped than the Pharisees who thought that they were good. Read verses 9-13.

### **Junior**

I want to ask someone of the class a few questions about the first verse of the chapter. It is speaking of the Lord. What water did He cross? In what direction? What was "His own city?" (Matt. 4:13.)

Someone else read verse 2. Have you heard of the palsy in another lesson? Find and read to us Mark 2:1-5 and Luke 5:18-20. The roofs of the houses were usually flat, made of earth laid on sticks and rolled hard. The roof here may have been some lighter cover above a balcony or porch. The first words of the Lord to the sick man show us that He cares first of all for the healing of our souls. The bodily sicknesses were pictures of the more serious sicknesses within. The Lord made the outward healing a sign of His power and desire to do the inward healing and make the spirit strong. That the physical diseases which the Lord cured pictured spiritual diseases is made plain in verse 6, and also in verses 12, 13 below. This was true of all the Lord's miracles of healing. You, may sometimes make a study of the diseases mentioned in the Bible, and learn what spiritual disorders they represent.

Another member of the class must help us. Read verse 9. From Mark and Luke what other name do you learn by which Matthew was known? When you read in Luke that Levi made the feast in his own house, you see how naturally there were publicans in the company with the Lord. How did the Pharisees feel toward publicans and sinners? How did the Lord feel toward them?

There were other ways in which the Lord's conduct and that of His disciples was new and different from what the Pharisees had taught, or even John the Baptist. One difference was in regard to fasting. With the Pharisees, this was a mere empty form, with the Lord's disciples it must be deep and genuine. (Matt. 6:16-18.) And even genuine fasting does not belong to the perfect Christian life. It belongs to John the Baptist and to states of repentance and self-sacrifice in preparation for Christian life. The perfect Christian life is strong and joyful. (John 15:11.)

It was so with the disciples when the Lord was with them and they felt every day the power of His works and His words. They were like "children of the bride-chamber," which means friends of the

bridegroom who escort the bride from her father's house to the marriage and to her future home where the marriage supper is prepared. Christian disciples, when they are strong and happy because they feel the Lord's presence, must rejoice.

The old forms of Jewish piety were garments which could not be patched to hold the new Christian spirit; they were old skins which would not hold new wine, as for example, their keeping of the Sabbath. In many things the old forms must be wholly set aside for new forms which would hold the new spirit.

1. "His own city." What city? "Publicans." Who were they? "Bottles." What were they made of?
2. What words did the Lord speak to the man sick of the palsy?
3. When I have done wrong and my father "forgives" me, what does it mean? How must I feel about a wrong thing that I have done before the Lord can forgive me? How can I arise and walk?
4. What was the Lord's answer to those who objected that He ate with publicans and sinners?
5. For what do we especially remember the apostle Matthew?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Take up the thought made so plain in the story of healing the palsied man, that the physical diseases also represent spiritual diseases which the Lord also has power to heal. Can we see what spiritual disease is represented by palsy? It is a wholly helpless state in which one has no strength to rise and go forward in useful life. Do the Lord's first words to the palsied man suggest the cause of the helplessness? - It is from a sense of sinfulness which weighs one down and takes away all strength and courage. The Lord says to one in such discouragement who looks earnestly to Him for help, "Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." The words bring the same new strength to the spirit which the other words brought to the helpless body, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go "unto thine house."

What is the forgiveness which the Lord has power to give? Not mere remission of punishment; not forgetfulness of what has been; but a sense of the Lord's protection from the evil that we wish to leave, and of strength and courage from Him to begin to do better. "The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." The Lord brought the Divine protection, the Divine strength and courage down within our reach in all our helpless and discouraged states. When we begin life again in this new strength we do arise; we take up the principles of our faith which like a bed have supported us in our helplessness, and carry them into active service; we go to our house to fulfill the place and use which the Lord intends for us in this world and in heaven. (A. 9938, 10042.)

John's Gospel shows us plainly the element of Christian character for which John stands, a deep love for the Lord. We can see in Matthew's Gospel the element of character of which he is the type. This Gospel sets forth with greatest fullness the Christian law and the fulfillment of the law in the Lord's life. Matthew represents a faithful keeping of the Christian law. While he sits as a

publican at the receipt of custom he represents such obedience for the sake of selfish gain, but called to be a disciple of the Lord all selfishness is left behind, and he is the type of obedience for the Lord's own sake. The feast in Matthew's house at which many publicans and sinners were present with the Lord represents the satisfaction which is found in keeping the commandments and in many external activities of life when they are turned from their selfishness and done for the Lord's sake. (E. 252, 617; A. 3596.)

The new strength and enjoyment in Christian life is further described in the Lord's words about the marriage and the happy children of the bride-chamber. Often the relation of the church to the Lord is called a marriage, and the strength and happiness of it a marriage feast. The point emphasized here is the happiness of this living with the Lord and from Him. There are times of trial, of temptation, of repentance, which are times of fasting, but the Christian life is essentially one of joy in the heavenly marriage with the Lord. (H. 409, and on.)

The parables of the garments and the bottles show that Christian life and worship must be different from that of the Jews. How would you state the most vital difference between them? The Jewish life and worship was formal, and had a value in merely representing the things of heaven. Christian life and worship must be filled with spirit, and has value only as it is so filled. Read the Lord's words to the woman of Samaria. (John 4:20-24.) The Christian Church, and the New Church, must have forms, and new forms, not mere representative forms, but forms filled full with heavenly spirit. (E. 376; T. 784.)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Forgiving Sins

In the lesson before the last, we learned that health of body comes from the Lord through heaven, and that disease comes from hell. Sometimes disease comes from the hell in the person who is diseased, that is to say it comes from evil in the person's own heart. We learned a little of that when we talked about intemperance in eating and drinking, in playing, and even in working. Intemperance comes from an evil love. Passionate temper also is an evil which will cause trouble in the body. Idleness is another.

Sometimes when a person's own evil heart has brought on a disease in his body, then, when he shuns the evil as sin against the Lord, and no longer indulges in it, the disease of the body will also go away.

Sometimes the Lord permits the evils of the heart or of the soul to produce sickness in the body, so that we may have our attention directed to the fact that we have this evil, and that we must overcome it. Perhaps that was the case with the man that was paralyzed, and perhaps he felt strongly that the evil in his soul was much worse than the disease of his body and that it was much more important that he should get rid of the evil of his soul than the sickness of his body.

We are led to think that this was so because the Lord did not heal him at once, as He seems to have done with the people of whom we read two lessons ago, but He said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Indeed, He seemed to love him, for He comforted him by first saying, "Be of good cheer," and affectionately called him "Son," or more correctly translated, "Child."

The Lord looks upon all as His children who look to Him as their Father from whom they receive every good and perfect thing. And we cannot but think that because the paralytic was overcome with the conviction of his sin, and was filled with the hope that the Lord would pity him, and confident that the Lord had power to help him get rid of his sin. and so save him, that the Lord said, "Be of good cheer, Child, thy sins are forgiven thee," for in the other Gospels where this beautiful story is told (Mark 2:1-12; Luke 8:26-39) we learn that He said this "when He saw their faith."

The Lord forgives everyone his sins when He sees that the man has confidence or faith that He can and will save him. This is what "faith" means.

We are always doing things because we have faith or confidence. When we stop having faith we stop doing things. For instance: If we have no faith in the strength of a bridge, we do not cross it. If we have no faith in a person who directs us how to go to a place, we do not follow his advice. If we have no faith in bread that it will nourish us, we do not eat it. If we have not faith in a savings bank, we do not place our money in it. If we have no faith that a person can teach us the truth, we do not go to him as a teacher. If we have no faith that the Lord can save us from sin, we do not go to him in prayer, and in His holy Word. But when we have faith we go to Him, and He surely will save us. Otherwise He does not save us, because He cannot.

A bridge may be ever so strong, but if we do not go on it, it cannot bear us up. If we do not go to an honest, well-informed person, he cannot tell us how to reach our destination. If we do not eat good, wholesome bread, it cannot nourish us. If we do not patronize a sound savings bank, it cannot take care of our, money. If we do not go to a wise teacher, he cannot teach us the truth. If we do not go to the Lord's Word and pray to Him, and thus open our heart and mind to Him, He cannot save us.

The essential thing with the paralytic was that he should have his sins forgiven. Health of the body mattered little compared with the health of his soul. But when the scribes who sat there reasoned in their hearts, "Why doth this man speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?" then the Lord, who of course could tell what was going on in the minds of people, even though they did not speak about it, showed them that He had this power, that He was God incarnate, by healing the paralytic as to his body also. People could not see the soul of the paralytic: they could not see that the Lord had healed him of his sins, but they could see the body healed, and that was a proof to them that the Lord Jesus Christ had power on earth to forgive sins and that the paralytic had had his sins forgiven.

Indeed this was the important work He came on earth to do: to forgive sins; and therefore He associated with sinners (verse 16). The scribes and Pharisees did not understand how He could do so, because they were not merciful as the Lord was. They did not think of leading people away from their sins and doing good to them. They thought it would hurt themselves in some way if they had anything else to do with sinners but to condemn them. But just as the Lord came and touched the leper and made him clean, so the Lord ate and drank with "publicans and sinners" in order that He might gain their confidence, their faith, and be able to lead them away from their sins. He would show them what was wrong, lead them to repent and sin no more, and forgive them, and thus save them.

Is He not a kind, merciful and wise Lord?

## **Lesson 11**

### **Matthew 9: 18-38: Raising the Dead**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

In our story last week we came back with the Lord from across the Sea of Galilee to the Gennesaret shore and touched Me?" He asked, and the woman came trembling and kneeled before Him and told Him what she had done. "Daughter, be of good cheer," the Lord said; "thy faith hath made thee whole."

Where was the Lord going? To the house of Jairus where the little girl had died. And now they came and found the house full of people and minstrels mourning and making sad sounds, as mourners used to do and as they still do in that land. The Lord knew that when a little girl dies her life is not ended, as they supposed. She sleeps while good angels are near to guard her and soon the Lord awakens each one to live in the heavenly home. Hear what the Lord said and see what He did to teach the people at Jairus' house, and to teach us all, about death. Read verses 18-26.

These were only some of the many works of kindness that the Lord was doing. Now two blind men met Him. You know what blindness is. And now there was brought to Him one possessed of a devil, who was dumb - he could not speak - and many, many more. "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people." The people with their many troubles, so weak and ignorant, but so ready to be helped - they were like sheep without a shepherd. They were like the harvest ready to be gathered. How He loved to help them! Read verses 27-38.

##### **Junior**

The story gives another glimpse of the busy usefulness which filled the days of the Lord's life on earth. You will be glad to compare the brief account of the Lord's raising Jairus' daughter and healing the woman who touched Him in the throng, with the fuller accounts in Mark 5:22-43, and Luke 8:41-56. The healing of the woman makes very real to us the power that went forth from the Lord, from His touch, and even from His garment's hem, and not unconsciously to Him but with His knowledge and love. It helps us to realize how He hears our prayers and gives us strength when we reach out to Him, even in the midst of the crowd and the confusion of the street. He knows it when we think of Him, He feels the touch, He is only waiting for such a chance to give His help.

And now at Jairus' house. You must learn this story well and bring it to mind whenever you hear that a child has died. Remember especially the Lord's words, "She is not dead, but, sleepeth," and His words as He took her by the hand, "Talitha cumi" ("Little maid, arise"). You must connect with this in your mind two other miracles of raising the dead, and the similar words, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." (Luke 7:11-17; John 11:1-44.)

Just what happens when a person dies? He comes at first into a sweet, peaceful sleep; angels are near to protect him from every disturbing influence. This sleep is to prepare one for the awakening, which is usually "on the third day," "after two days." With little children the sleep is short. The awakening is by the Lord's own power; it comes with great gentleness, nothing sudden or startling about it. At first one is conscious of the angels' presence. Gradually he opens his eyes to see them. Everyone and everything about him is homelike and familiar. He hardly knows at first that he is in another world. Read about this change of death in H. 448-452. Read Matthew 9:18-26.

The rest of the chapter tells of other miracles of healing. Notice in verse 30, the charge to the two blind men who were healed: "See that no man know it." Compare Matthew 8:4; 12:16. What could be the reason for this charge? Why would not the Lord wish His miracles to be known, that as many people as possible might be drawn to Him? Would it always be useful for people to be attracted by the hope of healing or other natural help? Might this make it harder for some to care for the deeper gifts that are of greater value? The true order is shown in the Lord's words, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33)

The sheep without a shepherd, and the plenteous harvest waiting to be gathered. They bring to mind many parables of the Lord in which He is the good Shepherd tending His sheep, and the Keeper of the garden and the vineyard. In this work of tending and keeping He needs us to help as under-shepherds and as laborers in the field and vineyard. Can we see a little work of either kind that He offers us to do?

1. "A certain ruler." What was he ruler of? What was his name? What did the Lord find at the house? What did He say? What did He do?
2. What happened on the way to the ruler's house?
3. What is it like to die? What sort of sleep? When is the awakening? Is it sudden or gentle? Is one alone when he wakes? Where do children find a home when they die? What kind of a home is it?

## **Intermediate**

You will wish to continue the thought that we followed in the last lesson, that the miracles described in this chapter which were done by the Lord after coming down from the mountain represent the effects of bringing the Christian law down into the plane of practical life. One of these effects is pictured in the raising of Jairus' daughter. A maiden represents a spiritual affection, especially an affection for spiritual truth. This maiden, the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, represents such affection in the Jewish Church, and in all whose formal religion has not yet been made living by the Lord. The Lord's desire and power to quicken this heavenly affection is expressed by His tenderly raising the little girl, and the duty to nourish the affection by wise instruction is expressed in the command that something should be given her to eat. (A. 2348; E. 863)

It is remarkable that the story of raising Jairus' daughter in each of the three Gospels where it occurs is interrupted by the account of healing the woman who came behind Him in the way and

touched the hem of the Lord's garment. There must be a close spiritual relation between the two miracles. This healing of the woman on the way to the ruler's house must represent a necessary step toward the quickening of the spiritual affection for truth, which is represented by the little girl. The issue of blood and the spending of her living upon physicians to no purpose, suggest a wasted effort for good life. The waste is checked by touching the hem of the Lord's garment. What are spiritual garments? Thoughts and words and outward acts are garments, as they clothe the living affections of the heart. The Lord's Word is His garment, and the hem is the practical summing up of His truth in precepts of good life. We touch the hem if we make these our guide. There is no more effort wasted in looking to this or that worldly source for guidance. We must now acknowledge and give thanks for strength found in obeying the Lord. And this touching of the garment's hem is the necessary basis for the quickening of the spiritual affection for truth, which is represented by the little daughter of Jairus. See Psalm 111:10; John 7:17. (A. 9917, 10023; E. 195)

When the affection for truth is quickened, effects follow which are represented by opening the eyes of the blind men, and loosing the tongue of the dumb. What spiritually is the opening of blind eyes? The opening of the mind to see what is genuinely true and good. (A. 6990; E. 239) And what the loosing of the tongue? The confession of truth, you say. Yes, and back of confession there must be a clear grasp of truth in the mind. Doubt and confusion in the thought keep one from speaking, or make him speak haltingly. Clear thought is the first necessity for clear speech. Such thought and the grateful expression of it are both represented by the loosing of the tongue. (A. 6988)

What element of human character is made prominent when the Lord calls men His sheep and Himself their Shepherd? The innocent affection of their hearts which needs His guidance. And what when He calls them His harvest? The knowledge of heavenly truth developing into good uses of life.

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### **Leading Thought: Raising the Dead**

We were talking about faith or confidence' in our last lesson, and that without it people cannot be saved. The Lord never healed people unless they had faith that He could. Today we read about a father whose daughter was dying, and who believed that she could be raised to life again if only the Lord would lay His hand upon her. Now, we do not read that anyone had as yet been raised from the dead by the Lord; but this ruler (his name was Jairus) knew that the Lord had healed the sick by laying His hands upon them or touching them with His hand, and he had faith that if Jesus would lay His hand on the little daughter, she would be raised to life again.

You know what it is to die, do you not? The life that comes from the Lord into the soul of a person flows from the soul into the body. When the current of life no longer flows from the soul into the body, the body dies. Just as when the electric current no longer flows into the electric lamp, the light goes out and the lamp is "dead." But life from the Lord comes to the body also directly through heaven. It likewise comes from heaven through the world to the body. So long as life comes from the Lord to the body in all these different ways, it lives; but as soon as one of these ways is closed up, the other two cannot keep up the life in the body. For instance: if life no longer comes to the body through the natural world - if the sunlight is kept from the body, or air from the

lungs, or food and drink from the stomach, the body dies. So, also, if in any way, as by the interposition of wicked spirits, the life of heaven were to be kept from flowing into the organs of the body, it would die. And so, likewise, as we well know, if the soul ceases to communicate its life to the body, it dies.

Now, the Lord was Life itself, and the source of all the life of heaven and the world, and of all men and things in both. Remember, He said, "I am the Way, the Truth, the Life." He also called Himself "I AM," because He alone is, and we are and live from Him. Therefore, when the body of the little girl had died, it only needed Him to restore the flowing of life into it so that it would live again.

You know that it is by contact that things will flow into other things. If the contact or the connection is broken between a live wire and an electric lamp, the electric current cannot enter, but if the connection is restored, the current inflows again. If there is no connection between the gas main in the street, and the pipes in the house, the gas will not flow into the pipes and the gas burner, and we can have no heat. If there is no contact between the oil in the reservoir of an oil lamp and the burner, by means of a wick, we cannot light the lamp. So there must be contact between the Lord and men that they may receive life.

People communicate their life to each other by touch. That is the reason why we shake hands. We are so glad to see our friends when they come to us, that we take hold of their hands so our gladness may pass from our hearts through the hands to their hearts. People who do not love each other, and do not care to receive any life of happiness and gladness from them, nor to communicate it to them, do not care to shake hands with them.

Because touching with the hands means this, therefore the minister lays his hands on the baby who has been baptized, to bless it; that is, to communicate the Holy Spirit to it. He does the same with a pair who are being married, to bless them; and he stretches out his hands toward the congregation to bless them. This is an ancient ritual that has come down to us from times of old. The meaning of it was well known. When a candidate is introduced into the ministry, the hands of the General Pastor are placed upon his head for the same reason, namely, to represent that the Holy Spirit may come upon him to enlighten him and help him to be a true priest.

The heavenly Doctrines teach us that the "touch effected by the hands signifies the communication and reception of Divine strength, by which comes the healing of the interiors, which is salvation. This originates in the representatives in the other life; there, those who are in an unlike state of life appear far distant from each other; but those who are in a like state appear in each other's company. And those there who touch each other, communicate the state of their life to each other. If they touch each other by the hands, they communicate the whole of their life, for the hands, by correspondence, signify power, which is the activity of life, thus whatever is with the person. Such representations exist in the world of spirits." (A. 10023)

Do you know that people may be dead although their bodies are alive? What do we mean by that? When a person takes no interest in a thing he is said to be dead to it. If a person takes no interest in a game, he might as well be dead so far as the game is concerned. If he takes no interest in his studies and does not apply himself to them, he might as well be dead so far as they are concerned. If he takes no interest in learning about God, our Creator and Savior, he is dead so far as real life is concerned. This is the kind of death that the Lord wanted people to think about when He raised the little girl from death. Death of the body is of small account compared with death of the spirit,

or being dead to religion. When people are spiritually dead and come to realize it and go to Him, asking for the touch of His hand, that they may live, then He communicates life to them. That is, they begin to feel a new interest in the Sacred Scriptures, in the church services, in the Sunday school, and especially in doing whatsoever the Lord commands us.

Because the Lord is the Lord of life, therefore in heaven, the angels are the liveliest, the quickest, to think and to feel, and to do, that you can imagine. They understand things of wisdom very quickly, and with the greatest pleasure. They are always ready to do things for other people, and are so cheerful and happy that it is a joy to see them. The children in heaven, in their sports, show astonishing quickness and skill, and the most delightful good nature. The songs are learned by a choir as quickly as they come into the minds of the leaders, and are sung with such correctness, expression and power that you would marvel. And all this because all in heaven are full of life from always looking to the Lord and being in touch with Him.

## **Lesson 12**

### **Matthew 10: Disciples Sent Out**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We often hear about the Lord's disciples. They were the people who came to Him and were much with Him to listen to His teaching. There were twelve whom He especially chose to be with Him, who were also called apostles. Do you know the names of any of these; some who were fishermen, and one who was a publican? Some day we will learn the names of all the twelve.

Now the Lord called the twelve disciples to Him and gave them power, and sent them out to preach and to do such works of healing as they had seen Him do. They must keep in mind that they had no power of themselves, but must always remember that the Lord was their strength. To help them to remember this they were to carry no money in their purses -their girdles, for that is how the people in that country carry money, tucked in a fold of the scarf, which is fastened about the waist. They were to take no food, and no bag or scrip as it is called. You may remember David's scrip, his shepherd's bag into which he put the stones when he went against Goliath. They were to take no bag, as if they could lay up strength for themselves. They should not have two coats, nor shoes, but only sandals, which cover the bottom of the foot and are tied on with straps or strings. (Mark 6:9.) They should take no staves, or nothing more than a staff. All this would help them to remember and to trust the Lord.

So the Lord sent out the twelve, two and two together, from their home by the Sea of Galilee. They were to go, He told them, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The Lord tenderly watched them as they started on their way. They were as little children whom He had taught a little about the heavenly life, and to whom He had given a little strength. His love and care went with them. He knew the dangers that they would meet. He told them that He sent them as sheep in the midst of wolves. They must be gentle and they must be wise. Hard things would happen to some of

them, but they should not fear anything that men, could do to them. The Lord cares for every little bird. He cares still more for everything of our life; every hair is numbered.

So the twelve went out to preach and heal, and after a time they came together again to the Lord and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. Read Matthew 10:1-20, 29-33; Mark 6:7-13, 30.

## Junior

Do you know what the word "disciple" means? A learner. And the word "apostle"? One sent out. Our story today shows why the twelve were called apostles.

How many of the twelve do you know? There were Simon Peter and his brother Andrew who had left their nets on the shore of the Sea of Galilee to follow the Lord; James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also fishermen. The Lord had found Philip as He came back from the baptism at the Jordan to Galilee; his home was Bethsaida near Capernaum. (John 1:43, 44) Bartholomew was probably another name of Nathaniel who lived in Cana near Nazareth; he was under a fig tree when Philip called him to the Lord. (John 1:45; 21:2) Matthew was the tax gatherer whom the Lord called at Capernaum. Here are seven of the twelve.

Besides these we remember Thomas who doubted when the Lord came to them after His resurrection. There was another James distinguished as the son of Alphaeus, and a Judas not Iscariot, who seems to be the same who is called Lebbaeus and Thaddaeus, and two more, Simon the Cananaean or the Zealot, names which mean that he was of the party of Israelites who were eager to throw off the Roman power; and Judas Iscariot, which means that he was from Kerioth, a town of Judea; all but the last were from Galilee.

Read now how the Lord sent out the twelve without provision for their journey. This was not wholly strange in that Eastern country, where people now might go depending upon hospitality on their way; but it represents that trust and dependence upon the Lord in which all disciples ought to live and work. Where they found a willing reception they were to stay; where they were not received they were to shake off the dust, which means, that nothing of the evil that they met should be allowed to cling to them. Why should it be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for a city that would not receive the disciples? Compare Matthew 11:20-24. Those who have the greater opportunity have the greater fault if they reject the Lord and His message.

Compare this sending out of the twelve disciples with the sending out of seventy a little later, which is described in Luke 10. The two stories are much alike. The twelve, however, were sent only to the "house of Israel" in Galilee; the seventy had a wider mission, to towns which the Lord would visit on His journey to Jerusalem, mostly in the country east of Jordan. By and by the disciples would be sent into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15) Read Matthew 10:1-16.

Reading on in the chapter you learn of dangers and hardships which the disciples would meet, and the wonderful promise of the Lord's tender care, of His support and protection in every trial. In verse 21 and again in verses 35-37 you read of conflict in the household. Many households were divided where some received the Christian teaching and some did not. But- the Lord is speaking rather of the conflict that must come in every mind where His truth is received and an

effort is made to obey it. A new generation of thoughts and motives spring up which are at variance with the old. Every man finds his worst foes in the household of his own thoughts and feelings. The Lord warns us of, these things, but bids us to have good courage. One who is not courageous is not a true disciple.

1. What does the name "disciple" mean? The name "apostle"? How many apostles did the Lord choose? How many of them can you name?
2. What did the Lord send the apostles to do? What were they to take for their journey? How were they to do when they came to a city?
3. What promise did the Lord give them of His watchful care?
4. What are the foes of our own household?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The Lord chose twelve apostles. Does it mean that He needs only twelve helpers in His Christian work? You know that twelve stands for all, and here for all forms of reception and of service in the Christian Church. With a similar meaning you remember the twelve tribes of Israel, the twelve foundations and twelve gates of the Holy City. Twelve is the product of four and three. Four suggests development in both directions, truth and goodness, and three, this development in all degrees from highest to lowest. (A. 3858; E. 430)

Do you know what elements of Christian character are represented by any of the apostles? Take for example, the first group of four. Peter you think of as standing for faith. He is called here by his name Simon, which means "hearing," and suggests not merely an intellectual faith, but a loving faith looking toward obedience. Andrew, his brother, represents this obedience. With this come love for the neighbor and love for the Lord, represented by James and John. Find help in regard to the meaning of all the twelve in Bruce's "Commentary on Matthew," and in "Matthew's. Gospel," J. Worcester.

"Freely ye have received, freely give." The Lord had been teaching the Christian law in the mountain; He had been showing its application in affairs of daily life. It is time to make all this of use to others, giving freely what has been freely received, for no good thing is given to be selfishly enjoyed; it is blessed only as it is used for others. Yet even giving must not be selfish; it must not be a forcing of ourselves and our blessings upon those who are confirmed against them. "Give to him that asketh thee," is the charge; and you find the same expressed in the instructions to the twelve; they were to give wherever there was willingness to receive.

You see in their going without provision a lesson of constant dependence upon the Lord. Can you interpret spiritually the charge, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses"? What do these three metals represent as applied to the gold and the silver and the copper ages? Or as used in the tabernacle and temple? They stand for inmost love of the Lord, for spiritual intelligence, and for natural goodness. We can have none of these of ourselves. (A. 9942)

"Sheep in the midst of wolves." Who are spiritually sheep? Who are spiritually wolves? What is a wolf in sheep's clothing?

"Wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." The last phrase seems easy to understand; but what does the first phrase mean? Serpents lying full length upon the ground represent affections of the most external kind connected with pleasures of the senses. Such pleasures are very subtle and are often dangerous; they creep in unnoticed, they charm us, they get their coils about us, they benumb us with their poison. Appetites, when they are indulged and become destructive of spiritual life, are dangerous and poisonous serpents. But the senses are not necessarily evil; they are given us for a use; they enable us to feel our surroundings, and to adapt ourselves to them. Tactfulness and discretion are the wisdom of the serpent that the Lord commands. (A. 197; E. 581)

The chapter contains predictions of persecution that the disciples would meet. A hint of this had already been given in the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you." We shall learn more of this persecution when we read the story of the apostles in the Book of Acts. But the persecution that the Lord foretold was not merely that which the apostles would personally suffer. In all this chapter the Lord looks beyond the twelve to the experience of all Christian disciples, and of Christian principles as they seek to gain a hold in any mind. The persecution is the struggle that Christian principles must inevitably have against natural thoughts and feelings. The Lord warns us that He comes not to send peace but a sword. He was indeed promised as the "Prince of peace"; His coming was heralded as the coming of peace on earth, and among His last words to His disciples He said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." The Lord does give peace such as the world cannot give, but this peace is gained through conflict, and it is not found until the family of selfish thoughts and feelings are cast out of the mind. (A 10490) The Lord sets squarely before us the issue. It is a choice between the selfish life and Christian life from Him. If we hold to one we lose the other. (Verse 39)

Verse 40 is a beautiful reminder that the Lord goes with us and works with us when we go on His errands. It is little that we can do, but that little opens the way for Him and we cannot know how great things are accomplished. Receiving a prophet means receiving the Lord's truth. Receiving a righteous man means receiving goodness from the Lord. (E. 624; A. 10683) The last verse of the chapter is a beautiful promise of the blessing to be found in doing even the smallest service for the Lord. Giving a cup of cold water suggests also the spiritual service of teaching the Lord's truth. There is a blessing in this, even in giving a cup of cold water, which means doing this service in simple obedience without as yet much love for it. All kinds of Christian service have at first to be done so, but the love and the blessing follow. (E. 695; P. 230)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Twelve Apostles Sent Out

We have been reading about the wonderful works the Lord did, and about "disciples" who were always present with Him. The word "disciple" is a Greek word (Greek being the language in which the New Testament was written), and it means "learner." The disciples were men who had been called by the Lord, and who followed Him wherever He went to learn of Him. They learned that He was the promised "Messiah" or "Christ"; that is to say, the Anointed One, or King. They learned

what the great kingdom was that He had come to establish, namely, a kingdom where men were not to be ruled by force of arms, or by stern commands, but by the law of love. It was to be a kingdom of faith in the Lord and charity to all. They heard Him preach many things about this. They also saw Him heal the sick, cleanse lepers, cast out demons, and raise the dead. All this was preparing them for a great work they were to do.

He went to all the cities and villages, preaching and performing these miracles, and when He saw the multitudes, He felt a great pity for them, because they had no teachers of truth who would lead them to live well. They were like sheep who have no shepherd and are scattered, and He said to His disciples: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore to the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest." It was His intention to make use of His disciples to be such laborers.

No doubt they did as He told them, and prayed. And this prepared them still further for the great work He was going to have them do.

Think of it! He called them together and gave them power, from His own power, "against unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease"; and He sent them out to "the lost sheep" of the house of Israel, to preach, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," and to use the power He had given them to heal the sick, and even to raise the dead. What a merciful and holy work it was He gave them to do! And how kind He was to them to choose them for this work, and to give them the power to perform it!

They were called "disciples" while they were learning from Him; but when they were sent out they were called "apostles," another Greek word, meaning "sent forth."

He had many disciples, and of them He chose twelve, whose names you will find in the chapter, and ought to learn.

Why did He choose twelve? Perhaps you will say, "Because there were twelve tribes of Israel." You are on the way to a correct answer, but have not reached it. For there were not only twelve tribes of Israel, because twelve sons of Israel, but Ishmael, who was Jacob's uncle, also had twelve sons, from whom were descended twelve nations; and besides the number twelve often occurs in the Word. There is a deep reason for all this, which is to be found in the correspondence of the number twelve.

The number twelve means all things good and true in the Lord's kingdom or the church. There are twelve cardinal things that belong to the faith of the church, and these taken together give us the whole faith. There are twelve cardinal things that enter into our love or charity, and these taken together present to us the fullness of love. For this reason there were twelve disciples, and also twelve tribes, also twelve gates to the New Jerusalem, twelve foundations to its wall, and the measurements had the number twelve in them; while those that were sealed on their foreheads were twelve times twelve thousand, or 144,000.

You will notice that although the disciples were to go to all the scattered "sheep" of Israel, they were to stay only where people were worthy. They were going as the Lord's ambassadors, to do His work, and they would be treated as people were going to treat Him. He told them in advance what was going to happen to them, not so much in the immediate future, for they came back and reported to Him about their work, but in the time long after, when He Himself would have been

crucified. He told them that they would be hated, persecuted, arrested and killed, but that they should not fear those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.

We shall learn in due time that these things that the Lord foretold, happened to the apostles. They were persecuted, and some of them killed. But only their bodies were killed and not their souls, and we are told in the Writings which teach us about the world where souls live; that is, in the Writings which the Lord has given us through Swedenborg, that he saw the apostles in heaven, where they are angels, and that they continue to do work in the other world, which is like the work to which they had been called by the Lord Himself on earth. In the last book published by Swedenborg, called True Christian Religion, he tells us that after that book was finished, "the Lord called together His twelve disciples who had followed Him in the world: and the next day He sent them all out into the whole spiritual world, to preach the Gospel, that the Lord Jesus Christ reigns, whose reign will last forever," and that "this was done on the 19th day of June, in the year 1770," thus thirteen years after the Last judgment which had been executed in the spiritual world in the year 1757. It had become necessary to execute the judgment and to send out the twelve apostles, because the Christian Church established through them on earth had come to worship three gods. For they prayed to three Divine Persons,-calling one "the Father," the second "the Son," and the third "the Holy Ghost." The apostles therefore went throughout the spiritual world teaching people the truth that the Lord is one God, and that the trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one in Him, as soul, body and operation are one in man, and that this God is the Lord Jesus Christ, and one and only God of heaven and earth. Each Apostle was given a district in which to do this work, and they are executing the Lord's command, "with all zeal and industry." (T. 4, 108, 791)

This is the Gospel that the Lord has ordained the ministers of the New Church to preach.

## **Lesson 13**

### **Matthew 11: Messengers of John**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

One day as the Lord was going from town to town teaching and healing, there came two men with a message from John the Baptist. Do you remember John the Baptist? - how he preached at the Jordan, and told the people to repent, and baptized them in the river? John could not come now himself to the Lord, for he was in prison. He had spoken boldly and told the people that they were doing wrong. His bold words offended Herod, the governor of Galilee and of the country east of Jordan, and Herod had shut up John in prison. The prison was in the castle of Machaerus, among the mountains of Moab, east of the Dead Sea. Some dungeons cut in the rock can still be seen among the ruins of the castle. It is a rough, wild place.

John had faithful disciples, and they came and went and told him of things happening in the world outside. They told him about the Lord and His teaching and wonderful works in Galilee. So John sent two of his disciples to the Lord to ask Him, "Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" John knew that the Lord was coming into the world; the Messiah they called Him. He

had even seen the sign of the dove when the Lord was baptized at the Jordan. But the days must have seemed long in prison. It is no wonder if he was discouraged, and he wanted to be sure if this One of whom he heard so much were really the Lord.

So the two messengers came to ask Him. "John Baptist hath sent us unto Thee, saying, Art thou He that should come? or look we for another?" The Lord kept the messengers of John by Him while He healed many sick people and cast out evil spirits and gave sight to many who were blind. Then He sent them back to John to tell him what they had heard and seen. He would feel the goodness of the Lord's works and would know that He was the Lord. Read verses 1-6.

Let us read on and see what the Lord said about John. He reminded the people of the time when they went out into the wilderness by the Jordan to see and hear John teaching. What sort of man did they see? Was he weak and trembling like a reed growing in the edge of the Jordan? Were the words that he spoke weak, doubtful words? No, you know that John was a brave man, and that the words he spoke were the Divine truth, which nothing could shake. Was John a man clothed in soft raiment? What did he wear? Was he a prophet, one of the long line of men, Elijah, Isaiah, and many more, who had spoken the Lord's word and foretold His coming? Yes, he was one of these, and the greatest of them all; for he called the people to prepare for the Lord who was at hand. Read to verse 10, and read the loving words of the Lord in verses 28-30.

## **Junior**

In the midst of the Lord's teaching and healing in Galilee we are reminded of John the Baptist. Read verses 2, 3. You remember John. Tell me about his birth, his life in the desert, and his preaching and baptizing in the Jordan. But why does it speak of John as in prison? This is referred to again in Matthew 14:3, and the story is briefly told in Mark 6:17, 18, and Luke 3:19, 20. John had boldly rebuked Herod for evils that he had done, and especially because he had married Herodias who was his brother Philip's wife, and Herod had shut up John in prison. This was Herod Antipas, ruler of Galilee and of Perea, a district beyond Jordan. He was a son of Herod the Great who ruled in Jerusalem when the Lord was born; both were crafty and evil men. The old historian Josephus tells us that the prison was in the castle of Machaerus, a fortress near the southern border of Herod's district east of Jordan.

What is meant by the phrase, "He that should come" in the question of John's messengers? There was universal expectation of the Messiah. You see it in the question of those who came to John's baptism (Luke 3:15), and in the words of the woman of Samaria to the Lord. (John 4:25) Do you see why the Lord answered John's question in the way that He did? Compare His answer to the Jews in Jerusalem. (John 10: 24-26)

Consider verses 7-15, what the Lord said about John. A shaking reed? Soft raiment? A prophet? In connection with verses 10 and 14 read Malachi 3:1 and 4:5, 6. Elijah in Malachi is the Hebrew form of the name; Elias in Matthew is the Greek form. How does verse 14 agree with John 1:21? John was not the man Elijah come to earth again, but he continued the work of Elijah, speaking the literal Divine truth and boldly condemning wrong. "He shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias," etc. (Luke 1:17) The Lord's saying that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John, does not mean that John would not enter heaven, but that the literal truth of repentance which John taught, while it is the greatest of all natural truth, is not the blessed

spiritual truth which angels enjoy in heaven. Verse 12 tells of the eager pressing into the kingdom now that John had opened the way.

In verses 16-19 we seem to see the children playing in the market-place, imitating the funeral processions with their wailings and the wedding processions with their music on pipes; but their playmates respond to neither. So the people rejecting the message of repentance, which John taught, were rejecting also the Lord's offer of full and happy life.

Can you find on the map all the places mentioned in verses 21-24? Chorazin is a heap of ruins, and there is not enough of Capernaum left above ground to make us sure just where the city stood. Why were the towns of Galilee more guilty than Tyre and Sodom? What is the practical lesson of these verses to us?

Read verses 25-27. Who are most able to receive the Lord and the heavenly blessings that He gives, selfish people who think they are learned and wise, or those who are like good children and are willing to be taught? Is the life to which the Lord calls us a hard and weary one? Does He ask us to take on heavy burdens, or to lay them down? Find the answer in verses 28-30.

John in prison. Why was he there? What messages did his disciples take between him and the Lord?

1. Who was John the Baptist? Who was Elias?
2. Why was John in prison?
3. What question did he send to ask the Lord?
4. What answer did the messengers bring?
5. What does the Lord say about His yoke?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

In the spiritual sense which is lifted above places and persons we find in this story of John the Baptist and the Lord instruction in regard to the literal Divine truth of the Word and repentance according to that truth, for which John stands, and its relation to the interior spiritual truth and life which the Lord gives. John in prison represents the literal truth of the Commandments and of the Word rejected by the spirit of selfish indulgence which finds itself rebuked. This rejection leads to utter hatred and denial of the truth, as John was presently killed by Herod at the instance of this same Herodias.

Can we see in the Lord's words about John a description of the literal truth of the Word? Truth that is literal and superficial, and even truth of the letter of the Word, is sometimes represented by the humbler vegetable growths, such as reeds and rushes; for example, the ark of rushes in which the baby Moses was laid. John might have been likened to a reed, but not to a weak and shaking reed, for the letter of the Word is strong from the Divine spirit in it. Raiment is also a frequent type of truth which clothes and expresses the living things of love. The truth of the Word

might be likened to soft raiment, but that would be the inner, spiritual truth of the Word, such as angels have in heaven, and they are meant by those in kings' houses. Not this but the plain literal truth is represented by John and his raiment of camel's hair. Compare the rough mantle of Elijah, which fell from him when he went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

John was a prophet. The letter of the Word teaches and points out the way to heaven. It is more than doctrine; the Word is Divine even in its letter. The full and earnest entrance into the uses and joys of heaven, to which the letter of the Word and obedience to the latter lead, is meant in verse 12, by the kingdom of heaven suffering violence and the violent taking it by force. Read A. 9372.

The relation of the literal Commandments and literal obedience to the deeper spiritual life is pictured in the parable of the children's plays, verses 16-19. Literal truth and, repentance are severe, requiring self-sacrifice. The heavenly life is joyful. In the first literal obedience there is a doing away of abuses; in the deeper spiritual life there is the right use of all good and happy things. The necessity for literal keeping of the Commandments and repentance before one can enter into the free and happy life of heaven, is described in other places in the Gospels where it is said that the acceptance of John the Baptist must come before the acceptance of the Lord. See Luke 7:29, 30; Matthew 21:23-27.

You see at once, in verses 20-24, that Tyre and Sidon and Sodom stand for evil states which are so from ignorance, while the cities in which the Lord had lived and taught stand for evil states which are chosen and confirmed in full knowledge of what is true and good. Can you distinguish between the meaning of Tyre and Sidon and Sodom? The Phoenician cities, the home of famous sailors, represent intellectual powers, here directed to what is false. Sodom, which for its wickedness was destroyed by fire, represents an evil state burning with selfish love. There must in this passage be a corresponding difference between Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum. Of all the cities Capernaum would seem to have had the fullest opportunity, where the Lord made His home. (R. 502; A. 7418)

Do you remember a story in the Old Testament which teaches in a beautiful way this same lesson, that heavenly wisdom is not revealed to those who think themselves great and strong, but to those who are humble and teachable, who are spiritually little children? (1 Kings 3:5-15) We may know the truth of what the Lord here teaches, from experience, for we may often meet untaught, simple-hearted people whose minds seem open to the light of heaven, and amaze us by their true wisdom in the deep things of life. (H. 351; A. 3428)

We all love the closing verses of the chapter. What are the labor and the heavy burdens from which the Lord would deliver us? Evidently they are the labor, the anxiety, the discouragement of trusting to ourselves, and trying to work in our own strength. They are the burdens that selfish loves and thoughts and habits of life bind and lay upon us. The Lord calls His service a yoke, and we must enter it as a duty, with determination to obey His laws; but the Lord makes the duty a joy. The prodigal son came home to his father resolved to be as a hired servant, but the father freely gave him the best he had. See the chapter of H. that has the heading, "That it is not so difficult to live a life which leads to heaven, as it is supposed." Read especially No. 533.

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: John the Baptist and Jesus

We have learned who John the Baptist was—this rugged preacher in the desert and in the Jordan, clothed with a rough garment of camel's hair, and with leathern girdle, whose food was locusts and wild honey.

Soon after he had baptized our Lord Jesus Christ, John the Baptist was cast into prison. Why? You may read this in the fourteenth chapter of Matthew. It was for telling the truth. Do you remember what the Ten Blessings say about the blessedness of being hated and persecuted for righteousness' sake, and that so the prophets were persecuted who came before the apostles? John was one of these prophets. At the time of which our chapter tells, he was in prison, and later he was beheaded, and this, for righteousness' sake. You may be sure that his reward, as the Lord says in the blessings, was "great in the kingdom of the heavens." We need not fear death of the body, but we need to be terribly afraid to be unrighteous, for that leads to the death of the soul—the kind of death we talked about two lessons ago.

John was the last of the prophets before Jesus. But Jesus was the Prophet. A prophet means a teacher of truth. Therefore the Lord called Himself the "Son of man," for that was a title by which He addressed the prophets, as you can see by referring to the prophetic books of the Old Testament.

When John is still spoken of in connection with the Lord, he, as prophet, represented the teaching of the literal sense of the Word; and Jesus, being the Word, represented the essential Truth. While John was still in prison, he sent two of his disciples to Jesus to ask Him if He were the One who should come. A prison is a dark, cheerless place. So the letter of the Word, as people often have it in their minds, is in a dark and cheerless state. People do not understand it; they cannot see clearly what is meant by it. They are not sure of the internal sense when it is revealed to them, just as John when in prison asked questions of the Lord as to whether He was the promised One.

There are other things about the literal sense of the Word to which the Lord called attention, contrasting it with the internal sense. He asked the people what they went out into the wilderness to see? And He Himself answered the question by saying, "A reed shaken by the wind." (The Writings teach us that this is the way to read these words, not in the form of a question as our English Bibles print it. The Greek language in which the New Testament was written had no punctuation marks.)

Have you ever seen a reed or any long grass in the wind? How it bends before every breath of air, no matter from which quarter it comes! Is the literal sense of the Word that way? Yes. That is one of the strange and wonderful things about the letter of the Word; people can make it mean almost anything they like. It bends before every kind of breath, or spirit, of teaching. People have quoted the letter of the Word to prove that there are three Divine Persons. Again they proved by the letter of the Word, the contrary; the horrible falsity that Jesus Christ is not Divine. They take the letter of the Word to prove that man gets health, or is saved, simply by believing. They have proved by the letter of the Word, that it is right to keep slaves; that it is right to marry more wives than one; and a thousand other wicked and false things. Of course the truth is also proved by the letter of

the Word, and that is the only right use that may be made of it. All the other ways of using it are "abuses" or "misuses" of it.

The Lord also referred to the coarse garments that John wore. So the letter of the Word has many things in it that are coarse: They tell of the coarse things men did and said in the past. But as John's garment was the best kind for the desert, so the letter of the Word is the best dress for the Divine Truth in the desert states of men.

On the other hand, they that wear soft garments are in kings' houses. That is, the beautiful soft presentations of the Lord's Truth are in the internal sense of the Word. The Lord is King, and His houses, His habitations in which the angels dwell, are the truths of the internal sense.

How shall I explain to you the difference between the literal sense and the internal sense?

Take something you all know: The Ten Commandments.

These tell us not to kill, not to commit adultery, not to steal, not to lie nor "bear false witness against thy neighbor." Are not the things here mentioned coarse? To kill is coarse and hard and horrible. But it is necessary to tell men who might do such a horrible thing that the Lord, who created all men, forbids the murder of any one of them. In the internal sense nothing is said about such coarse things as killing, or murder; but about soft and beautiful things that come into the lives of the angels who are full of love for their King.

Any kind of teaching is a "prophet." The prophet John taught the Word. The Lord said that John was "more than a prophet," in order to tell us that there is no teaching in the world that can be compared to the teaching that we derive from the Word. And yet the Word as the angels understand it, that is, the Word in its internal sense, is far superior to anything in the literal sense, or as men in the world understand it. This is what the Lord meant when He said that "the least in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than" John.

You will notice the expression "all the prophets and the law" (verse 13). That means the prophetic books of the Old Testament, and also the historical, especially the books of Moses, which contain very many laws.

The prophets represented the Lord who was going to come into the world; and the things that they did represented what He would do. The Law contained many directions how to prepare sacrifices and other things they used in their worship. These represented the Lord and what He does for man to save him. But when He came into the world, He put an end to sacrifices, and washings - all things of the Law - for He whom they had represented had come into the world, and He began to teach them what they had represented. "The Law was given by Moses. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

## **Lesson 14**

### **Matthew 12: 1-21: Keeping the Sabbath**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

It was a Sabbath day at Capernaum. That meant to the Jews, and especially to the strict Pharisees, a day to do no useful thing. They said that it was wrong to make a fire on the Sabbath, or to walk more than a very short way, or to carry any burden, or to take good care of the sick, even to set a broken bone. (See Edersheim's Jesus the Messiah, Appendix XVII.) But the Lord did not keep the Sabbath so; He taught the people on the Sabbath days and healed many who were sick. This Sabbath the Lord was walking with His disciples through the grain fields. There were no fences, and the ears of grain, probably wheat, were growing by the path on either side. As they walked and listened the disciples picked the ears and ate the grain as they rubbed them out in their hands. (Have you ever eaten wheat in this way? It is very sweet and good.) The Pharisees complained that the disciples were doing wrong, that they were doing work on the Sabbath; but the Lord said it was not wrong, and He reminded them of other things which were done in holy times, and holy places which were not wrong. Once David had come hungry to the tabernacle and had taken the holy bread for himself and the men that were with him; and the priests at the temple did their work each Sabbath in offering the sacrifices and the incense. They were not doing wrong; the disciples were not doing wrong. It was right for them to walk with the Lord on the Sabbath and listen to His teaching and grow stronger in soul and body as they went.

On another Sabbath they were in the synagogue. The synagogue was the church where the Jews gathered on the Sabbath and at other times to hear the Scriptures read and explained. There was the shrine where the sacred rolls were kept, and the platform where the reader stood to read and sat down to teach the people who sat before him on the floor. On this Sabbath in the synagogue there was a man whose right hand was withered so that it had no strength. The Pharisees would say that it was wrong to heal this poor man on the Sabbath, but the Lord showed that it was not wrong. He said, "It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days." He told the man to stretch out his hand, and it was healed.

How would the Lord wish us to keep Sunday? It should be a happy day, but not just like other days. It is a holy day. On Sunday we can go to church and Sunday school, or hear a Bible story at home and learn about heaven and the Lord. We will not play rough and noisy plays on Sunday. Perhaps we can have some books and playthings especially for Sunday. If we walk in the fields or woods we can think that the Lord has made all the beautiful things and is taking care of them. And remembering how often the Lord healed the sick people on the Sabbath, we can try on Sunday to do kind things for people who are sick or in any trouble. These are ways to keep the Sabbath holy. Read verses 1-13.

##### **Junior**

Let us read the first part of our chapter one verse at a time. In the first verse what is meant by corn? The paths led through the grain fields, the seed often falling on the beaten path when the

sower sowed. The law allowed a passer-by to pick what he wanted to eat of grapes or growing corn. (Deuteronomy 23:24, 25)

Verse 2 brings to mind the strict rules of the Pharisees about the keeping of the Sabbath. I have told the little children some of the rules, and mentioned a book where you may learn more about them. You cannot believe how external and trifling these rules of the Sabbath were.

Read verses 3 and 4. Who knows the story of David that is referred to? Find it in 1 Samuel 21:1-6. Do you know what the hallowed bread of the tabernacle was, and why it is spoken of as being "for the priests alone"? Look further back to Exodus 25:30, and Leviticus 24:5-9, to remind you of the table, and the showbread which was put fresh upon it every Sabbath, and when taken from the table was eaten by Aaron and his sons in the holy place. Read verse 5. What we have said about the showbread reminds you of one of the Sabbath duties of the priests in the temple. What other duties of the priests do you think of?

Who is the "one greater than the temple" referred to in verse 6? Compare John 2:19-22, where the Lord called Himself the temple. You see the meaning of this and the two following verses. The temple and its service had represented the Lord and His Divine life with men. The sacrifices and all the formal observances of the Jews had been holy only because they represented mercy and other forms of love to the Lord. (This had been often declared even in the old days. See Jeremiah 7:21-23; Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:6-8; Psalm 51:16, 17, and many other places.) Even the Sabbath and its rest were holy because they represented the Christian life of nearness to the Lord that was now beginning to be realized. The real thing had now come that had been pictured by the temple, the sacrifices, and the Sabbath; but the Pharisees hated it and set themselves against it. This hatred you see developing all through this chapter. See verses 14, 24, 31, 32.

Read verses 10-13. After learning about the rules of the Pharisees, which forbade almost every useful thing on the Sabbath, you may wonder at the Lord's words in verse 11 which imply that even the Pharisees would on the Sabbath lift out a sheep which had fallen into a pit. See also the lifting out of an ox or ass, and the loosing of ox and ass and leading them to watering, in Luke 14:5; 13:15. Points connected with the care of animals were much discussed by the Pharisees. Leading them to water was allowed, though not carrying water to them. It was allowed to let down food and drink to an animal fallen into a pit, and to provide means by which it could get out, or even in some cases to lift it out.

The Lord showed the absurdity of their position. If common humanity required such permissions in the care of animals, and if they were in keeping with the Divine spirit of the Sabbath, how unreasonable to suppose that it was against the spirit of the Sabbath to do works of mercy to human beings! One point we notice in this healing of the withered hand, the command to the man to stretch out his hand. As he obeyed his hand received new strength. This suggests that we must do our part if we would have the Lord help us. We must use what strength we have if we expect Him to bless our effort and give us more strength.

Read verses 14-16. The hatred and opposition of the Pharisees were becoming settled, but there were open-minded Gentile people more ready to receive the Lord, to whom He could now turn. It had been foretold that this would be so, and the prophecy had also told of the Lord's gentleness toward such simple-hearted people, and His care not to do violence to the least possible

beginning of truth or goodness in their souls. Can you find the prophecy in Isaiah? With verse 16 compare Matthew 9:30. What did we think could be the reason for such a charge?

1. What is the Commandment about the Sabbath day? How did the Pharisees keep the Sabbath? How did the Lord keep it?
2. What happened one Sabbath in the grain field? One Sabbath in the synagogue?
3. What was the showbread? When did David eat it? What did the priests do in the temple?
4. Ought we on Sunday to do the same work, and play the same games, and make the day just like other days? What ought we to keep Sunday?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Notice that both here in Galilee and in Jerusalem (John 5:16; 9:16) the issue between the Pharisees and the Lord arose over the observance of the Sabbath. You see the reason of this. It was because the Sabbath was representative of heaven and of all things of religion and worship. With the Pharisees all these were mere forms filled with a selfish sanctity and pride. The Lord was showing the true spirit of heaven and of all things of religion, and it called out the hatred of the Pharisees. See T. 301-304; A. 10730, and many other numbers.

Can we see that the disciples eating the ears of corn as they walked with the Lord were not only "guiltless," but that this represented a part of the true keeping of the day? The grain is instruction in regard to the duties of life. The Lord was giving the disciples such food for their spirits as they walked; and not stale, formal teaching, but teaching fresh, like growing ears, from His own life's experience. Their rubbing with their hands represented earnest reception with effort to be doing what they learned. This ought to be a part of our keeping of the Sabbath. The disciples' eating of the grain shows the importance of Sunday instruction, and the spirit in which we should receive it. (T. 301; A. 5293, 5576)

The story of David at the tabernacle is referred to. Whom does he represent? What is represented by his eating the hallowed bread? And what by his giving it to his companions?

What is represented by the healing on the Sabbath day? The spirit of love and service that should characterize the Sabbath and all things of religion and heaven. Can you think how this man in the synagogue with the withered hand was representative of the Jews in their religion? It was lacking in the good works, which the hand represents (especially the right hand, Luke 6:6). The Pharisees forbade the doing of such works, and they were made angry by the healing of the withered hand. It was all expressive of their hatred of a spirit of mercy and of a religion of good works. (T. 301)

Consider verses 19, 20, a part of the prophecy which describes the Lord's ministry to the Gentiles, to those not learned but of simple, open heart. That He will not strive nor cry, suggests the gentleness of His teaching, adapted to feeble powers of understanding. Streets spiritually are truths that show us how to live. That is why here and elsewhere instruction is associated with the streets. (Luke 13:26; R. 501) "A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench," means that the Lord is very tender in saving and strengthening even the least beginnings

of heavenly understanding and love. We saw that a reed meant weak, superficial understanding when the Lord asked if John the Baptist were a reed shaken with the wind; and we know that fire is a type of love. Read the beautiful explanation in E. 627.

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Keeping the Sabbath

In our last lesson we learned something about the difference between the literal sense of the Word and the spiritual sense, especially the difference between the literal sense of the Old Testament and the real truth of the Word. We learned that most of the laws that were given by Moses about the manner of conducting worship, were representative of the Lord and of our worship of Him. For instance, when a lamb was burnt on the altar it represented that innocence is from the Lord and that we must love it, or else our worship is not genuine. For the lamb represented innocence, and the fire represented love, and the altar represented worship.

When the Lord was in the world He abrogated all such things as were merely representative; that is He taught men by His example, and also by explanations, that they were no longer to be kept; but instead, such things as they had represented were to be done.

Among the laws of Moses was the law about the strict keeping of the Sabbath. They were not allowed to gather the heavenly bread, the "manna" in the wilderness, on the Sabbath. They were not permitted to gather sticks for a fire on that day, and a man who did do this was stoned to death as a punishment. (Numbers 15:32-36.) No work of any kind was to be done on the Sabbath. This was because the Israelites and Jews did not have the true idea about work, such as we have in the New Church, where we can learn that work is really worship of the Lord, provided we engage in it because we love to work so as to be of use to other people.

The "six days of labor" which they were commanded to keep represented the labor of the Lord in fighting against the evil spirits, and in putting out of His own human nature all desires and thoughts that were merely human and not Divine. And the "Sabbath" represented the Lord's victory over the evil spirits, when He was through fighting them and had cast them into hell; and when He gathered together the good people in the world of spirits, and organized a heaven of them; while, at the same time, He made His human nature fully Divine. As all this accomplishment of His work on earth was most holy, therefore the Sabbath which represented it, was to be kept in the only way that seemed holy to the Jews: by not doing any work at all, but resting. Therefore also the day was called by a Hebrew name which means rest: - "Sabbath."

When the Lord came into the world, He taught them that the Sabbath had represented Him, and that now, that He had come, and was doing what it had represented, it was no longer to be kept as in the past. He said, that He "is Lord also of the Sabbath." He taught and showed them wherein true worship of Him consists: in doing things holy. He taught on the Sabbath day. He healed the sick, and He let one of those so healed carry his bed home. The Jews considered this as work. He let the hungry disciples pick ears of barley and rub them in their hands and eat them; in this way they seemed to be harvesting and threshing grain. And this again the Jews looked upon as being work and breaking the Sabbath.

But the Lord taught them in a few words just what is the right way to keep the Sabbath: "It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath day."

But the Pharisees, who did not care about doing well, and who would not see the holy, Divine spirit of the Lord's works, but who thought only of the literal keeping of the laws of Moses, and especially of their own way of explaining how to keep them, were very angry at Him, and came together to talk over how they could kill Him.

Does the Lord's teaching us that it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath day mean that we may go to work on the Sabbath just as on other days?

We may do so, if it is necessary in being of service to others, and if it does not interfere with one of the important purposes for which the Lord instituted the Sabbath day, and made it holy, when He was in the world. That purpose is that we may be instructed in Divine things. He not only worked by healing the sick, but He also taught on the Sabbath day. He made it a day of instruction in Divine things, and therefore a day of rest from our ordinary work. People are so busy during the week, that they have little or no time to study the Word of the Lord, and in this way to learn about the Lord and heaven and the life hereafter, and to think just how to live during the week when working, so that they may do the Lord's will in the work. And then also on week days a person's mind is so occupied with the work itself that, even when he has a leisure hour, he cannot always bring his mind away from his work to things Diviner. Therefore it is necessary that we stop work on the Sabbath day, so that we have at least one day in seven on which we may be prepared both as to our minds and as to our bodies to think about the Lord, and to learn from His Word; to pray to Him and to praise Him.

So we get ready for the beautiful day of rest, the Sabbath; or, as it is called in the Word, "the Lord's Day," or, as we call it nowadays, "Sunday." Workingmen, who have to wear rough clothes in their work, change them for their best clothes. Everyone prepares his house, his body and his mind to be clean and tidy and beautiful on that day. The noise of factory and commerce and farm machinery is hushed. The churches and Sunday schools are open. Ministers and teachers are in them to teach young and old about the Lord, about salvation and eternal life.

And since we do not attend to our ordinary work on that day, we think of other ways in which we may "do well" to our neighbor. We think of good things we cannot do on the week days because we are too busy with our day's work, and so we make use of the Sabbath to visit the sick and cheer and comfort them; to visit the poor and comfort them and see how we can help them. We visit our friends who are well, and talk to them about what we have learned in church and Sunday school, and how we can live better lives, and serve our city, our state and our country in such manner as to do the Lord's will. We take walks into the country or the parks in order to behold the works of the Lord, and to see His wonders in them. Or we stay at home and read good and pious books.

If there happens to be a Sunday on which it becomes absolutely necessary to do some work, it is not a sin to do it. But we must bear in mind that it is a special day of love to the neighbor, and therefore it would not be right to do anything that would disturb the worship of other people. Since it is one of the delightful things that people can do on Sundays to read good and pious books and think about salvation and eternal life, therefore it would be wrong to engage in noisy work or boisterous play that would disturb the people who are engaged in such pious meditation.

## **Lesson 15**

### **Matthew 12: 22-27: The Sin of Blasphemy**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

You remember how messengers once came to Jesus from John the Baptist, asking if He were really the Lord, and how He let them see the kind works that He was doing and sent them back to tell John what they had seen. Men like them with simple, good hearts, felt the Lord's great love and goodness. They were as persons whose eyes had been opened spiritually to see the Lord, and their lips to confess Him. (Verse 22.)

But the same goodness which simple, good people felt in the Lord's works and which made them happy, made selfish people angry; they hated it, and showed their hatred by calling it "Beelzebub the prince of the devils." (Baal-zebub, "Lord of flies," was an idol of Ekron, 2 Kings 1:2, which the Jews identified with the worst of evil spirits.) How utterly false! All evil things were leagued together as a united army to do harm. The Lord's loving powers stood against them. He bound the strong man by overcoming the evil spirits of hell, and so He had power to save men from them. Good and evil, right and wrong, are opposites, and we should draw a sharp line between them. As the evil stand together against the Lord, so we ought to stand bravely and consistently with Him and not leave it in doubt on which side we are. (Verses 25-30)

Blasphemy means irreverent and contemptuous speaking of holy things. There were, no doubt, many people who saw the Lord when He was in the world, who did not know that He was different from other men. If they said something against Him, they were not so much to blame. When they knew Him better they might be sorry and learn to love Him. But suppose they felt the Divine, loving spirit in the Lord's works and words, and hated it and spoke against it, then they were much more to blame; they were despising the only power that could save them. Even in the other world there is no other power to, save, and if they hated it here they would hate it there.

It is the same with the Lord's Word. Some people do not know that it is different from other books. They may criticize its language and speak against it, but perhaps by and by they will learn that it is Divine and love it. They are speaking a word against the Son of man, which may be forgiven them; for the letter of the Bible, like the natural body of the Lord, is taken from men and may be called the Son of man. But if one feels the holiness and goodness of the Bible and hates it, he is closing his mind to the only power that can help him. This is blaspheming against the Holy Spirit, and it cannot be forgiven, because there is no other power to save and protect us.

The same lesson is taught in the second Commandment: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." When people speak against the Lord or the Bible and holy things, let us hope that they do it without really knowing the Divineness of these things. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." But how very necessary it is for us who do know how holy and Divine the Lord and the Bible are, not to speak carelessly of them, and not to neglect or disobey them.

It was the Divine spirit of goodness and love in the Lord's works and words that made them so good. The spirit in our acts and words makes them good or bad. If selfish and bad thoughts and feelings are within, they make the acts and words bad even when they look outwardly good. People are like trees, and their works and words are the fruits. The fruits cannot be good if the spirit in them is not good. If the spirit is like a poisonous viper, the words that we speak are not good. In this world we cannot always judge the spirit of other people, but in the other world the hidden thoughts and feelings will be plainly seen. The angels then can read one's whole character in a single act or word. And even now nothing is hidden from the Lord; He knows the spirit in everything we do and say.

1. Why should a Divine work done by the Lord lead some to confess and love Him, and some to deny and hate Him?
2. What does the word "blasphemy" mean? What Commandment forbids it? Why would it be more wrong for us to speak against the Lord than for some others to do so?
3. A tree is known by its fruits; what shows the quality of a man? What is there within an act or word, which makes it good or evil?
4. Can we always see which it is? Will it sometime be seen more plainly than now? Who sees even now?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The man who was possessed was blind and dumb. At another time the devil was deaf and dumb. (Mark 9:25.) If we let any evil have possession of us it dulls our senses to spiritual things. It makes us blind so that we cannot understand and see the truth of them, or deaf so that we cannot take them in and love and obey them, or dumb because we cannot acknowledge them and teach them and thank the Lord. We must ask the Lord's help and get free from the evil thing. Then our senses will be opened; we shall know that the Lord and the Bible are Divine, and heavenly things which we are taught will be plain and beautiful to us. (A. 6987-6990)

The Lord's words about blasphemy show the importance of being very careful to be reverent. If others use the Lord's name in careless swearing, or if they joke about the Bible, that is no excuse for our doing so. They may know no better, and it may be forgiven them; but in proportion as we do know better, such irreverence does us harm, and makes us less able ever to be reverent toward the Lord, or to feel the holiness and power of His Word. (E. 778; A. 8882; P. 231; T. 299)

When is the "day of judgment"? It is for each one when, soon after death, his real character is revealed. (Matthew 13:39.) Shall we be judged by our words alone? What else reveals the character? (Revelations 22:12.)

## **Lesson 16**

### **Matthew 12: 38-50: Mother and Brethren**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

The Lord said of the Jews, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." (John 4:48) But it is not useful for those who do not love the Lord in their hearts to be compelled to believe in Him by any outward means. That kind of belief is not deep and will not last. The Lord said, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." (Luke 16:3 1) That is why the Lord comes to us so gently in His Word and the story of His life, and in His works in the world around us and in His providence, not compelling us to believe in Him, but asking us to feel how good He is and to love Him with all our heart. That is why the Lord was grieved when the people asked for signs, and gave them none. (Matthew 16:1; Mark 8:11) In the Bible a sign means anything which convinces the understanding. This is never useful except when the heart is also touched. "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still."

Before the Lord came into the world prophets and wise men had been sent as types and signs of His coming. There were Gentile people then who listened to these messengers, not with their understanding only, but with their heart, and repented and received wisdom. Jonah was a prophet who was sent as a sign of the Lord who was to come. He came in the days of the second Jeroboam, king of Israel (2 Kings 14:25), and he was sent to preach repentance to the great, strange city Nineveh, far away on the Tigris river. (Jonah 1-4) You remember how he was unwilling to go and tried to escape from the Lord, and how after the storm and the three days and nights in the belly of the great fish, he was obedient and went. The people of Nineveh repented at his preaching, for their hearts were tender. Who would be more ready for heaven when they came into the other world where all hearts are known, the men of Nineveh who repented at the preaching of Jonah, or those who did not repent at the preaching of the Lord Himself?

Another who came in the old days as a sign of the Lord's coming was Solomon. You remember the richness and peacefulness of his kingdom, and the beauty of the palace and temple which he built, and his great wisdom; and you remember how the queen of Sheba came with her camels from southern Arabia, bringing spices and presents, to see Solomon's glory, and to prove him with hard questions, and how the king answered all her questions, and she was filled with wonder. (1 Kings 10) Which would be more ready for heaven, the queen who was tender hearted and was glad to learn wisdom from Solomon, or those who hardened their hearts and would not learn wisdom from the Lord Himself?

But we must not think that all the people hardened their hearts against the Lord. There were the faithful disciples who listened to Him and loved Him and obeyed Him. They were His little family, very near and dear to Him, nearer than those who had lived in the same house in Nazareth, but who did not understand Him, nor believe in Him. (Mark 3:21; John 7:5) He called the faithful disciples His brother and sister and mother, and we may all be as near and dear to Him.

1. Who wished for a sign from the Lord? Why does the Lord not give signs that would compel everyone to believe in Him?
2. Who was Jonah? Where was he sent? What happened before he obeyed?
3. Who was Solomon? Who came to hear his wisdom?
4. Whom does the Lord call His brother and sister and mother?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

The Lord's reference to the story of the Ninevites and of the queen of Sheba implies that what was represented by those events was having its fulfillment. There were some who were ready to listen to the call to repentance, but they were not of the learned Jews; they were ignorant Gentile people like the Ninevites. There were some who were tender and open to heavenly wisdom but they were simple-hearted people like the queen of Sheba. (A. 1188, 3048.) When the Jews were angry because the Lord gave His blessings to the Gentiles and the publicans and sinners (verses 14-24 of our chapter) they showed the same selfish spirit which Jonah showed when he refused to go to the Ninevites and was angry that they repented and were saved. (P. P.)

The unclean spirit going out and returning. The house is our own soul, and the spirit is any evil which has an abode in us, and also the evil spirits which prompt it. We need by the Lord's help to have all such occupants of our house cast out. Sometimes a bad habit seems to be cast out, but it is only from fear; the love for it still remains; and when it dares it returns stronger than before. Sometimes a false idea is overcome by reasoning, but if the heart loves the false thing it comes back again. This would be the case with belief compelled by signs. The last state is worse than the first, because the wrong is more wrong after we have learned better and are able to do better if we only would. The increase of the evil is described as seven other spirits more wicked than the first. Seven is usually associated with a holy Sabbath state when through patient effort some good thing has become easy and delightful. Here it means the deliberate choice and confirmation of the evil thing. The Lord's words are a warning not to grow careless about a wrong thing which seems to be cast out, but to be always on our guard and to ask His protection against its return. (A. 8394; R. 10; P. 133, 231)

The Lord's saying of His disciples, that they are His brother and sister and mother, expresses in a very tender way how near they are to Him who love Christian goodness and truth and cherish them in the world. (E. 746)

## **Lesson 17**

### **Matthew 13: 1-23: Parable of the Sower**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

"The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the seaside." It was the Sea of Galilee, which we read of in so many of our stories. And we think of the shore bordering the beautiful plain of Gennesaret, for Capernaum was there, the town where the Lord lived. "And great multitudes were gathered together unto Him, so that He went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore." It was one of the fishermen's boats. (If possible, show pictures of the boats lying near the shore, and pictures of the green plain as it looked to one sitting in the boat.)

There was a beach of sand and tiny shells on which the water rippled. Above this was the green meadow; in those days it was cultivated with care; it was sheltered by the hills and warmed by the sun, and watered by streams from large springs. The soil was rich and the plain was filled with beautiful gardens and orchards and grain fields; it was noted for its early fruits and vegetables. There was a path along the shore, and other paths crossed the fields by which the people went from town to town, and on which traders passed with lines of camels carrying goods from the East to the Mediterranean shore. Beyond the plain were the hills which kept off the cold winds; winds; in places they were rocky, and in places green and bright with flowers. One valley with rough cliffs at its sides led up through the hills toward the Mountain of the Blessings. From this valley today great clouds of pigeons fly out and settle down upon the plain to find their food.

This view was spread before the Lord as He sat in the fishing boat by the shore: the beach, the rich meadow, the sheltering hills. And as He taught the people that day He gave His lessons in the form of stories or parables about the things which were happening around them.

"Behold, a sower went forth to sow." Every year when the autumn rains softened the ground the farmers plowed the fields; then they scattered the seeds. Some fell upon the beaten paths, for there were no fences and the paths crossed through the grain fields. When seed fell upon the beaten path it could not sink in, and the birds came and picked it up. Some seed fell in the borders of the plain where the rock of the hillsides was not far below the surface. This seed started quickly, but it could not sink its roots deep and soon withered away in the hot sun. Some fell among thorny bushes and thistles. Nowadays, when the fields are neglected, with no farmers care for them, the thistles grow everywhere, high above your head. In those days no doubt they grew in the borders, and neglected corners of the fields. Seeds which fell among the thorns began to grow, but were soon crowded out.. But some seed fell into good ground and brought forth a plenty of good grain.

The people had seen all this happening around them every year; the farmers were working in the fields near by them while the Lord was speaking; but He told the story to teach a lesson. Some of the people could not understand His meaning, but the disciples asked the Lord and He helped them to understand it. Can you see the lesson that He taught?

The Lord Himself was a Sower as He sat there in the boat. The words that He spoke were the seeds, and the people gathered on the shore and people everywhere to whom His words would come were the ground into which the seeds were falling. Were they all good ground? Are we all good ground? Do the Lord's words when we hear them always sink in deep and bear fruit? When do you think we are not good ground, but are like the beaten wayside or the stony ground or ground that is choked with thorns and thistles? The Lord wants us all to be good ground, to listen to His words, to take them to heart, and to let them bear fruit. Read Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23.

## Junior

Where are we at the opening of our story? Show me the place on the map, and tell me all about the boat, and about the shore and the meadow which lay spread before the Lord as He sat in the boat. Read what I have told the little children and make the scene as clear to me as you can. And tell me about the work of the farmers which the Lord made the basis of the parable of the sower. Look through the chapter to the end. What other parables do you find about the things growing in the fields and gardens? Do you remember other places in the Bible where a man is compared to a tree or to a garden? (Psalm 1; Isaiah 5:1-7; 58:11; Genesis 2:8, 9) Notice that we use the word "nursery" for the children's room, and for the garden where little trees are starting; and we call the little children's school a "kindergarten." If your mind is a garden, what are the seeds that are sown in it? What is the fruit that they bear?

Think especially as you read this parable of the sower of the seeds that the Lord was sowing that day in the minds of the people gathered on the shore, and sowing for us all; and think carefully what he says about the different kinds of soil. When are we like the beaten paths? When we are so busy with other things; when our minds are so occupied that we do not attend to the Lord's words. They go in at one ear and out at the other, as we say; we hear them but do not grasp and hold them, and first we know, some wrong thoughts come flying along and snatch the Lord's words away. When are we like the stony ground? When we are interested in learning what the Lord tells us, but it is only an interest of our minds; we do not take it to heart; when a little self-sacrifice, or a little effort and patience are needed to be faithful to what the Lord teaches us we find we have not that kind of interest, and let the good seed die. And when are we like the ground choked with thorns and thistles? When we really mean to do what the Lord teaches and are in earnest about it for a time, but we do not care enough; we love other things too well and let them take a stronger hold and the good things are crowded out. "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." (Luke 8:15)

Can you find the prophecy referred to in verse 14? (Isaiah 6:9) It may seem hard to understand. If people would receive the Lord's teaching and be really and permanently converted and healed by it, it would be just what the Lord desired. But the prophecy is speaking of people who would not be faithful. It was better for them that they should not understand and should remain in ignorance, than that they should receive the Lord's teaching and then willfully reject it. The lesson of the parable is explained to us. With the Lord's help we can be faithful to it, we can examine ourselves and refuse to be the trodden wayside or the stony ground or the ground choked with thorns. We can, if we will, be good ground and bring forth fruit. "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." We have ears to hear, for the Lord has explained to us the lesson. It is for us to take the lesson to heart and to obey.

1. "The seaside." What sea? "On the shore." What shore?
2. What became of the seed that fell by the wayside? That fell on stony ground? Among thorns? Into good ground?
3. Who is meant by the sower? What is meant by the seed? by each kind of ground?
4. What is a parable? Why did the Lord speak in parables?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Senior

With the scene before your minds, give a deeper thought to some points of the lesson.

Studying the meaning of the sea and the boat, do you see a reason for the Lord's sitting in the boat on the sea to teach the people? The sea represents the plane of natural, worldly thought, and the boat, principles of natural knowledge which serve to guide our thinking and make possible an interchange of thought. The Lord's teaching from the sea and the boat represents the fact that He came to the people in their natural state of mind and spoke to them in their own language and their own familiar forms of thought. It is significant that that day He spoke in parables of common, natural things and did not, as He had done on the mountain, unfold the inner motives of Christian life. (E. 514)

The prophecy quoted in verse 14 opens the subject of the Lord's protection of holy things, guarding against their reception by those who would only profane them and confirm themselves the more deeply in evil. The Lord's manner of teaching by parables is one means of guarding the holy truth. A child can see some lesson in a parable, and a wise man can see more. Everyone sees what he is able and ready to see, and he does not reject the rest, as he would do if it were stated in direct, dogmatic form. (P. 221-233; A. 302)

How does verse 12 apply to the subject of which the Lord is speaking? What is it which a man may have which enables him to receive more, and when he has it not he loses even that he has? The Lord is speaking about the reception and understanding of His teaching. Plainly, the needful thing is an honest and good heart, a love for the Lord's truth which will treat it reverently and try to obey it. If one has this his mind is open to receive and understand. If he has not this the knowledge which he receives verbally or intellectually will not stay; it is sooner or later taken from him, in the other world if not in this. (H. 349)

You may be interested to carry further the thought of the mind as a garden, and of the principles of truth received into the mind as seeds. You can trace the correspondence between the development of such principles to their fruit in good deeds, and the stages of a seed's growth through stem and leaf and blossom to the fruit. See "The Language of Parable," pages 184-192.

Different degrees of fruitfulness are described in verse 23. You will know that these numbers, a hundred-fold, sixty-fold, and thirty-fold, describe spiritually not merely the difference in abundance of good works, but in the quality of life. A hundred-fold stands evidently for the greatest fullness and holiness of character. (A. 2636) Sixty, like six, is associated with the week of labor, and suggests the goodness of a life which has been faithful in every labor and temptation.

(A. 5335) Thirty is five (instead of ten) times six, and suggests faithfulness in temptation, but in a less degree. (A. 2276) Good life of all these kinds is acceptable to the Lord.

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Sower

Seeds need deep rich soil, where the roots they gently thrust down can reach with their little mouths to the tiny cups of earth holding minute drops of water. Here, whenever they are thirsty, the roots can drink, and drink, and send the water to the stalk and leaves and blossoms and fruit above ground. One seed of wheat or rye will send down a number of roots into the dark but warm earth, and at the same time push up several stalks into the bright and warm sunlight. Every one of these stalks bears an ear which has a number of little pockets in each of which a new grain or seed is forming. In this way one seed may grow to have a hundred seeds, another may grow to have sixty seeds, and a third to have thirty; or as the Lord says in the parable, "Some a hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold."

How great and wonderful is the Lord's wisdom and power which makes one little seed that is taken into Mother Earth's lap, and lies there comfortable and warm, where no one sees it, but where it is very active, to produce such a great number of new seeds.

And He does something more wonderful still! He makes one little truth from His holy Word that is taken up into the heart of a loving and obedient child, lying there so warm, and where no one sees it but the Lord, to bring forth a great many kindly, thoughts and useful deeds in the mind and life of the child while he grows up, and later when he is a man, and still later when he is an angel. This is what the dear heavenly Father, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, told the disciples in explaining the parable. Every truth in His Word is a heavenly seed, which He, the Divine Sower, or the "Son of Man," wishes to plant in the hearts of men. So, while the earthly father is reading the Word to his children, and they listen with loving hearts, the Lord is sowing in these hearts the seed of His 'truth, which, some day, will grow up and bring forth seeds or fruit.

But, sad to say, not all receive the Lord's truths into good hearts. The Lord tells us that there are other kinds of people, which He divides into three classes; making, with the good, four different kinds of earth or soil in the field, that is, in the church, for the reception of the Divine seed.

First. - There are those who sit in Sunday school or in church, and listen to the reading and explanations of the holy Word, but do not care for it, and so do not think further about it; therefore it does not enter their understanding, but thoughts about other things, about other stories, or pleasures, fly into their minds and destroy the things to which they have been listening. These are like the hard road on which the seed falls, and the birds come and eat them up.

Second. - There are others who like to listen to the Word; it sounds very pleasant to them; they enjoy reading and hearing it. But they are not deep at all. They are superficial; and, after a while, when they find that they must do something besides listening and reading and enjoying the stories and the truths in the Word, namely, that they must fight, and fight hard, against their own evils, and strictly obey the Ten Commandments, they do not like it. They love themselves more than the Lord. These are shallow, rocky ground, having only a thin covering of soil for the seed to

grow in, where there is little water, and the seed cannot push its roots deep, and so when the sun comes up the little plant withers and dies. The sun here means their love of self.

Third. - And there are still others who indeed take in the truths of the Word, and think about them so that they seem to be growing and developing in their minds, but they let evil loves and pleasures choke out the thoughts about these truths, and so they do not live according to them. They are just like the seed that is growing among thorns. These thorns also have roots in the ground that draw away the water from the good seed, and they have stems and leaves above the soil, with which they shut out the sunlight from the growing plant, and so they choke out its life before it has had time to form the fruit in its ears.

Did the multitude who stood on the seashore, listening to the Lord, understand what He meant by this and the other parables?

No. Even His disciples did not understand and He had to explain them to them afterward. The greater part of the people were not good, and it would have been dangerous for them to take in the Word which He was teaching. The Lord spoke only to those who "had ears," for He said, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." Of course they all had ears such as grow on the sides of the head of the natural body. The Lord did not mean such ears. A child "hears" when he obeys his mother. So to "have ears" for the Lord's words, means to possess obedience: to believe in the Lord and obey Him. Those who do this, take in, and understand, and live up to what the Lord teaches them. They "have ears" and "hear."

Because the disciples did this, therefore the Lord taught them the secret of what He meant by the parables, and told them, "To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."

The disciples having this given them, had what others did not have. This will help you to understand what He meant by saying, "To him that hath shall be given and he shall have more abundantly." Of course Jesus did not mean having houses, and gardens, or farms, and furniture, and pictures, and ornaments, and jewelry, and money, and horses, and cattle, etc. He meant what people have in their minds and hearts: truth and good. When you love the truth and "have" it, you want more because it is so beautiful, and since there is no end to the truths and goods which the Lord has and wants to give to others, the more you really want of good and truth from Him, the more He gives you in this life, and still more after you enter heaven when you die.

But people who do not really love the truth which they have learned, cannot keep it when they die and enter the other life, and therefore all the knowledge and intelligence which they seemed to have are then taken away from them.

## **Lesson 18**

### **Matthew 13: 24-43: Wheat and Tares**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

The Lord spoke other parables that day about the sowing of the seed. Read verses 24-30. The tares are probably "darnel," a grass which looks very much like wheat while it is growing, and if it is threshed out with the wheat the grains are so heavy that they can hardly be separated by winnowing. They are somewhat poisonous. Weeds are sure to spring up in a garden. How much worse it would be if an enemy came and sowed them while we were all asleep.

From what we learned in the other parable, can you guess what the Lord meant by the good seed, and by the man who sowed it? The Lord says the good seed is His Word, His teachings of what is right and good, which, if we take them to heart, grow and bear the fruit of good, kind, useful deeds. And what can be meant by the bad seed? Suggestions of bad things that come into the mind; and the plants and fruit that spring from them are bad thoughts and actions.

A good act and a bad act may look alike on the outside. A poor woman once kissed the Lord. Judas once kissed Him. Why was one kiss good and the other not? We may do things to help at home, because we want to be useful, or just because we want to get some reward for it. So it is not always easy to know the tares from the wheat in this world. Will it always be so? In the other world, where we all go when we die, the real inward feelings of everyone are plainly seen, nothing that is hidden remaining hid. Then it is plain to everyone who are good and who are evil. The evil of their own accord turn away from the good to live by themselves.

See how the parable teaches us this lesson about the other world. The going to the other world is the harvest. The angels who welcome us there, and in whose presence our real character is seen, are the reapers. The selfish feelings and passions, in which the evil choose to live, are the furnace of fire. The good love of those who go to heaven grows stronger and happier; which is meant by the words, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (E. 911)

Mustard seeds are very little things, but in Palestine the plants grow large. They are often taller than a man's head as he rides on horseback. Suppose we have learned only a very little and made only a little beginning of heavenly life in this world (and nobody learns very much or makes more than a beginning), do you think from this parable that the little may grow in the other world into a great deal that is good and beautiful? The mustard seed is not only little, but it is sharp to the taste. The beginning that we have made of heavenly life is not very sweet and good. Still, what is really heavenly may grow from it. "If by combat against evils, as sins, man has procured to himself anything spiritual in the world, be it ever so small, he is saved, and his uses grow afterward, like a grain of mustard seed into a tree." (D. L. in A. E. xvii.)

We often read about "unleavened bread." It means bread that is not raised. We usually raise bread with yeast. In old times it was done with a bit of the old dough which was called "leaven." From

this the raising spread to all the rest. The unleavened bread was used in the Passover, for the old, sour dough represented what was not good and heavenly. The Lord lets things that are not heavenly come to us sometimes, so that we may ask His help to resist them, and be stronger and more heavenly than we were before. This is why the kingdom of heaven is said to be like leaven. (A. 7906; P. 25)

1. What is the first of the parables spoken by the seaside?
2. Tell me the parable of the wheat and tares. What is meant by the wheat? What by the tares? Do good and evil people live together in the other world as they do in this?
3. Does the little beginning that we make of heavenly life in this world stay just so little always? If we are faithful in a few things here, what will happen by and by?
4. Leaven represents something that is not good. In what way may it sometimes be useful to us to meet things that are not good in the world?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The Lord sows the good seed. Who sows the bad seed? "The enemy that sowed them is the devil." This does not mean one particular evil spirit, but all the evil spirits, and all the evil things which put wrong thoughts and feelings into our minds. The tares were sown while men slept; for the bad things creep in whenever we are off our guard.

We have spoken of the separation of the wheat and tares as representing the separation of good and evil persons in the spiritual world. You can learn when and how this takes place, in H. 499-511. Three states are described through which we pass in coming into the other world. First, we awaken: there is still both good and evil in us as there was here. Second, the real inner character comes plainly out. In which of these states can the good and evil be separated? Afterward there is a third state, of instruction, for those who are preparing for heaven.

The separation of the wheat and tares also describes the separation of good and evil things in one person. Good and evil are mixed in us all, while we live in this world. But in the other world those who at heart are evil reject all that is good, and by the help of the angels those who at heart are good reject all that is evil. The tares were bound in bundles. In the light of the other world, all things of character are seen in their true order and relation; all evil things cling together as one.

Two things are mentioned in regard to the evil in the other world: the furnace of fire and the gnashing of teeth. One describes their state of evil feeling; the other the conflict of false and wicked thoughts. Can you tell which is which? (A. 4424, 5071; H. 575)

The Lord had spoken to the people outside in parables. When they went into the house, the disciples asked Him the meaning of the parables. Was there an appropriateness in this?

## **Lesson 19**

### **Matthew 13: 44-58: The Pearl of Great Price**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

What did the Lord mean when He said, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear?" He meant that we should try to understand His parables and do what they teach. (A. 4653; R. 87)

What idea did the disciples have of the Lord's kingdom? They thought it would be a great earthly kingdom, with everything grand and beautiful in an outward way. But the Lord once told them that the kingdom would not come with observation, but that it was within them. They must learn that things quite hidden from the world, true and holy thoughts, kind and useful feelings, are more precious treasures than any outward things. The Lord teaches this lesson by saying that the kingdom of heaven is like hidden treasure. Although the heavenly things are hidden, they are so precious to those who know them, that they are willing to give up everything else for their sake. This is meant by selling all and buying the field.

The Lord now tells of a particular kind of treasure which the kingdom of heaven is like. You have seen a pearl, the beautiful, precious thing that is found in the shells of some oysters. The oyster has a great strong shell to protect himself, and it is said that when some little grain gets in and hurts him he covers it over with this precious pearly coat to make it smooth. You see how the Lord can use the pearl to picture something that keeps us safe from evil things that would hurt our souls. What is it that protects us from every harm? It is to know that the Lord has overcome every kind of evil and will save us from it. This precious knowledge of the Lord is the pearl of great price. The gates of the Holy City, which shut out everything that offends, are made of this heavenly pearl. (E. 863, 1044)

As the Lord had been teaching from the boat that day, fishermen may have been near on the beach. They may have used their long nets, holding one end at the shore and carrying the other end around in a boat till they brought it also to the shore, enclosing as many fishes as they could. Then they may have drawn it up on the stones and picked the fishes over, putting the good ones into baskets to carry to the town, and throwing the bad ones away. The Lord made this a picture of what happens when people come into the other world. Then the good and bad are separated. You know that the angels are there to help us and that everything is done most kindly. But the inner feelings and thoughts of all hearts are known. Those who have not the spirit of heaven in them turn away to evil. This is called the furnace of fire.

In the end of the chapter we read of the Lord's going again into His own country. It means the town which had been His home for many years, until He came to live at Capernaum. You would think that the people who had known Him so long would have loved Him most of all. They had seen Him working as a carpenter, and had thought of Him as a neighbor, but they did not feel His Divine kindness and goodness. They did not see or know the hidden work which He was doing for them all. He came back to Nazareth, but they did not believe in Him. You can read in the fourth chapter of Luke (16-31) about the Lord's going again to Nazareth and teaching in the synagogue,

and how they tried to cast Him down from the hill. Perhaps it was the same time of which we are now learning. (E. 815)

1. What scene especially comes to your mind when you think of the Lord teaching in parables? How many of the parables by the seaside can you remember?
2. Can there be a treasure so hidden that no one can see it with his eyes, nor touch it with his hands? What hidden treasure can there be so precious that it would be worth giving up everything else to get it?
3. Where else in the Bible are pearls mentioned?
4. When is the net for each one of us drawn to the shore? What will the angels do then to help us?
5. What is meant in verse 54 by the Lord's "own country"? How long had He lived there? What had the people seen Him doing? What work was He doing which they did not see?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

These parables of the kingdom of heaven are related to one another and tell of successively deeper experiences. In verse 33 we have the parable of the leaven, which means temptation, and the coming by temptation into deeper things of heavenly life. After that it speaks of their going into the house, which also suggests coming into deeper things with the Lord. Then the Lord explained the parable of the wheat and tares, which means that experiences which at first are taken in a simple external way, may now be entered into more deeply. Then comes the parable of the hidden treasure, for the Lord is now telling of deep, interior things. The last parable, of the net, is much like that of the wheat and tares, but coming later in the series, it represents a deeper searching of the character.

Fixed, sure facts are represented by the stones, and holy facts of heavenly life by the precious gems. The knowledge of the Lord and His protecting power is one of the most precious kinds of knowledge, and the pearl is ranked among the gems. Yet the pearl is not like the other stones, but is a product of life and of hard experience. It seems to say that this precious knowledge of the Lord is not gained in books, not by reasoning, but from experience, by trusting in the Lord in times of trouble. (R. 727, 916)

The drawing of the net to the shore represents the coming to the other world. The sea represents the plane of natural, worldly interests. Death lifts us above this into a spiritual state. Then the inner character is known, as it cannot be known here, and good and evil people can be separated; also the good and evil in everyone is clearly seen, and if real good is there the bad is cast away. The end of the world or of the age means for each one when he leaves the natural world at death. There have also been ages in the world's history and a special judgment in the other world as each age came to its close. The net was full when drawn to the shore. Each one is called to the other world when his natural experience is full, when he has received all the help that this world

can give. As in the parable of the tares, the furnace of fire is the burning of evil passions, and the gnashing of teeth, the conflict and unrest of untrue thoughts. (E. 513; J. 70)

Things new and old. We need to take the Commandments and the other teachings of the Lord in a simple, literal way, to guide our daily life. It is useful also to see in them deeper heavenly meaning. The literal lessons are meant by the "old" things, and the deeper lessons by the "new."

A carpenter builds homes for people to live in. Was the Lord doing this in a deeper sense than the people of Nazareth knew? Compare John 14:2. Why did He not do mighty works and compel the people to believe?

## Lesson 20

### Matthew 14: 1-21: The Multitude

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

We learned some time ago (Matthew 10) how the Lord sent the twelve disciples out to teach, and heal the sick. They came back to Him again at Capernaum and told Him all that they had done. "And He said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while; for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." (Mark 6:31) He went with them by boat, and they seem to have crossed the Sea of Galilee to the sunny pastures which rise gently from the shore at the northeast corner of the lake.

As they sailed they were not far from land. The people saw them starting and hastened on foot along the shore; others joined, the company from the little towns which they passed. So when the boat with the Lord and the disciples touched the beach, a great multitude were there before them. The Lord pitied them; they seemed to Him like sheep not having a shepherd. He went among them and healed those that were sick, and leading them up on the grassy slopes above the sea He sat down and taught them. It is called a "desert place" to which they went, but this does not mean that it was barren; it was a quiet place away from the towns. There was much grass there; it was springtime and the pastures were bright with flowers.

The day was nearly passed, and the people were hungry. The disciples begged the Lord to send the people away that they might go into the villages and towns and lodge and buy food. But the Lord said, "They need not depart; give ye them to eat." "How many loaves have ye? Go and see." They found five barley loaves and two small fishes. The loaves were thin round cakes of barley bread. Barley is a coarser grain than wheat, and is often used as food for animals. The fishes were little dried ones to be eaten with the bread.

The Lord told the disciples to make the people sit down upon the grass; there were five thousand men besides women and children. They sat down in companies by hundreds and by fifties, and in their bright dresses they looked like flower-beds on the green sunny hillside. Then the Lord blessed the bread and fishes and gave to the disciples, and they gave to the multitudes. They kept coming back for more, and still there was enough. They all were satisfied, and they filled with

pieces that were left twelve baskets, wicker baskets such as they used on a journey to carry provisions in.

You can imagine the wonder of the people as the disciples kept going back for more, and the Lord kept giving bread and fishes. And if we stop to think, we must always wonder when we see how the Lord gives food for everybody. Usually He gives it by sending rain and sunshine and making the grain grow in the fields and fruit upon the trees. That day He gave it directly from His hand. I hardly know which is the more wonderful. We must remember that it is the Lord who gives us food and thank Him for it.

Let me read the story in Matthew 14:13-21. The same story is also told in each of the other Gospels.

### **Junior**

In the first verse of our chapter we find the name of Herod. Who was he? Not the old King Herod who was king in Jerusalem when the Lord was born. He had died when the Lord was a child. This was a son of the old Herod. He was ruler of Galilee and of the region east of Jordan. (Luke 3:1) The Lord once spoke of this Herod in a way that shows his character. (Luke 13:32) Herod built Tiberias by the Sea of Galilee, but lived also in the fortress Machaerus, east of the Dead Sea. He heard John's preaching, and at first, it is said, heard him gladly; but when his own sins were rebuked he shut up John in prison. We have read of John's imprisonment in Matthew 11:2.

Herodias, the brother's wife whom Herod had married, hated John and tried to cause his death. At last she succeeded, and on Herod's birthday John was beheaded in the prison. It is a sad story.

Now follows a beautiful story in the same chapter, the feeding of the multitude. This is told in each of the four Gospels. Let someone of the class find it in each Gospel, and read along together. (Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14) You will have your map of the Sea of Galilee before you. The Bethsaida mentioned in Luke seems to be the city called Bethsaida Julias on the east of the Jordan near its entrance into the Sea of Galilee. Read what I have said to the little children about the character of the place, the hillside sloping gently from the sea, and rich pasture country with green grass and bright flowers. As you read in the four Gospels you learn many particulars of the story.

There was another miracle of feeding the multitude much like this one. You will want to keep the two in mind and not confuse them. The other is described in Matthew 15. It also occurred east of the Sea of Galilee, but probably farther to the south. You will distinguish the two miracles especially by the different numbers of the multitude, of the loaves, and of the baskets of fragments. Notice in Matthew 16:9, 10, how the Lord compares the numbers in the two miracles.

You will know that the power by which the Lord made food for the multitude that day is the same power by which He makes food for us all. In the miracle the work was done so immediately from the Lord's hand that we all must recognize it to be His power. He wishes us to learn this lesson from the miracle, and to acknowledge it as His power which provides all things needful for our life.

You will see also that this miracle, like all the Lord's miracles, was a picture of spiritual work which He was doing and is always doing. The feeding of their bodies pictured the feeding of

people's minds with good affections and true thoughts which make them spiritually strong. He had been teaching the people through the day, feeding their souls. It was a picture and a continuation of what He had been doing when, toward evening, He fed their bodies also.

1. Who imprisoned John the Baptist, and caused his death? Had John done wrong? What kind of man was he? What kind of man was Herod?
2. Show me on the map the land of Gennesaret, and the pasture country to which the Lord went with the disciples. How was it that people were there to meet them when they came to land? How many people?
3. What food could the disciples bring to the Lord? What was done by His blessing? What was left?
4. Does the Lord do any wonderful work like this nowadays?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Senior

We have thought of John the Baptist as standing for the literal truth of the Lord's Word, especially for the commandments which forbid evil and require a good life. What seems to you to be represented by Herod, who caused John's imprisonment and death? A good king represents truth in the mind, keeping the life in order and guiding it wisely, but an evil king represents the opposite of truth - deceit and falsity. The Lord called this Herod a "fox" (Luke 13:32), and a fox stands for falsity seeking to justify an evil life. You can see that such falsity is directly opposed to the plain truth of the Lord's Word; it may make some show of friendliness for appearance's sake, but in reality it is utterly opposed.

It was the wicked wife, Herodias, who urged Herod on to do violence to John the Baptist. She stands for the evil life which the falsity seeks to justify. It was in particular the dancing of Salome, the daughter of Herodias, which charmed Herod and led to the beheading of John. She represents the abandonment to evil pleasure which leads one to discard even the appearance of regard for truth and to reject utterly the Lord's teaching of right and wrong. Notice that the death of John occurred on Herod's birthday. As the falsity which is allied with evil strengthens itself and takes new life, the Lord's truth perishes in the heart. See "Matthew's Gospel," J. Worcester, pages 81, 82.

Besides the physical benefit of the Lord's miracles they all represented corresponding spiritual works which the Lord was doing and is now doing. Can you show what spiritual work is represented in this miracle? Do we need spiritual food? Suppose we had plenty of natural food, would that make our spirits grow strong? They need their food, interesting subjects of thought and good things to love - knowledge of what is true and of what is good. Read of such food in Isaiah 55:1, 2; Amos, 8:11; Matthew 16:6, 12. These two elements of food are represented by the bread and the fishes. The bread which strengtheneth man's heart is the knowledge of what is good. The fishes, associated with the water and the sea, are the knowledge of what is true. (A. 680; E. 750)

Think a little further about these types of spiritual food. There are rich, luscious fruits which represent rich satisfaction to be found in certain forms of goodness and usefulness. The little grains growing together in great numbers producing hard, dry fruits, represent the satisfaction to be found in the faithful doing of little daily duties. There are nobler and less noble grains. Wheat is the noblest grain, and represents the goodness of duties done in the highest motive of obligation to the Lord. Barley is a coarser grain and represents the duties done in a motive of neighborly love. The Lord fed the people with barley loaves, suggesting that the knowledge of good life which they were able to receive was of a simple, external kind.

The deeper thought suggested by the barley loaves is confirmed by the number of the loaves, five. Ten suggests two handfuls, and means fullness and abundance. Five, the number of fingers on one hand, means something of completeness, but also what is few and little. Five barley loaves represent knowledge of goodness of a very simple kind, little and external. The same thought is involved in the number of the multitude who were fed, five thousand men. The twelve baskets of fragments you will see, represents the great abundance of the Lord's provision for our spiritual life. If you compare the numbers in this miracle with those in the other miracle of feeding the multitude, you see their significance more clearly. The numbers of the second miracle are not in the literal sense all of them larger than the numbers of the first miracle, but in the spiritual sense they are expressive of deeper, fuller spiritual states. The seven loaves, the four thousand and the seven, baskets full of fragments all represent what is spiritually deep and full. (E. 430, 548; A. 5291)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### **Leading Thought: The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes**

Did you ever examine a nut and see how beautifully the shell outside fits the kernel inside? The two are quite distinct, are they not? Yet the one fits the other closely. The Lord makes the shell to grow from the kernel and to protect the kernel and also to further the growth of the kernel. For, although the shell cannot be created without the kernel, yet the kernel would not develop aright without the shell.

Everything in Nature has a shell, or a sheath, or a covering, that fits it snugly and promotes its growth and protects it. The tree has bark; the bird has feathers; the animal has fur. The muscle has a membrane; the ear of Indian-corn has a husk; the fruit has skin; the seed has a covering, etc., etc. Everywhere, if you look for it, you will find a kernel or an inside, and a shell or an outside.

And more, everything in Nature, both the outside and the inside, is itself a shell. For everything in Nature is natural, or outside; and its kernel, or inside, is something spiritual, which is in the spiritual world; for the natural world outside snugly fits the spiritual world inside and protects it. And every particular natural thing is said to "correspond" to the particular spiritual thing that is inside of it.

We are having a very beautiful lesson of this law of correspondence in this chapter.

A great many people had followed the Lord into the desert, for they felt that they needed Him; they wished to be cured of their wickedness and their sicknesses. They wished to have Him teach them and heal them. And because He loves all men, He did to them as they wished.

Although the Evangelist Matthew does not mention in this story that the Lord taught them, stating only that "He saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion toward them, and He healed their sick" - yet the Evangelist Mark tells that "He began to teach them many things," and Luke writes that "He spake unto them of the kingdom of God."

By teaching them and talking to them of the kingdom of God, the Lord was doing something for their inner being; He was feeding their souls. He was giving them things true and good, which cannot be seen with the eyes of the body and felt with the hands of the body, and which are therefore not material or of the outside, but spiritual and heavenly and of the inside. They nourish the soul and build it up. You know that the Lord taught about two kinds of bread, when He said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4)

There is inside bread for the inside man or the soul, and outside bread for the outside man or the body. The words that the Lord speaks, or the truths which He teaches, are of the soul, and the material bread is for the body. And as the body corresponds to the soul, so the material or outside food corresponds to the inside food or the good and truth from the Lord. And here is a secret or an "arcانum," which the Lord has given to us of the New Church. Just as the soul is in the body, so the spiritual food is in the natural food. It is the kernel of which the natural food is the shell.

Goodness which the Lord gives is inside the bread, and knowledge of truth which He gives is inside the fishes. There could be no bread in the world if there were not goodness from the Lord, for through this the Lord creates the bread. There could be no fishes in the sea if there were not truth from God, for He creates the fishes through this. There are many kinds of bread, and there are many kinds of goodness. There are many kinds of fish, and there are many kinds of knowledges of truth.

It was because the Lord had been feeding the hungry souls of men in the desert with His good and true teachings, that He then fed their bodies with the food which corresponded to these teachings. The goods and truths of His teachings were in the spiritual world and were introduced into the loaves and fishes that were in the Lord's natural hands in the natural world, and there they were multiplied by influx from heaven.

I am sure that you will be interested in reading the explanation of this miracle given by the Lord through Emanuel Swedenborg, in E. 617:

"This miracle was performed because the Lord had before taught His disciples, and because they received His doctrine and made it their own; this was what they ate spiritually, therefore natural eating followed; that is to say, it flowed in with them from heaven as the manna did among the children of Israel, without their knowing it. For when the Lord wills it, then spiritual food, which is also real food, but only for spirits and angels, is turned into natural food, as into the daily manna."

It is important for you to notice what the Lord did before He broke the bread. All four gospels tell us that He first "looked up to heaven and blessed," or that He "gave thanks" before He broke the bread.

To look up to heaven means to love and think of what is heavenly more than of all else.

To bless means to give of His heavenly riches to men; indeed, to give them of His Divine, whereby He comes into very close touch, indeed, into "conjunction" with His disciples. In our story He came into conjunction with His disciples and the people by giving them the goods and truths represented by the loaves and fishes.

His breaking the bread means almost the same thing. It was customary in the Ancient Church, when a man had guests, that he would break the bread and so share it with them, because in this way he showed that he shared what was his own with them, and that he loved them.

For the same reason our dear Lord, Jesus Christ, blessed and broke the food which He gave to the multitudes. He thereby showed that He loved them and gave to them from what was His very own. And because they also were to love one another, therefore He gave the food first to the disciples and directed them to give it to the people.

Two or three years later, when He was about to leave the world, and instituted the sacrament of the Holy Supper, He likewise took bread and blessed and broke it and gave to them.

The loaves were five in number and the fishes two, because these numbers indicate what is little and barely enough. Something, even though a very little, was needed to make a start of the miracle. So something good and true - even if it is only a little - is needed in our minds before the Lord can multiply it and make it much.

The twelve baskets that were taken up after the meal signify what is full; namely, that the people had been fully instructed and fully blessed.

## **Lesson 21**

### **Matthew 14: 22-26: Walking on the Sea**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

You remember the day on the grassy slopes above the Sea of Galilee, when the Lord fed the multitude with loaves and fishes - five barley loaves and two small fishes. We thought how they must have wondered when they saw the disciples going back and back again to the Lord, and still bringing more till all the people were fed, and when they saw the disciples gather up twelve baskets full of pieces. The multitude believed that the Lord must be the king who had been promised and whom they were all expecting; they thought that He would lead their armies and make them the greatest nation in the world. These thoughts were in the minds of the people, and it says that Jesus perceived that they would come by force and make Him a king. (John 6:15) The Lord was a King, and the whole world is His kingdom, but He was not such a king as the people

wanted and hoped that He would be. He sent them away, first the disciples in the boat to go back to Capernaum; then all the people to go back to their homes; then He went alone into a mountain to pray.

So the night came on and it was dark. The wind was blowing on the sea and the disciples were rowing hard against it. They were about half way across, and it was the beginning of the fourth watch, which means after three o'clock, the very early dawn. They looked and saw One coming toward them walking on the sea. At first they were afraid, but when He spoke they knew that it was the Lord. We must read the story and how Peter tried to walk on the water to the Lord, and was beginning to sink when the Lord stretched out His hand and caught him; and how when the Lord came into the ship the wind ceased and they were at the land where they were going. (John 6:21)

It was the Gennesaret shore near Capernaum. They had come home, and many people in that country knew the Lord. When they heard that He was there they sent into the country all about and brought the sick people to Him; many only touched the hem of His garment and were made whole. Listen to the story. (Matthew 14:22-36)

### **Junior**

When we study our lesson today, let one of the class find the story in Matthew 14:22-36, one in Mark 6:45-56, and one in John 6:15-21, and see what particulars each Gospel adds to the story.

After the miracle of the loaves and fishes the disciples wished to make the Lord a king. All the Jewish people in those days were expecting a king; they called him the Messiah; there were many prophecies about him; how glorious he would be, and how strong his kingdom would be. How did the Jews understand these prophecies? What sort of a king were they expecting? At that time they were under the Roman power. They expected especially that the Messiah would be a king who would throw off this power and make them great.

The Lord was the Messiah, the promised King. Remember the angel's words to Mary: "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1:32, 33) And remember the Lord's own words to Pilate: "Thou sayest that I am a king" (John 18:36, 37); but He also added, "My kingdom is not of this world." The Lord was a different kind of king from what the people expected; His power and glory were different from what they wanted.

When they came after the miracle of the loaves and fishes to make Him a king, He sent them all away, the disciples and the multitude. He went alone into the mountain to pray. We can imagine in part the purpose of His prayer. In one of the Lord's temptations in the wilderness the devil showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. It must have been one purpose of His prayer on this night in the mountain, to meet this temptation and to put away all thoughts of worldly power and greatness. Was it not a sort of picture of the victory in Himself which He gained in this night of prayer, when presently He came to the disciples walking on the sea, all disquiet and worldly thoughts under His feet? And every victory in Himself gave the Lord power to overcome the same evil things in the disciples and in all people. And was it not an expression of this power when He calmed the storm for them? Do you remember another miracle of calming the sea? Can you tell me about it?

Besides this deeper lesson which we see in this miracle, the promise of the Lord's help to overcome disquiet, worldly thoughts and feelings, it is also a beautiful reminder of the Lord's power in nature. Things in the world around us happening all the time become so common that we forget to stop and think what power is doing all these things. Science learns something of the processes by which plants grow, by which storms gather and are dispersed, and a thousand other things take place, and we become so much interested in these processes that we almost forget that they do not take place of themselves, but that these are simply ways in which the Lord's power is working in the world around us. The Lord's power brings the sunrise so regularly and with such a gift of new life each day; it brings the spring, awakening the world from the sleep of winter; His power is in the clearing of the storm when the wild winds and waves are still and the peaceful sunshine returns. Very early in the Scriptures we are taught to find a lesson of the Lord's power in the clearing of the storm and to think of the beautiful rainbow as a token of His remembrance. (Genesis 9:12-17.)

The last verses of the chapter tell of the coming home to the Gennesaret shore. We read in an earlier lesson (Matthew 9) of another time when the Lord and the disciples came by boat to Capernaum from the further shore, and how the people were waiting to ask His help. It was the same at this time that we read of in our lesson. It says that they besought Him that the sick might only touch the hem of His garment; and as many as touched were made perfectly whole. Do you remember one miracle which we have learned of, in which one was healed who touched His garment's hem?

1. What does the word "constrain" mean?
2. "Unto the other side." Of what? To which side did they come?
3. How did the Lord come to the disciples? When did He come? How did He help them? What did Peter say and do?
4. What happened after the feeding of the multitude, that shows a reason for the Lord's prayer in the mountain? What happened afterward that shows the result of the prayer?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

We must think more carefully of the spiritual meaning of this walking on the sea and calming the storm. What does the sea represent? Remember the calling of the disciples and the promise that they should become fishers of men. They should lift men up from a natural, worldly state of life to a spiritual state. They should teach how to make natural things of service to spiritual life. The sea, contrasted with the upper air and sunshine, is like the lower atmosphere of natural, worldly thought. And the storm on the sea? It represents a state of temptation when worldly thoughts and ambitions are aroused and threaten to swallow us up from the light of heaven. And what are the winds which raise the waves upon the sea? They represent the unseen influences from hell which arouse the evil thoughts in us.

Had there been any such excitement of worldly thoughts and feelings at the time which we read of in this lesson? What had just taken place on the eastern shore? Thoughts of worldly power and

greatness had been awakened in the disciples' minds which they could not quiet for themselves; their helplessness is pictured in their toiling against the storm. The Lord in His prayer on the mountain overcame these temptations of the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, putting all thoughts of worldly greatness under His feet, and gaining the power to quiet the disturbance in the minds of the disciples. It was an expression of His victory over worldly things and of His power to calm the storms of worldliness for others when He came to the disciples walking on the sea and stilled the storm for them. "Be of good cheer," He said at another time; "I have overcome the world." (E. 419, 514; T. 123)

It was night when the disciples were toiling on the sea and the Lord was praying in the mountain. What does this, night tell us in regard to the spiritual state? Our minds are dark and it is spiritually night when we are in states of excitement and temptation; we do not see clearly what is right; the Lord seems far away from us. When we do awaken to a sense of the Lord's nearness and receive His help, the darkness passes by and our minds grow bright. Notice in our story how the darkness is associated with the Lord's absence from the disciples: "It was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them"; and that His coming was with the dawn. (Psalm 30:5; A. 6000, 10134)

The incident of Peter's walking on the water contains much that is interesting and valuable. The Lord bade Peter to come, but when he saw the wind boisterous he was afraid, and began to sink, and as the Lord caught him His words were, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" The state of mind represented by Peter in this passage is evidently one which has some knowledge and confidence in the Lord, but not enough to make it strong in putting worldly things in their right place. For example, all the disciples and the multitude had faith in the Lord as the Messiah; but as the story shows, that faith was not enough to calm the excitement of worldly thoughts. They must gain a higher conception of the Lord and His power. That truer faith is expressed in the exclamation of the disciples when they received the Lord into the ship and the storm ceased; "Of a truth Thou art the Son of God." The thought of a worldly king is associated with the storm. This acknowledgment of the Divine, the Heavenly King, is associated with the ceasing of the storm and the coming of the ship to the land whither they went. (E. 815)

One thought more about this coming to the land. We have thought of the farther shore of the sea outside the strict limits of the Holy Land as representing natural, external states. The other shore which is strictly of the Holy Land represents interior and spiritual states. It was on that farther shore and on the sea that the thoughts about the worldly kingdom were aroused. The return of the disciples to Capernaum and the familiar shore was also a return to a more spiritual state of interest and helpfulness in the Lord's ministry to men. In this thought it is significant that the return to the Gennesaret shore on this occasion and on the earlier occasion mentioned in Matthew 9 was followed by an abundance of works of healing. (E. 440; A. 4117)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### **Leading Thought: Seas**

Today's story is about the sea or the lake of Gennesaret. The disciples had sailed ahead of the Lord toward the country of Gennesaret, which is on the western shore of the lake. The Lord remained behind to send away the multitude whom He had fed with loaves and fishes, and then

to pray. Then He walked on the sea to overtake the disciples. When Peter saw and heard Who was coming, he started to meet Him on the water, but began to sink because he had not confidence.

We often read about Lake Gennesaret. It was on this lake that the disciples had their boats, and where they fished, both before and after they were called by the Lord. It was here, in a boat belonging to Simon Peter, that the Lord sat and taught the multitudes that had gathered on the shore. It was on this lake that the Lord and His disciples sailed to the eastern shore, to the country of the Gergesenes, when He fell asleep, in the stern of the boat, and a storm came up, and the disciples, afraid of becoming shipwrecked, and drowning, awoke the Lord, and He calmed the sea.

In the Old Testament we often read of seas and the fishes in them. Some of the seas spoken of by the prophets in the Old Testament, and by John in the Revelation, were in the spiritual world.

We must learn about the seas in the spiritual world, for then we shall be better able to understand why we are told so much about seas in the holy Word.

Of course, children, you know that the spiritual world, where angels and spirits are, looks just like the natural world where men are; that is to say, there are mountains, hills, lands and seas there. And these are inhabited. The angels who are in the third or inmost heaven live upon mountains; those who are in the second or middle heaven live upon hills; and those who are in the first or lowest heaven live upon the earth and are under the earth, and in the seas. The air on the mountains is the purest and most refined; the air on the hills is less pure and refined, and the air on and under the earth, least pure. The seas look like seas to those who are above them. In reality it is the heavy watery atmosphere in those parts of the spiritual world, that makes them look like seas; but the water looks very pure and light, with beautiful, gently splashing waves. There are other seas the waters of which are heavy and gross and dark, with heavy billows and a destructive surf. These belong to hell, they being evil-disposed people that live there. These are the seas that become tumultuous and stormy and threaten to destroy ships and people.

The reason why the angels of the lowest heaven live in seas, or in very watery atmosphere, is that, although they are good, they are natural-minded, rather than spiritual-minded. They are such people as, in the world, when they had the chance to learn what the internal sense of the Word teaches, did not understand it, but cared only for such truths as are taught by the literal sense of the Word. The literal sense teaches us very important truths, truths without which no one can go to heaven, but they do not go into particulars. It is just as if in geography we cared to learn only that there are several continents, and these divided into countries with cities big and little, with mountains and plains and rivers, and the like, and as if we were satisfied with that, and did not care to learn about what the people are like, what they raise out of the ground, what grows on the mountains, what is in the mines, what they manufacture, what they say and think, and many, many other details.

So the literal sense of the Word teaches about the Lord God, that He is one, that He created the world, that He came into the world and taught and healed men and performed miracles, and instructed them about the kingdom of God, and the law of love, and about His taking them into heaven to Himself, when they die. But the internal sense tells us many things about the Lord Himself; how He created the world, and why; how He came into the world; what He thought and did when a child, and when growing up, and when a man; what goes on in the minds of men, and

how the Lord leads them to think and love during their whole life; what heaven really is like; what the angels do; and many other particulars.

So the literal sense teaches us "general truths." People who like only general truths are called "natural," or "sensual." But those who love the particular truths of the internal sense are called "spiritual" and "celestial."

Swedenborg tells us that there is an immense number of angels in the seas of the spiritual world, because so many are sensual. The watery atmosphere does not appear to them like water, but like the air which they breathed when they were in the natural world.

Such people, because they do not know the particulars about the Lord Jesus Christ and His birth in the world, and His great work of redeeming and saving men, and about the nature of heavenly life, and the work the angels do, are not clear in their religious views. They do not understand the truths of the Word clearly, but are somewhat in the dark.

They are just as we are on days when much water is in the air, and we are surrounded by mists and by fogs, and it gets so dark that we have to light our lamps. Then the trains run more slowly. Motorists and bicyclists are afraid to speed; and even people on foot are uncertain as to their way. People lose confidence. The engineer or motorman is not sure but that he may run into another train. But when people can see the road clearly, then they go ahead with great confidence.

That is the way it is with the angels of the higher heavens. Their atmosphere is so clear that they can see great distances, and so they go very quickly and safely from place to place, and attend to their work with confidence. But those in the lowest heaven, especially those in the seas, are apt to hesitate and waver. They are not quite sure of their ground. They lack confidence.

Now, the Lord walked on the sea to represent and show that He is present with all angels and men, even with those who are in the lower and the lowest heaven. To walk means to live. His walking on the sea shows that His life comes even to those who dwell in the seas in the spiritual world. But the lack of confidence, the dark and obscure and uncertain and wavering faith and belief of those who live there, is represented by Peter's walking on the sea just before daybreak, and beginning to sink; but being saved when the Lord took hold of him.

What a comforting lesson this is! No matter how much men may be in the dark concerning truth, if they will only go to the Lord and take hold of Him, that is, trust absolutely that He will give them the thoughts and affections and life needed, that He watches over them and cares for them, and saves them, then all is well. He is present everywhere and always. Let men pray to Him, have confidence in Him, and strive to do His will.

## **Lesson 22**

### **Matthew 15: The Gentile's Daughter**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

In our story today we follow the Lord away from the Sea of Galilee to the country by the Mediterranean Sea, near to the old cities of Tyre and Sidon. You can stand there on the highlands, with the grand snowy mountains above and behind you, and look down on the green plain bordering the sea. There where little points of land run out into the water were the old cities Tyre and Sidon, once so grand and beautiful, where the ships lay at anchor and unloaded their goods from many countries. The blue Mediterranean Sea stretches away in the sunshine to the far-off shores from which they came.

The Lord came to this country across the hills from the Sea of Galilee. The people living here were not Jews, but of a different race and religion. A woman of the country came to the Lord and followed Him crying out for help, for her daughter was "grievously vexed with a devil." We know what this means, for we remember the men on the further shore on the Sea of Galilee who were possessed by devils, who were so strong and fierce that no one could bind or tame them. At first the Lord gave no answer to the woman, and the disciples asked Him to send her away. Would the Lord send anyone away who wanted His help? Would He refuse to help the poor woman? We know that He would not send her away or refuse to help her. But He did not help her at once. He waited until she asked very earnestly and humbly. She was willing to say that she was like one of the hungry dogs that came about the table when the children had their food, to eat the crumbs that fell. "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." From that time her daughter was well. "When she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed." (Mark 7:30)

The Lord did not stay in the country of Tyre and Sidon; He came back across the hills and through the country east of Jordan, and came near from that side to the Sea of Galilee. As He sat there on a mountain slope above the lake the multitude came to Him with sick people of every kind and wondered ("were beyond measure astonished") when they saw them healed.

Does this great company of people about the Lord on the slopes above the Sea of Galilee make you think of another time that we have learned of on the hills not far from the same place by this same shore? The day when the Lord took the five loaves and two fishes and fed five thousand men besides women and children? And on this day, too, the Lord fed the multitude. They had been with Him three days and were far from home. This time, too, He commanded the people to sit down on the ground, and giving thanks He gave to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. This time there were seven loaves and a few little fishes. There were four thousand men besides women and children, and they gathered up seven large baskets of broken pieces that were left. After this the Lord sent the multitude away, and He came home with the disciples by boat to the shore by Magdala, which was near Capernaum.

We will read the story of these two miracles that the Lord did on this journey away from home, one in the country of Tyre and Sidon, and one on a mountainside beyond the Sea of Galilee. Read Matthew 15:21-39.

## Junior

The first verses of the chapter mention a custom of the Jews which seems to us so trifling that it is hard to realize how it could have been a matter of great religious importance with them, the washing of hands before eating. The washing of dishes and tables is also referred to in Mark 7:4. Washing had been commanded in the law of Moses, as the washing of the hands and feet of the priests at the laver in the tabernacle and temple court. (Leviticus 22:6; Exodus 30:17-21) But like the rules for keeping the Sabbath, the Jews had multiplied the rules of washing to a degree that seems too foolish to be true; when the washing should be done, how much water should be used, how the hands should be held, etc., etc. (See quite a full account of these rules in "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," Edersheim, Vol. II., pages 9-15.)

Can you see the meaning of the command in Exodus for the washing of the hands and feet by the priests? and of words like those in Psalm 24:4, or Isaiah 1:16, 17? The verses from Isaiah explain themselves. In connection with such verses you will think of John the Baptist's baptizing in the Jordan, and of the Lord's washing the disciples' feet at the table of the Last Supper. But in the customs of the Jews, how far they had strayed away from the real meaning of the Lord's commands about washing! In verses 10-20 of our chapter you can see how the Lord is bringing the disciples and us back to the real meaning of the washings, the searching out in the feelings and the thoughts of the things that are spiritually unclean and putting them away because they are wrong and forbidden by the Commandments.

Verses 2-9 speak of another tradition of the Jews which was worse than foolish, for it was made an excuse for breaking one of the Ten Commandments. Which Commandment, you see in verse 4. The tradition excused breaking the command, for it allowed a child, if his parents asked him for something, to say, "I give to the Lord the thing you ask for," and then he need not give it to his father or mother. You can see that if the Lord commands us to honor our father and mother we can serve Him by serving them; and that if we disobey and dishonor them, we dishonor Him at the same time. Perhaps you will spend most of your time today thinking about this first part of the chapter, and how we can truly keep the commands about honoring our parents and about washing.

If you have time to read the rest of the chapter, show me first where Tyre and Sidon stood. What was this country of Tyre and Sidon called? Remember how these cities had been famous in the old days for their sailors and commerce. You read of this in Ezekiel 27, and you recall the help of Hiram, king of Tyre, to Solomon in building the temple.

In the days of its glory Tyre stood partly on the shore and partly on a rocky island which sheltered the anchorage. But when Alexander the Great took Tyre before the Gospel days, after destroying the city on the shore he used the materials to build a causeway to the island and took that also. Now the sands have drifted in and the modern town of Tyre stands on a little prominence of the shore, broken columns lying partly under water reminding us of greatness gone by. Read what I have said to the little children about this region and the Lord's visit to it. You will add to the thought suggested to them one other reason for the Lord's delay in answering the woman's

appeal for help; that it was important before she received help that she should know and confess that the help was not from the idols of her country, but from the true God who was known in Israel.

The story of the second miracle of feeding the multitude you will understand from our study of the other miracle so much like it. Notice the different numbers in the two miracles; it is a good way of distinguishing them. (Matthew 16:9, 10)

1. What kind of washing of hands did the Pharisees require? What kind does the Lord require?
2. Can any outside circumstances keep a man from heaven? What alone can keep him from it?
3. What do we know about Tyre? Did the people of Tyre and Sidon worship the Lord or idols? (1 Kings 16:31) What miracle did the Lord do in that country? Why did He seem to delay to do it?
4. How many times did the Lord feed the multitude? How were the miracles alike? How do you distinguish them?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Some member of the class should make a study for us of the subject of washings, and show us what they represented in the Jewish law, and what washing the Lord requires of Christian disciples. What is this spiritual washing? What is the water by which it is done? What especially is meant by washing the hands and feet? (A. 3147; T. 670-673)

What the Lord says about the powerlessness of natural food to defile the soul applies also to the impressions and thoughts which come to our mind through the senses from the world. They are like food received into the stomach, but are not yet a part of ourselves until we assimilate them by loving them and wishing to do them. Before we do this we should examine them and reject the things that are not good. .(E. 580, 622)

The Lord's visit to the country of Tyre and Sidon and the miracle done there for the Gentile woman, remind us of His love for Gentile people, and of His pleasure in blessing every simple heart that was open to receive His blessing. Remember the visit of Elijah to this Gentile land and the miracle done there by him, which the Lord also accepted as representative of His ministry. (Luke 4:24-26) In studying this story consider that Israel and the land of Israel represent the spiritual life, and the neighboring nations various natural faculties and states which are blessed by the Lord if they take their true place as subordinate to the spiritual life. This thought explains the Lord's saying that He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and His delay in answering the woman, until she humbly acknowledged her position to be like that of the dogs fed from the children's table. The children stand for developments of spiritual life and the dogs for natural affections, simple and ignorant but earnest. (A. 9231; E. 455)

Can we see what natural faculty in particular is represented by this land of Tyre and Sidon and the Phoenician people? They were seafaring people, the famous sailors and traders of the world. The sea represents the department of natural thought and knowledge. Trading by sea represents the gathering in of knowledge. The daughter of the Phoenician woman stands for this affection for natural learning. She was possessed by a devil, for this affection for learning, without the Lord's help, comes under the power of evil. It must take its true position as the humble servant of spiritual life, and must look with devout acknowledgment to the Lord, willing to be taught and led by Him. Then it is restored to health and strength. (A. 2967, 9231)

Like the former miracle of feeding the multitude, the one recorded in this chapter represents the feeding of our souls with spiritual food. The loaves represent the affection for what is good, and the fishes the understanding of what is good, received from the Lord. This miracle represents a deeper, more spiritual feeling of the soul than the other. This is shown by several differences between them. The people in the first miracle had continued with the Lord one day; this time three days. The five thousand and the five loaves represent little reception. The same thought is emphasized by their being spoken of as barley loaves in the first miracle. The four thousand in the second miracle represents a fuller reception, for the number suggests a character developed in both directions of truth and goodness. The seven loaves and the seven basketfuls of fragments represent a deeper, tenderer, holier quality than five and twelve. (R. 905-908; A. 9717; E. 257)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Gentile Woman

The church of the Lord extends all over the world. Wherever there are people who have any religion, and live a good life because they know that there is a God, and wish to do what is right in His sight, there is His church, be they Christians, Mohammedans, Buddhists, Hindus, or gross idolaters. But among all these there are some who have the true religion, because they have the Word and understand it and live according to the true understanding of it. These, although they also may live scattered in many lands, together constitute what is called "the church specific." All others are called "Gentiles" or "heathen," and constitute, with "the church specific," "the church universal." Those who are in the church specific, are generally meant when "the church" is spoken of.

In ancient times those who were outside of the church were called "dogs," and the Lord when in the world used this language when speaking of them, as in our today's lesson.

The Lord was going into a country outside of the country of the Jewish Church, namely to Tyre and Sidon, so He went toward a land where lived people who were not of the church. One of them, a woman who was descended from the ancient Canaanites, a Gentile, cried to Him, telling of her poor daughter who was possessed of a demon. The Lord did not answer her, and when His disciples spoke to Him about her, He told them that He had come to teach those who were of the church. They needed Him more than did the people outside of the church.

If you will read the first part of the chapter, you will see that in the Jewish Church, the teachers and leaders had changed the Word of the Lord. They explained it to mean what it did not mean. They had "traditions" - explanations handed down from one generation to another, which misled

people, and taught what was not true instead of what was true. It was therefore of the greatest importance that the Lord should help the people in the church; that He should teach them how to understand the Word aright. For the church where the Word is, is to the church universal, or to Gentiles, like the heart and lungs to the rest of the body. If the heart is diseased, the physician must first cure it, then it is easy to cure the rest of the body. So the Lord came to the heart and lungs of the church universal of that time. He came to the Jewish Church. "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." By restoring His church among His disciples, whom He instructed in the Truth of the Word, He could then through this new church help the Gentile world.

But although the Lord had apparently paid no attention to the woman, and had told the disciples why He did not, yet she came and fell down before Him, and said piteously, "Lord, help me!"

Again the Lord told her that it would not do to cease teaching and curing the people of the church in order to teach and cure the people outside of the church. He called the people of the church "children," and those outside the church "dogs." "It is not meet to take the children's bread, to cast it to dogs." She understood this. She was willing to recognize that she was not any better than a dog, and said, "and yet dogs eat the fragments that fall from their master's table." She was sure that the Lord Jesus Christ, who was doing so much for His children, for "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," had enough and to spare, so that the "dogs" could also have something.

It was not that the Lord meant to be unkind to her. But by His actions He tried her faith, to see whether she really and truly believed in Him, and then when she believed so earnestly, He healed her daughter.

He spoke in the way He did also in order that all men may understand the difference between the Church and those out of the church. The children of the church must first be fed, but those who are out of the church must not be neglected.

We are taught in H. 319, and in other books of the Writings, that good heathen go to heaven, but their heaven is distinct from the heaven of those who have been of the church. The Lord wishes all men to be in His church, but when we are in His church, as in the New Church which He has established at His Second Coming, we must be careful that we are truly of His church, by eating the bread which He gives us, and not cast it to the dogs. As we learn and study, and live according to the Doctrines, then we are better able to help others who are not of the New Church, and may be able to teach and lead them in also.

## **Lesson 23**

### **Matthew 16: Peter's Answer**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Our story again takes us away from Capernaum and the Sea of Galilee, and this time to the country under Mount Hermon. You will like to go nearer to the mountain, for you have seen its

snowy range far away in the north from many hilltops in Galilee and from the lake. It is a charming region, a broad valley under the mountain lying open to the sun and watered by large springs and streams; flowers are plenty and thickets of shrubs and groves of trees - iris, oleander, roses white and red, and trailing clematis. You notice especially one great spring which comes from the side of a little hill lying out in the open valley. It is the spring of Dan where the town of that name once stood, often mentioned as the northern limit of the land. Another great spring is at the foot of the cliffs of Mount Hermon, at a place now called Baneas, and in the Gospel days Caesarea Philippi. The great springs about the Hermon range seem to be fed by the melting snows on the mountain, and these two springs are main sources of the Jordan river.

The Lord came with His disciples into this region of Caesarea Philippi, this sunny homelike country of springs and flowers and trees and fresh mountain air. While they were there the Lord asked the disciples questions about who He was: first who men said that He was, and then what they themselves would say to the same question. Different people were thinking and saying many different things about the Lord. Herod had said that He was John the Baptist risen from the dead. (Matthew 14:1, 2; Luke 9:7-9) Others said that He was one of the old prophets, Elijah perhaps, or Jeremiah, or some other prophet.

But when the Lord asked the disciples for their own answer Peter spoke for them, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Christ, or the Messiah as the Jews called Him, meant "The anointed One" whom they were all expecting. (John 1:41; 9:22) Peter's answer said as plainly as he could say, that the Lord was not a man like other men, not even a man like the prophets, but Divine. The Lord said, "Upon this rock I will build My church." He meant that of all the things that we learn in church and Sunday-school this is the most important. If we learn that the Lord is God, living with us in the world, and learn to know Him and to trust Him, we have a strength and protection that nothing can shake.

Still there would be trials for the Lord and for the disciples. The Lord began to tell them of these trials, but they could not understand, even Peter could not believe it. But it is true that everyone must have his trials and temptations, what the Lord calls His cross; they are his opportunity to give up what is selfish and wrong and to grow stronger. We need not fear these trials when we know that the Lord our Heavenly Father is living with us to help us and protect us. Listen while I read a part of the chapter. (Matthew 16:13-28)

## **Junior**

If you go into the great church of Saint Peter in Rome you can read in a circle on the frieze around the dome in huge letters of mosaic the sentence: TV . ES . PETRVS . ET . SVPER . HANC . PETRAM . AEDIFICABO . ECCLESIAM . MEAM . ET . TIBI . DABO . CLAVES . REGNI . COELORVM. It, is the Latin translation of the Lord's saying to Peter in verses 18 and 19 of our chapter.

We must learn about the circumstances under which the words were spoken and consider their meaning. In verse 13 we learn where the Lord and the disciples were; they were in the region of springs and trees and flowers under Mount Hermon. The modern name of the town is Baneas, in which you recognize the name of the heathen god Pan, the god of life, to whom the great spring at this place was dedicated by people long ago. In Gospel times the town was called Caesarea for the Roman emperor, and Philippi to distinguish it as the Caesarea of Philip's district. (Luke 3:1)

The visit to this region is remembered for a question which the Lord asked the disciples and the answer of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." In the Lord's reply to Peter He said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." The Lord Himself had given Simon the name Cephas, in Greek, or Peter, in Latin, which means "a stone." (John 1:42) And He added, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

Some persons have thought from this that Peter personally was to be the foundation of the church and was given power to let people into heaven and to shut them out of heaven; and they have claimed that he passed this power on to his successors, the Popes. This has been the belief of the Roman Catholic Church, and of those who put the words around the dome of Saint Peter's. But the Lord could not give such power to any man; and also see in verse 23 how the Lord spoke to Peter after something else that he had said: Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an offence unto Me." It was not Peter in either case that the Lord referred to, but in one case the truth and in the other case the falsity that Peter spoke. The truth of Peter's answer, the truth of the Lord's Divinity, was the foundation stone of the church, and not Peter, except as he stood for this truth.

The Lord was still speaking of this great truth when He said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." He was speaking of the eternal certainty of this truth, and of the strength which they would find who accepted it as the foundation of their character and looked to it for defense against every evil that assailed them. What the Lord said about binding and loosing on earth and in heaven also teaches that evils which are resisted in the Lord's strength in this world we are protected from forever; and that good things chosen and made a part of our life here remain ours and develop in the life of heaven. They are tremendous words that are written on the dome of Saint Peter's, expressing a tremendous truth if rightly understood, and a tremendous falsity if misunderstood.

Can you think why the Lord charged the disciples to tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ? (Verse 20.) Compare verse 9 in the next chapter. Was it because an announcement of the truth in that external way would have been by almost everyone misunderstood, and would have aroused hopes of an earthly king and an earthly kingdom which would have hindered and not helped the Lord's purpose?

In verses 21-23 the Lord foretold His own trials which were coming. Now that the disciples had learned and acknowledged the great truth of His Divinity they were able to hear of His trials and even His crucifixion without being discouraged and losing their faith in Him.

The Lord went on, after speaking of His own trials, to tell the disciples of a cross which they must bear, their own trials and temptations. If the Lord must meet such trials Himself, those who follow Him must meet them also. (John 15:18-20) In these very trials, when they were tempted to do wrong and turned to the Lord for help, they would learn the strength of faith in Him and the reality of His protection of which He had spoken in the famous words to Peter.

1. Where did the first things told in the chapter take place? How do you know? Where did the Lord ask the disciples who He was?
2. What had others said? What did Peter answer? What is the rock on which the Lord builds His church? What can give us strength to resist every temptation?

3. Did the Lord tell His disciples beforehand that He should rise from the dead? Why were they so sad and perplexed on Easter Day?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

In the first verses of the chapter the Lord makes the red of the evening and morning sky a picture of the spiritual state of men, in particular of the Jewish Church at that time. The Jews could not read the sign; they were not aware of their own spiritual condition. The evening represents a state of spiritual life which is obscure. The evening redness represents the affection of such a state, imperfect, perhaps, but so from ignorance. The morning represents a state more fully established and its quality more clearly known. The morning redness represents evil affection chosen and confirmed. The state of the Jews in their denial of the Lord was of the latter kind. (A. 22; E. 706)

Someone should make for us a little study of Peter and his meaning. The twelve disciples represented essential elements of the church and of character; among them Peter stood for a true faith in the Lord. For this reason the Lord gave him the name Cephas, or Peter, which means "a stone," because a stone is a type of fixed, sure truth. The truth for which Peter stood is especially the truth which He declares in this chapter, the truth of the Lord's Divinity. And the Lord speaks of this as a "rock" and a foundation of His church, and of its strength against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. Compare Matthew 21: 42-45.

Peter's other name was Simon, which like the old name Simeon is derived from the word for "hearing." When the name Simon is used the thought is not of hard, intellectual faith, but of loving faith and obedience. This tenderer thought is emphasized when to Simon is added the name Bar-jona, "son of Jona." The name Jona means "a dove." Where these names are applied to Peter there is great tenderness. Notice their use in the last chapter of John's Gospel (John 21:15-17): "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" In such a case the faith for which Peter stands is a faith that comes of love and is full of love. This is suggested by the Lord's words in our chapter, verse 17. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." The power to recognize the Lord's Divinity and to acknowledge Him had not come and never comes merely by an outward way, by the force of reasoning and argument: it comes from being touched at heart by a sense of the Lord's great goodness. Notice the very similar statement in John 6:44: "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him."

Perhaps you connect with this the charge in verse 20, that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ. The acknowledgment must come, if it was to come at all, by a deeper way. The outward proclamation of the fact of His Divinity to those who did not feel it in their hearts might do more harm than good. (A. Preface to Genesis 18 and 22; T. 379; E. 443; R. 798)

I have suggested in the junior department a reason why the warning of the trials coming to the Lord and of His death, and of trials coming to the disciples themselves, follows Peter's acknowledgment: namely, that they had strength now to hear of these trials, and strength to bear their own cross, which they had not before. It may always be that fuller, truer knowledge of the

Lord and His protecting power brings new and deeper temptations, for the reason that with this fuller knowledge one has the needed strength to meet temptation. You may see also another reason for the close connection of these warnings with Peter's confession. It was by His temptations and the continual laying down of all things of evil and finite inheritance, and the bringing down of Divine things in their place, that the Lord was glorified and was becoming wholly Divine. He accepted Peter's answer that He was Christ, but spoke at once of His coming suffering and death. It is almost as if the Lord had said, that the answer was true, but not completely true until these other trials had been met and He was fully glorified. (A. 2816; R. 639)

Our thought that the disciples stood for elements of the Christian Church and Christian character shows us one meaning of verse 28, namely, that the faith for which Peter stood, and principles for which other disciples stood, were being established which were to endure in the Lord's kingdom. Compare the saying to John in John 21:22, 23. A more limited and personal meaning of verse 28 is also suggested by comparison with verse 19. The elements of Christian character established in an individual in this world are not destroyed nor interrupted by death, but continue and increase in heaven. (R. 17)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### **Leading Thought: Peter's Confession**

Read the story very carefully, as it is one of the most important for you to know and remember. Notice especially what Peter said in answer to the Lord's question, who the disciples said that He was: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

You have learned that "the Christ" is the Greek word for the Hebrew "the Messiah," and that both mean "the Anointed One," which, again, means "the King," for kings were anointed with oil when they were crowned. Remember that when the angels announced the birth of the Lord to the shepherds in the field, they told them, "Unto you is born in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord." The Lord is King of kings. He rules in heaven and on earth. He rules by His Divine truth, which is the law that all must obey. And the oil with which He was anointed means the Divine love which is in the Divine truth.

What is meant by "the Son of the living God"?

The body which Peter and the rest of the disciples saw when they looked at Jesus was the clothing, or the Son, of the Soul that was in it, which Soul was the living God, and is called "the Father." When we look at a living person we see his body with his soul in it. When we look at a dead body, we no longer see the soul in it. A dead body looks very different from the living body. The soul is no longer in it. But when we look at a living body we see the soul in the body.

When Peter spoke to the Lord, the Christ, he was also speaking to the Father who dwelt in Him. He was speaking to "the Son" in whom was "the living God."

This is the reason why the disciples called Him "Lord" and also "God." This truth about the Lord Jesus Christ is the most important truth that we can learn. The acknowledgment of this truth is what makes the Christian church. When people do not worship the one God, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are not of the Christian church. This truth, and believing it from the heart, is like

a great, solid, firm rock upon which a church building is erected; and therefore the Lord said to Peter after he had made this confession, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Of course the Lord did not mean that Peter was the rock upon which the church was to be built. He meant that what Peter said was "the Rock." The Lord told Peter that the words which he had spoken, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," were not from Peter himself, but that they had been given or revealed to him from heaven. So that this truth, or this rock itself came from heaven, "My Father who is in heaven hath revealed this unto thee."

But as Peter had expressed this truth he came to represent it. He stood for the truth that he had expressed, and therefore the Lord called him a "rock" - not Peter as an individual person, but as a representative. He represented the "rock" or the truth. The name "Peter" is Greek, and comes from a Greek word "petra," meaning "rock."

It is very important to understand that the Lord spoke of Peter as a representative. Then you can understand further that, when the Lord said to Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," of course He did not mean that the man Peter would have the keys of heaven, but that what Peter represented, that is, the truth regarding the Lord Jesus Christ, has the power (meant by "keys") to open heaven. For, everyone who believes from the heart, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the God of heaven and earth, of course obeys His commandments, and in this manner heaven is opened to him by means of the truth which he has taken into his heart.

Do you know that there are very many people who do not understand this, but think that the Lord meant Peter himself, as a person, when He said that He would give him the keys? These people are called Roman Catholics. No doubt you have seen their fine churches and cathedrals. They believe that Peter was the first pope, that is, the first head of the church; and that when he died, his keys to open heaven were given to the next pope; and that when he died, they were given to the pope after him; and so on until the present pope has the keys, or the power to open or shut heaven. In other words, that only he whom the pope lets into heaven goes there, and he whom the pope keeps out of heaven cannot go there. But all this is a mistake, a falsity.

It is easier to understand that the Lord did not give Peter any keys, like those we use, made of brass, or iron, but that he meant spiritual power by keys. For as a key gives us the power to open a door, so there is a spiritual power which opens heaven. And just as the Lord did not mean keys by "keys," He did not mean Peter by "Peter." Peter means the truth about the Lord. When this is received into anyone's heart and life, it has the power to let him into heaven. But when it is not received or believed, then its power is such as to keep the person out of heaven.

If you ever see gilded keys in a Roman Catholic procession, or in Roman Catholic pictures, you may know that they are put there to symbolize the belief of the Roman Catholics, that their pope has the power to open or shut heaven, as he pleases - a belief which is mistaken and false.

Remember the truth, that Peter represented faith from charity, or belief from the heart in the Lord Jesus Christ as the God of heaven and earth, whose human nature is Divine.

## **Lesson 24**

### **Matthew 17: In the Mountain**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The Lord and the disciples were in the region of Caesarea Philippi, near the beginning of the Jordan, in the north, the region of great springs and trees and flowers and fine mountain air. We learned of a question that the Lord asked the disciples, and of Peter's answer. It was now a week later, and the Lord took three of the disciples and went with them into a high mountain apart. The three disciples were Peter, James, and John, the same three who were with Him when He raised the little daughter of Jairus. We think of some part of Mount Hermon, the mountain that rises grand and beautiful above the valley. It was perhaps toward evening, for they stayed all night in the mountain. (Luke 9:37) The green valley lay below with the shadows lengthening across it; the cliffs and snowy ridges of the mountain were round them.

The Lord was praying and the disciples were heavy with sleep. Then when they looked up they saw the Lord transfigured. He was changed, and so bright and glorious. His face did shine as the sun and His raiment was white as the light. Two men, heavenly men, Moses and Elijah, were talking with Him. The disciples felt that it was a very holy place and that it was good to be there. But the glory was more than they could bear, and a bright cloud overshadowed them. They heard a voice out of the cloud and they were afraid. But Jesus touched them and told them not to be afraid, and when they looked up they saw Jesus only with themselves. They were not to tell at once what they had seen; others were not ready to hear it; but they should remember it and be encouraged by it in hard times that were coming, and should encourage others then by telling them of the Lord's glory. Let me read so much of the story. (Matthew 17:1-13)

While the three disciples were with the Lord in the mountain something very different was happening at the foot of the mountain. A multitude was there. A man had brought to the disciples his boy who was possessed by a devil, for them to cure him. We have learned of others who were possessed by devils, which made them so fierce that they could not be bound or tamed. So this boy was sore vexed, and the devil often made him fall into the fire and into the water. But the disciples could not cure the boy, and when the Lord came down from the mountain the father of the boy came to Him, kneeling and asking His help. Then the Lord rebuked the devil and cured the child. He told the disciples that they could not do it because of their unbelief, and He said, too, "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." Let us read this and another little story that comes at the end of the chapter. (Matthew 17:14-27)

The tax in this last story was the tax of a half-shekel which the men of Israel were to pay each year for the temple at Jerusalem, which was the temple for all the land. The half-shekel was a silver coin about the size of a quarter-dollar. The coin which Peter found in the fish's mouth was worth two half-shekels and was enough to pay the tax for both the Lord and Peter. This story helps us to remember how the Lord knows all things about every little bird and flower and creature in the world, and takes care of every one and makes each one useful.

## **Junior**

In Raphael's famous painting of the Transfiguration there are two scenes brought together in one picture, one on the mountain and the other at the mountain's foot. We find both described in our chapter. (Matthew 17) As you read the chapter it will be interesting to follow also the accounts in Mark 9 and Luke 9, which tell some other particulars. "After six days." What was it that happened a week before? Where were the Lord and the disciples? And what mountain naturally comes to mind as we read of His taking them up into a high mountain apart? What does "transfigured" mean? How could the disciples who were living in this world, see Moses and Elijah who were in heaven? It must have been by the opening of their spiritual sight, for it is only in that way that men in this world can see the angels. And the Lord's glory which they saw at the same time was something of the glory which angels in heaven see about the Lord; for the shining of the Lord's love and wisdom are the sun of heaven. Read Isaiah 60:19, 20, and Revelation 21:23.

Moses and Elijah were talking with the Lord, and in Luke it says that they "spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." Moses and Elijah stand for the Scriptures, for the history and the prophecy. Their appearance with the Lord in glory and their talking with Him represents the fact that all the Scriptures are about the Lord; and their speaking of His decease means that the Scriptures everywhere in their deeper meaning tell about the temptations and victories of the Lord's life. The cloud overshadowing the disciples suggests the dimness of their minds and of all our minds in perceiving the Lord's glory and the message of the Scriptures in regard to Him. Still, from the cloud we can at least perceive the testimony of all the Scriptures to the Lord's Divinity, like the voice which the disciples heard. (At what other times had these same words been heard?) After even a little glimpse of the Lord's glory we come back to the simple story of His life and to the simple thought of His presence with us, with a fuller sense of His power, like the disciples who looked up and found "Jesus only with themselves." The fuller experience of the Lord's power after perceiving something of His glory is further expressed in the story as we come down with the disciples to the foot of the mountain.

Read of the scene at the foot of the mountain in the three Gospels in which it is described. The possession by devils which was so common in the Gospel days shows the extent to which the power of evil spirits had grown; even children were possessed, like the poor boy in the story. The story makes it very plain that only the Lord's power is able to cast out devils, is able to meet and overcome any evil. But He has brought His power clear down to the foot of the mountain where we are, and He gives us the help we need if we believe in Him and do the work of repentance which is represented by the prayer and fasting.

In connection with the story of the tribute money keep in mind the fact that this was not a tax to earthly rulers, but the yearly temple tax. You can read of the institution of this tribute in connection with the numbering of the people, in Exodus 30:11-16. The tribute was a half-shekel from every man twenty years old and upward. The coin which Peter found in the fish's mouth was a Greek "stater" of twice this value, enough for two. But should the Lord pay tribute to His own temple? While He lived with men on earth He would do this duty with them; and it is a duty which we all should do according to our means. What is the meaning of "prevented" in verse 25? Compare Psalm 119:147.

1. "Six days" after what? "A high mountain." What mountain? "Go thou to the sea." What sea?

2. Who were with the Lord in the mountain? What did they see? What did they hear? Of what use was the vision to them?
3. Who were waiting at the foot of the mountain? What did the Lord do for them?
4. How was the tribute paid for Peter and the Lord? To what was this tribute paid?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Do you see an appropriateness in the place of the Transfiguration - "a high mountain apart"? Compare the going up into a mountain to hear the Christian law. (E. 405)

Do you see why Peter, James, and John were chosen to be with the Lord at this and other times, and to see His glory? What elements of character do they represent, which bring us near to the Lord? Peter, you know as the type of firm faith in the Lord, and John as the type of the deepest love for Him. James, a brother of John, represents the love which is like unto love to the Lord and closely joined with it. (A. Preface to Genesis 18; E. 600, 820, 821)

What Divine attribute of the Lord was represented by the shining of His face as the sun? And what by His raiment white as the light? (E. 401; H. 129)

Remember the thick cloud which shrouded the Lord's presence on Mount Sinai. (Exodus 19:16) The thick cloud represented the obscure knowledge of the Lord of which the children of Israel at that time were capable. His truth could be revealed only as stern literal commands which inspired fear and wholly concealed from them the Lord's tender love. A cloud overshadowed the disciples on the mountain of Transfiguration, but now it was a bright cloud. It represented the simple forms of truth in which the Lord accommodated His love and wisdom to their feeble comprehension. (A. 8106, 8814) When you think of Moses and Elijah as representing the history and prophecy of the Lord in their inner meaning testifying of the Lord and His glorification, what seems to be the special significance of this cloud? (S. 48)

Does there seem to be a reason why the Lord spoke to the disciples of John the Baptist as they came down from the mountain and why the messenger of repentance in this way connects the vision of the Lord's glory on the mountain and the experience of His power to cast out devils at the mountain's foot? Is it not by the practice of repentance that the inspiration of the interior state is brought down and made powerful in the external life? Much the same thought is expressed in the Lord's saying, "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." The rejection of John the Baptist and his message, and the neglect of such prayer and fasting was the cause of the helpless subjection to evil which is pictured in this scene at the foot of the mountain. What two dangers into which evil leads us are represented by the fire and water into which the devil cast the child? (A. 739; E. 504, 518)

It is important in studying the spiritual meaning of the story of the tribute money, to know that this was the temple tax. The lesson is in regard to the duty of acknowledging things of natural life to be the Lord's, and of making them useful to the Lord and spiritual life. The sea especially represents the department of natural life - natural interests and knowledge; and the fish

represents the love of such natural things. The acknowledgment of the Lord in each natural interest and possession, and its service to the Lord and spiritual life, is the tribute in the fish's mouth. Even the Lord paid this tribute. We may say that the Lord especially paid this tribute, as in His life on earth He made everything of His human nature serve the Divine. There is a beautiful suggestion of the Lord's companionship and help to us in this duty, in the one piece of money which paid the tribute for Peter and the Lord. (E. 513)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Divine Human of the Lord

You have often heard or read of the Lord's "Divine Human," or the "Divine Humanity." What this is, is shown in this story.

When the disciples looked at the Lord or heard Him, what they saw and heard was the human nature from the earthly mother Mary, which God took on, or with which He clothed Himself. But on the mountain of which we read today, He showed what this Human was like when it was changed, or "transfigured," or "transformed," that is to say, when it was made Divine, the Divine Human." See how wonderful He then looked! "His face did shine as the sun!" No doubt when the disciples saw Him ordinarily, His face had the loveliest, kindest expression, full of strength and wisdom. Yet the features of the face were still made up of earthly matter and so it could not be aflame as when the disciples saw the same human face made Divine or "glorified."

Do you know why the face of His Divine Human shone as the sun? Because it was the Divine love, and the Divine love is the source from which all the angels grow warm with love, just as from our natural sun all things on earth grow warm. In winter we have little of the heat of the sun, and so the ponds and streams are frozen over, the rain comes down not in lively little drops that run quickly on their errands, bringing life to plants and animals, but in solid angular little crystals of ice, called snow, that remain where they settle until again transformed into round drops of water by the sun's heat. The trees are cold and bare of leaves; the fields look desolate. Many birds and beasts have long ago traveled to the warmer countries south of us. But in spring when the sun's heat grows stronger, then everything begins to start into life again. The snow and ice melt, and run quickly to give life to all things.

As on earth heat is needed for the life of all things, so also in heaven. There could be no green fields, no flower gardens, no orchards, no birds, no beasts, no fish, no, nor any angels there, if there were not heat. But the heat there, while it feels like the heat on earth, is very different. Here it comes from the sun which would be dead but for the Lord's constant work to keep it burning. The heat of heaven is from the Lord. It is the love that comes from the Lord. His love as it flows down into all things of heaven is felt as heat, and His truth as it flows down into heaven is seen as light. There is no other heat, nor any other light there, but the love and the truth that come from the Lord. You may imagine, then, how great His love must be, which is the source of all the heat and light of heaven. The Lord's love is the sun. It looks to all in heaven as our sun does to all on earth, only that it is incomparably brighter and warmer.

Understand correctly, that the sun of heaven is the love which flows out from the Lord Jesus Christ.

The three disciples saw the Lord's face shine: as the sun. Notice that it was His face that so shone. The shine came from the face; it therefore surrounded the face. The face was inside the shining. So within the sun of heaven is the Lord in person with His face, His body, His hands, His feet. And therefore, as you will also notice, the Lord's garments were white as the light or as snow - so brilliant. Light surrounds love, just as garments surround the body.

Since the Lord was seen by the three disciples in a different state from that in which He usually appeared to them, do you suppose that the disciples were also in a different state? Read the same account in the gospel according to Luke (9:32) and you will see that the disciples were heavy with sleep. The eyes of their body were closed and they awoke by the opening of the eyes of their spirits, and with these they saw the Lord.

It is only with the eyes of the spirit that the Lord's Divine Human can be seen. Swedenborg saw the Lord with his spiritual eyes, several times, sometimes in the sun of heaven, and sometimes outside of the sun, but then as though veiled by a thin cloud.

Since the three disciples saw the Lord's Divine Human, or His human nature "glorified," with their spiritual eyes, you can understand how it was that they also saw Moses and Elijah.

You will remember that Moses, the law-giver, had been dead about 1400 years, and that Elijah, the prophet, had been taken into heaven by a whirlwind about 900 years before. At the time they were both in the spiritual world in their spiritual bodies, and of course the disciples could see them only with the eyes of their spirit, for no one who has died can again be clothed with a material body.

The fact that they were taken by the Lord into a high mountain apart also leads us to think of their being led by the Lord into a higher or more interior state of mind than usual, that is, into a state of the spirit.

Let us consider for a few minutes a little of the spiritual meaning of this memorable occurrence.

You know that the books of the Word are divided into two great divisions - historical and prophetic. Those before the Psalms are historical; those after the Psalms, prophetic. In the New Testament, the Gospels are historical, and the Revelation is prophetic. Moses stands for the historical books, and Elijah for the prophetic. And their speaking with the Lord means that we people on earth can speak to the Lord through the books of the Word. That is, when we read and study and love the books of the Word, we thereby come so near to the Lord, that we hear His voice, and can tell Him what is in our hearts, how much we love Him, how much we need Him, and how much we wish to do His will.

You will remember what we learned in our last lesson about the rock on which the church of the Lord is built, the rock of belief, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." That was said by Peter at Caesarea Philippi, where are the springs or the source of the Jordan. Now, the Lord teaches the same thing on the high mountain. Out of the cloud, which means the literal sense, came the voice, "This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him." Was that voice heard once before? When?

To "hear" means to obey. So we are to listen to what the Lord Jesus Christ says in His Divine Humanity, and obey it.

But why were the three disciples, Peter, James and John, chosen to witness this splendid scene? Because they represent the trinity in man. What trinity? The trinity of will, understanding and deed. Or, of love, wisdom and use. Or, again, of charity, faith and good works. Peter means faith, for it was he who expressed what the disciples believed of Jesus, that He was "the Christ, the Son of the living God." James represents charity. And John, who lay in the Lord's bosom, represents charity in act.

First, we learn the truth about the Lord and His Word, and have faith in Him; therefore Peter is mentioned first. Next we love Him and His commandments in our heart, and will to do them; this is James, and so he is named next. But our faith (or belief) and our love (or charity) amount to little unless, when we can do so, we express them in our outward acts in the world. When from a good love, by means of a true understanding, we perform uses to the neighbor, then both the love and the wisdom are together in the use or the good work. This is John, and therefore he is mentioned last. And he was the one whom the Lord loved most.

## Lesson 25

### Matthew 18:1-20: The Lord and the Children

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

You have seen beautiful pictures of the Lord taking little children in His arms and blessing them. Once when the disciples would have kept the children from Him, He was much displeased. He said to let them come to Him, and He took them up in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them. Perhaps you know the sweet hymn that begins:

I think when I read that sweet story of old,

When Jesus was here among men,

How He called little children as lambs to His fold,

I should like to have been with them then.

There was another time when the Lord called a little child to Him, in the house in Capernaum, and told the disciples that little children and those who are like little children in their hearts are the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The disciples as they walked along the road had been disputing who should be the greatest. They thought of rich men whom they knew, and rulers like Herod or like the great Emperor at Rome. They thought the Lord would be such a king, and they disputed which of them would have the chief places in His kingdom and the largest share of His riches and power. The Lord called a little child, and said that they who were like little children were the greatest in His kingdom. Little children have what is more precious than riches and stronger than the power of any earthly king. They have the good angels very near to them, and a happiness that the angels bring. They are protected by the Lord's own power from evil things. If as they grow older they are still like little children, and keep near to the Lord, and trust Him and

love Him, they will always be safe. If they are willing like little children to learn what the Lord will teach them they will be wise. That is why angels in heaven are so wise and so strong.

Everyone is at first a little child. The Lord gives him this little child to take care of. He must not neglect it. He must not do it harm, as he will if he does wrong of any kind. He will send away the good angels and the protection and happiness that are from them. If he despises the little child that the Lord has given him to take care of, if he neglects him and does him harm, he is destroying his own soul. No, we must protect the little child in ourselves, and be prompt and brave in cutting off and putting away everything that leads us astray. The hand is every wrong action; the eye is every wrong thought. We must not hesitate a moment when we know that anything is wrong. Cut it off; it is destroying our life.

Or we can think of the good, heavenly things that the Lord has given us to take care of as sheep of which we are shepherds, under Him the Great Shepherd. If any of the good things are wandering off and being lost, like good shepherds we must hunt them up and bring them back, and not let them be lost.

The Lord loves children always, just as He loved them when He took them up in His arms and blessed them. Let me read Matthew 18:1-14.

## **Junior**

This is another story where it is interesting to open to the three Gospels where it is told, and follow along together. (Matthew 18:1-14; Mark 9:33-50; Luke 9:46-50) Where were the Lord and the disciples? What had gone before, which led up to the Lord's calling the little child and His lesson about the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? In what way does the Lord wish us when we are grown up, to be converted and become as little children? The word "converted" suggests turning, and the Greek word in this place means "turning back." We must turn back from pride and love of being great and rich in a worldly way. In the next verse it is spoken of as humbling oneself. We must know that we are not strong and wise, and must trust the Lord to protect us and lead and teach us, as little children trust their parents. When older people become in this way again as little children, they have a deeper, wiser innocence than when they were children in years.

As you read on about receiving a little child in the Lord's name, and about the danger of offending (or causing to stumble) a little child, or of despising one of these little ones, you will see that the Lord is speaking not only of children in the personal sense, but of innocence and each of the innocent qualities of trust, and obedience, and love which make one as a little child - the danger of willfully destroying or despising these; the duty of faithfully guarding them and of cutting off whatever endangers them. These innocent things are what keep the angels near to us.

It is a splendid lesson (in verses 8 and 9) of promptness and courage in cutting off every habit of action, every way of life, every thought, which injures innocence and leads away from heaven to hell. When we know that a thing is wrong, it is fatal to delay, to go half way in giving it up. We must be prompt, and thorough, and decided. Boys and girls like to do things that require courage; they enjoy hardship; they do not flinch at a little pain. Here is their opportunity for true courage. They must not be weak and spare themselves. They must not be afraid to protect the little child of

innocence in themselves and everywhere. If they despise the little child they are despising also heaven and the Lord.

In verses 15-17 the Lord gives us a rule which would prevent a great deal of pain and strife if it were followed literally. How often, if someone seems to have done us wrong, the trouble can be made right if we go to our brother kindly and alone. Often he may not have meant to do us harm; he may not even have known that there was harm. He may have been hasty, and may have acted from an impulse that he is now sorry for. How much better to give him opportunity in this quiet, kindly way to be friends again, than to keep up and increase the bad feeling by telling of the wrong to others and saying hard things about our brother. How much better so, than to go on in silence cherishing hurt feelings and hard thoughts.

What is said in verse 18 about binding and loosing on earth and in heaven, brings home to us the importance of choosing good and not evil in this world, for we are choosing what is to be our life forever. Compare the warning and promise in Revelation 22:11.

1. What is heavenly greatness? How can we become as little children after we are grown up? (John 3:3-8)
2. Who are always near to little children?
3. What sheep has the Lord given us to keep?
4. How does the Lord teach us that it is not right to talk about the faults of others in any unkind or idle way?
5. How is it that things that are done on earth are done in heaven?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The childlike spirit which is so precious is the spirit which knows that we have no goodness and no strength of our own, but is humbly dependent on the Lord. It is strong because it trusts His strength. It is wise because it is willing to be taught by Him. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." To such a spirit all things of heavenly life are possible; it opens the soul even to the Lord. (H. 407, 408) To despise and willfully destroy this innocence is to sink into the depths of evil, and in a more hopeless way than when carried into evil by ignorance or false teaching. Such falsity is represented by the millstone. The word used in the text means ass-millstone. Literally this suggests a large, heavy stone. Spiritually it suggests truth or falsity of the natural mind, of a worldly scientific sort; for the power of natural thought and reason is represented by the ass. (E. 1182; A. 9755)

"It must needs be that offenses come." There will be contact with evil and experience of evil, but it is dangerous only to the extent that we make it our own and so are responsible for it. Compare the lesson in Matthew 15: 17-20, about the things which do and do not defile.

Think carefully about the hand and foot that are to be cut off, and the eye that is to be plucked out. The foot suggests the outmost plane of life, in contact with the world. The hand suggests actions,

and the eye thoughts. The member to be cut off is the act or thought which is selfish and evil, that the life may be single in its service of the Lord. (E. 313, 1081)

Read about the angels with little children in H. 295; A. 2303.

Give a little deeper thought to the threefold charge about our duty to one who trespasses against us. Going to him alone is to go in the power of kind affection. Calling witnesses is to bring truth for his instruction. Telling to the church is the appeal to external authority to secure right. If all fail, we may not be able to have dealings with our brother, but we are still not warranted in abusing him, nor in feeling unkindly toward him. This threefold charge also describes the Lord's dealing with men. If they reject His love, His instruction, and His appeal to their most external knowledge of right, still He does not reject them, but they exclude themselves from heaven. (A. 4197)

Binding and loosing on earth, is restraining or cherishing evil or good in this life, especially in actual conduct; at the same time deeper and eternal things are done for us in the heaven of our souls. The two who should agree on earth are the will and understanding. An act in which these two are united becomes a permanent part of character. The two or three gathered in the Lord's name suggest these same two faculties in their several degrees, highest to lowest. (E. 532, 815)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Infants and Innocence

In connection with this lesson read also the story in Mark 10:13-16. The Lord dearly loved little children, because they are so sweet and innocent.

Do you know what innocence is? Very often people use the word innocence as if it meant ignorance - not knowing anything. Innocence does not consist in this. It is true, that innocent little children do not know much, if anything; but this ignorance is distinct from their innocence. Their innocence consists in the following traits, and it is important that we should have a good knowledge of them:

- They do not claim anything as belonging to themselves, but whatever they receive they still believe to belong to their parents.
- They are quite content with the few and little presents that are given them, and feel happy with them.
- They do not worry about food and clothing, and have no anxiety about the future.
- They do not look out upon the world with the wish to own the things they see.
- They love their parents, their nurse, their little playmates, and play with them innocently.
- They love to be led by their parents, to harken to them and to obey them.

All these traits are traits of innocence.

Now, I want to tell you a very important secret which our heavenly Father has told us of the New Church. You remember, do you not, that one of the largest works which the Lord has given to us through His servant Emanuel Swedenborg, is called "Heavenly Secrets" because it tells us many secrets that the angels in heaven know, but which the Lord told men on earth only at His Second Coming? One of these secrets is the one I am going to tell you now. It is about innocence. It is this:

The reason why the Lord makes babies and little children so innocent, is that innocence is the greatest, the most precious, the loveliest thing in the world and in heaven; and He wishes every single man and woman to become innocent. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to start men and women, when little babies, with this rich present of innocence that He gives them. You know that many people do not remain innocent. Little by little, as children grow older and their own individuality begins to develop, they begin to change. They begin to claim things as their own, as belonging entirely to themselves. They are no longer satisfied with a few things and little things, but they want more and more. They want to become rich. They want to have much property. They want money and jewelry, and fine houses, and large tracts of land, and to have others do as they want them to. And they think, that if they only had more than they have, they would be happy. So they become discontented with what they have. They worry about how they may earn enough to get their food and clothing; and are anxious about the future, worrying lest when they grow old they may perhaps become so poor that they may not live in the style in which they would like to live. They begin to love only those who are kind and nice to them. They forget about the heavenly Father, and feel as if He were far away from them, and as if He did not take care of them, but that they had to take care of themselves. So they no longer hear His voice, and they do not obey Him, but they obey only what, as they imagine, they think out for themselves.

In this way people gradually get away from the state of innocence in which they were when they were little children.

But as people grow up and go away from their state of innocence, the heavenly Father still stays with them, and after a while He sends them little children to remind them of innocence, and they remember what He says, "Unless ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." And then they fight hard against those wishes of their heart that have led them away from innocence. They try hard to be contented; to realize that the heavenly Father is with them and cares for them. They go on doing their work diligently and faithfully and cheerfully, and are satisfied with what the Lord brings out of it. If they become rich, they do not become proud, because they know that the riches belong to their heavenly Father, and are entrusted to them only as His servants. If they remain poor, or become poor, they do not worry, because they know that their heavenly Father is with them, and that whatever happens, He is going to bring good out of it. And so they again become innocent like the little children, but with this great difference, that they are not ignorant like little children, but that they know a great deal, not only about life in the world, but also about heaven and their heavenly Father. They are innocent and wise.

Now, they could not become innocent in their old age if they had not been innocent in their infancy; for the innocence of their babyhood was put away by the Lord in a secret storeroom of His own, inside of them, where it remains, and through which the Lord touches their hearts when He sees that they will pay attention to the touch.

I must tell you a secret which the Lord told in part in the Gospel when He was on earth, and now has told us the rest of it in the heavenly Doctrines. It is this, that the way He keeps little children innocent for several years, so as to have a lot of it to store up in His secret storeroom, is by sending angels of certain kind to be with them.

You know that there are many different kinds of angels. There are some who are more innocent and wise than others. And the kind that He sends to be with little children, are the most innocent of all. They live in the heaven that is nearest to the Lord, which is called "the celestial heaven." In our lesson we read that the Lord said that the angels of the, little children "always behold the face of My Father who is in heaven." This is because they are so good. There is never anything, in their lives that brings a cloud between them and the heavenly Father. He lives in the sun of heaven, and in this they see Him. Angels further down in heaven, in "the spiritual heaven," do not see the Lord as the sun, but because there are mists and clouds in their atmosphere, the sun looks to them like the moon.

When children begin to be less innocent, then these celestial angels leave, and angels of the natural heaven come to them, who help them to learn things at home, in church, in school and at play. Later, other angels come to them. But those people who in the course of their life finally return to the state of innocence, return to the companionship of the celestial angels, and then they feel at home, and very, very happy.

The Lord said that it was not His will that one of these little ones should perish. If a baby dies, it wakes up at once among the celestial angels, who take care of its education. Every baby is assigned there to an angel mother. If you are interested in this, you can read about it in the "Heavenly Secrets" (Arcana Coelestia), or in the work Heaven and Hell, n. 332 to 336.

## **Lesson 26**

### **Matthew 18:21-35: Forgiveness**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Do you know what it means if I tell you that you ought to forgive a person who has hurt you or said some unkind thing to you? Is it forgiving if you hurt the person who has hurt you, or say unkind things to him? Is it forgiving if you let yourself feel angry toward the person and think hard thoughts about him? No; if you forgive the person, you do not hurt him because he has hurt you: you do not let yourself feel angry toward him, nor think hard thoughts about him. You may feel sorry for what he has done, but you feel kindly toward him, and want to help him to do better.

This is what a mother means if a child comes to her and is sorry for something he has done wrong, and she gives the child a kiss and says, "I forgive you." She means that she is not angry, but loves the child, and wants to help him to do better. And this is the way that the Lord always feels toward us when we are sorry for something we have done wrong, and want to do better. He forgives us. The Lord wishes us to forgive, because it is more helpful to others to be forgiving, and because it is so much happier for us not to have angry feelings and unforgiving thoughts.

Peter once asked the Lord a question about forgiving. "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." Does it mean that we ought to be just a little forgiving or very forgiving? Does it mean that we ought to forgive reluctantly as a duty, or gladly and with love? It means that we should forgive always and gladly.

And the Lord told a story about forgiveness; let us read it. (Matthew 18:23-35) Ten thousand talents is an enormous sum of money. A penny was a little coin worth fifteen cents; but it was pay for a day's work in those days. Do you think who the Lord means by the king in the parable? He means Himself. The story shows that the Lord is glad and willing to forgive us, but that He cannot forgive us if we are not forgiving to one another. This helps you to understand the part of the Lord's Prayer which says, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

## **Junior**

Think first of Peter's question and the Lord's answer about forgiveness, and then about the parable. How forgiving does the Lord mean that we should be? Entirely and always forgiving. We should not count the times, but forgive till we have no wish to be unforgiving. The number seven is associated with the seventh day, the holy Sabbath rest - the heavenly state when it is easy to do right.

The parable is of a king reckoning with the officers of his government and under rulers. Ten thousand talents is something like ten million dollars. Who is meant by the king? The enormous debt suggests our indebtedness to the Lord for everything, and our many, many failures to give Him the gratitude that we ought, and to use His good gifts as we should. The penny (fifteen cents) suggests the smallness, in comparison, of the little debts and wrongs about which we should be forgiving to one another. Remember the penny also in Matthew 20:2 and 22:19. The imprisonment and the selling of men and their families for debt were both common in those days.

Why is it that the Lord's forgiveness to us depends upon our forgiveness to our brother? And if we are not forgiving, can it be that He is wroth or angry and will deliver us to the tormentors? Answer the last question first.

Look back to Matthew 5:25, 26. What does it mean, that if we do not hasten to agree with an adversary, we shall be delivered to the officers and the judge, and shall be cast into prison, from which we cannot come out till we have paid the uttermost farthing? If we do not agree with our adversary, but keep unkind feelings and thoughts toward him, these very feelings and thoughts shut us up and make us hard and unhappy, and there is no escape from this prison except by completely repenting of the hard thoughts and feelings. And so if we are unforgiving, the unkind, resentful thoughts and feelings are the tormentors, and there is no escape from them except by giving up these thoughts and feelings. The king in the parable was wroth, and the Lord may seem so to us. Really He is never angry, but even with His great love He cannot deliver us from thoughts and feelings which we are not willing to let go.

"Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." What we are willing to do for others determines what the Lord can do for us. All good things come to us from the Lord, to pass on in use to others. If we are selfish toward others, grasping and unkind, the gifts are not passed on and they cannot be given us from the Lord. As the stream of life flows out generously to others, it can come abundantly

from the Lord. The truth is taught in many places in the Scriptures. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned; forgive and ye shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given unto you. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." (Luke 6:36-38) For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:14, 15) Only as we exercise kind, generous love toward others can that love come to us from the Lord, and fill our souls with blessing.

1. How do I really forgive anyone for a wrong he has done? by saying that I forgive him?
2. How often ought we to forgive?
3. What debt does the Lord forgive us? What is the condition of His forgiveness?
4. Who or what are "the tormentors"? Why cannot the Lord save us from them if we are unforgiving?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Let someone make a study of the number seven and of passages in the Bible where it is used. You will easily remember its meaning by association with the seventh day, the day of rest after the week of labor. It suggests the state of peace which follows effort and temptation. There is the idea of completeness in the number, and of holiness. To forgive seven times implies some heavenly motive, perhaps a faithful willingness to forgive as often as duty requires; but seventy times seven means a fullness of heavenly affection which makes it easy to forgive without limit. (E. 257; A. 433)

Read the parable carefully, seeing in it all you can of instruction in regard to our relations with our fellow servants and with the Lord, our King. We are called servants especially in the early stages of regeneration, while we act more from a sense of duty than from loving freedom. (Luke 15:19; John 15:15) The servants are brought to the king; we are to consider our relation to the Lord. It is one of great indebtedness. The command to sell suggests the impossibility of making just return to the Lord, even if all that we have, and all that we are, is put absolutely at His service. The wife and children represent faculties and developments of one's own life. (Exodus 20:17; Joshua 7:24) The Lord asks no return for His blessings, but that we shall have no wrong feeling of pride and selfishness in regard to them, but shall be grateful and make them of use to others.

The servant went out and was unforgiving to his fellow servant. We consider now our relation with others. By being selfish and unforgiving toward our fellow servant we close up the channels of life from within. This is represented by seizing by the throat, choking the flow of life between the head and the body. The hard thought and feelings expressed in the acts of violence toward the fellow servant put us again in a false relation toward the Lord; we are again in debt to Him. Moreover, these same hard feelings and thoughts become tormentors from which there is no escape till our hearts are made right toward our neighbor and so toward the Lord.

We may also think of the fellow servants as representing external faculties of our own life, which we are slow to bring into right relation to the Lord. In this sense those who saw the wrong and were very sorry represent recognition of the wrong and sorrow on account of it in our own hearts. There is also promise in the last verse of the chapter, as in Matthew 5:26, that when through temptation one repents of his selfishness, he will find the free and happy life, grateful and trustful toward the Lord, generous and forgiving toward his fellow men. (A. 892; E. 629)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Forgiveness

Do you suppose that Peter meant his own brother when he asked the Lord how often he should forgive his "brother" if he sinned against him? No. The term "brother" is very often used in the Word to mean every person, and more especially everyone who loves to be good and believes in the Lord, whether he or she be rich or poor, ignorant or learned, a man or woman of influence and honor, or one who is known by very few people. Whoever loves to be honest and just and sincere, obeying the commandments which the Lord has given in His Word, is a brother who is very near to us. Those who are less honest and sincere and righteous are also our brothers, but not so near.

Why is it that goodness makes them our brothers? Because goodness comes from the Lord, and whoever receives it is a child of the Lord, and children of one father are brothers of each other. The more they love the Lord, the nearer are they to Him and therefore the closer are they one to another.

It is very easy to understand, therefore, that as children of God we must forgive our brothers if they do anything wrong or amiss, for although we ourselves are all the time doing things that are not quite right, our heavenly Father is always forgiving us. To be children of our heavenly Father, therefore, we must do as He does - always forgive.

It is seldom that a person sins against us "seventy times seven times," or four hundred and ninety times. But suppose he does? By the time we shall have forgiven him that often, it will have become such a strong habit that we would do it ever after, if he should continue to sin.

This matter of being ready to forgive is very important, as we see where we are taught the Lord's Prayer. (Matthew 6) We pray "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." And at the conclusion of the prayer the Lord speaks just as if the whole prayer were nothing else but a petition for forgiveness. Read it and see.

The Lord, then, forgives us when we forgive others. But I thought that He is always forgiving us, that He never feels otherwise than kind and good and forgiving to us. How are we to understand this?

That the Lord forgives us does not mean that we are thereby free from evil and sin. He is "plenteous in mercy and ready to forgive." But we must do things ourselves in order that our sins may really be forgiven. We must ourselves shun the evils which evil spirits prompt us to do. We must fight against the evils which our hearts lead us to commit. Only then can we get rid of those evil spirits, and only then does the Lord's forgiving mercy enter our hearts to make them clean. This is the reason why the Lord teaches us in His prayer that He can only forgive us as we forgive

others. One of the strongest evils which our hearts cherish is the evil of dislike and hatred and revenge. We do not like to forgive others. But so long as we feel that way, the Lord's forgiving love is like sunshine that shines and shines upon windows the shutters of which are closed tight and the shades drawn down: the sunshine cannot enter the room. But when we push away the feeling of revenge and hatred and unforgiveness, it is like raising the shades and throwing open the shutters, so that the sunlight can flood the room.

So long as we are not ready to forgive others for being remiss and for doing things wrong, we are like the man of whom the Lord speaks in the book of Revelation, who keeps the door of his house shut tight while the Savior is knocking. But when we throw away these hateful, unbrotherly feelings, then we are like the same man, who opens the door wide, so that the knocking Savior can enter into the house. (Revelation 3:20)

## Lesson 27

### Matthew 19:13-30: The Rich Young Man

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

The Lord loved little children. Once He was in the country east of Jordan; it was a beautiful country of brooks and trees and pastures sloping down to the Jordan valley. And there were kind-hearted people there who loved to have the Lord come to their country and stop in their villages. There one day they brought little children to Him that He should put His hands on them and pray. The disciples tried to keep them from Him, perhaps thinking that children were not worthy of the Lord's notice. But He showed how much He loved them, for He said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me," and He took them up in His arms, put His hands on them and blessed them.

We think how the Lord loved those little children, and He loved all little children, and loves all children now. He shows His love in the protection and the care that He provides for them in many ways - through kind parents, through good angels who are near to little children. We know, too, of His loving care for little children who die and grow up in heaven.

It is a very short story about the little children coming to the Lord. I will read on and you will learn about another person, a rich young man, a ruler, who came running to the Lord in the way. The Lord loved him, too, and told him what he must do to be ready for the kingdom of heaven. He must keep the Commandments, the same commandments that we must learn and keep; and he must sell his rich things and give to the poor; and come and follow the Lord. (Matthew 19:13-22)

##### Junior

The first verse of this chapter tells of the Lord's leaving Galilee. He was leaving it for the last time; the country where most of His life on earth had been spent, and where so many of His mighty works had been done. The few months that remained were spent in Judea and in the country east of Jordan. What we read of in our story today took place in that country outside the strict borders

of the land, and away from the priests and Pharisees of Jerusalem. Of one of the Lord's visits to this country beyond Jordan at this time we read, "Therefore they sought again to take Him, but He escaped out of their hand, and went away again beyond Jordan. . . . And many resorted to Him . . . and many believed on Him there." (John 10:39-42) Our lesson gives us two beautiful scenes in that country: one, of the Lord with the little children, and one with the rich young man.

We can think of the first scene as showing the Lord's care for us all when we are little children. Then especially the arms of His protecting power both on the earthly and the heavenly side are about us, and His blessing is upon us.

The second scene, the young man running to the Lord in the way, seems especially to teach of our relation to Him when as young men and women we go forth eagerly into the work of life, and turn to the Lord to know what we must do to make life of real, eternal value. The Lord's answer to the young man is His answer to us. It is in two parts.

First, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments"; and when asked, "Which?" the Lord repeated the Commandments that were spoken at Sinai and written on the tables of stone. He did not repeat all the ten, but the short commands forbidding evil. This is the place to begin obedience; and if these Commandments of the second table are kept, the Lord gives power to keep the Commandments of the first table. They almost keep themselves. In keeping the Commandments we must remember that they apply not only to outward actions, but to thoughts and feelings. The Lord taught that in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matthew 5:20-32)

The young man claimed that he had kept the Commandments from his youth up, and it is said that the Lord, looking upon him, loved him. (Mark 10:21) But one thing more was needed to make his obedience perfect. "Go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor: . . . and come follow Me." He was very rich, which means spiritually the opposite of what is meant in the first Blessing by being poor in spirit. He was self-confident. He trusted his own strength and felt that he was good. He must get rid of this self-confidence, this sense of being good, and must learn that real strength and goodness come only through a humble sense of need, and through dependence on the Lord.

Was it not this lack in the young man's character which the Lord saw when he first addressed Him, and which He pointed out in His first reply? "Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." Did the young man in calling the Lord "Good Master" really mean to acknowledge that the Lord alone is good, and that we have no strength or goodness except through constant dependence upon Him? The young man had still to learn that lesson, and every young man and woman has that lesson to learn. We are wise if we learn it willingly and get rid quickly of the foolish thought that we are strong and good of ourselves and do not need the Lord's help; or that we are wise and do not need that the Lord shall teach us. We can put with the Lord's answer to the young man the words of Psalm 119:9.

Read verses 23-26 of our chapter and tell me what you understand the fact to be about riches in this world and preparation for heaven. Before you answer read Mark 10:24. Was the Lord in these verses speaking even more of the riches of pride and self-confidence? The last verses of the chapter, like verse 25 above, show how little even the disciples understood the sort of riches and the poorness of spirit which the Lord was speaking of. They still were hoping for a great earthly kingdom and for positions of honor in it. See also Matthew 20:21.

1. Tell me about the Lord and little children what the Lord said and what He did. Where is the home of little children who die?
2. Who is good? What must we do to have eternal life? We must keep the Commandments, but in what spirit and with whose help?
3. Why do riches make it hard to enter heaven? Are there any other riches besides money which make it hard?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Read carefully the Lord's words in regard to the Divine origin and the sacredness of marriage. (Verses 3-9)

In thinking of the Lord's care for little children read about the association of holy angels with them, in H. 295; A. 2303; and about the care for little children who die, in H. 329-345.

Think further of the Lord's care for the little child of innocence and trust and teachableness in ourselves. Compare Matthew 18:1-6, 10; 11:25; Psalm 8:2; Isaiah 11:6, 8, 9; read A. 5608.

Think further of the reason for the Lord's naming only the commands of duty to the neighbor, and mainly the negative commands forbidding evil. The duty to our neighbor is really one with our duty to the Lord. Recall the words of John's Epistle (1 John 4:20, 21), and the familiar poem of Abou Ben Adhem. Remember, too, that the negative duty of repentance must come first. "Cease to do evil; learn to do well." (Isaiah 1:16, 17) Consider especially the last lines of T. 287. On the several steps of regeneration indicated by the Lord's words to the rich young man, see Life 66, and E. 934.

Some members of the class should study for us the subject of natural riches and their relation to preparation for heaven. Read especially H. 357-365. You will naturally consider at the same time the subject of riches in heaven and the spirit in which they are enjoyed. (H. 185; T. 740)

We must think more closely of the meaning of the camel and the needle's eye in the light of the full explanation in H. 365. The camel is the type of natural knowledge and strength, often with willfulness and self-confidence in it. When John the Baptist taught his lesson of repentance he wore a garment of camel's hair. The rich young man in his external keeping of the Commandments had something of the same character. But even of John the Baptist the Lord said, that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. The needle and its eye stand for an interior, spiritual understanding which comes only with the humble heavenly spirit. The things of heavenly wisdom are hid from the wise and prudent and are revealed to babes. The natural knowledge and strength represented by the camel is not heavenly and cannot make itself so. The camel cannot go through the needle's eye. Yet it is implied that even this is possible to the Lord, for by His help one may advance from the natural state to one which is truly heavenly, and from a natural self-confident knowledge to a heavenly wisdom. (A. 3048)

What are the house and family which we must leave for the Lord's sake? Compare Matthew 10:33-37. The hundredfold which we shall receive instead are the heavenly goodness and truth which the Lord gives, in some degree in this world and more fully hereafter. (E.724)

What can be meant by the Lord's promise that the disciples should sit on thrones in His kingdom? Compare the promise in Revelation 3: 21. It is a promise, that by learning His truth and making it our law we shall come into the strength and order of His kingdom, and shall be conjoined with Him in heaven. Twelve apostles and their thrones stand for the varied forms of His truth, and the twelve tribes for the development of heavenly life which are protected and guided by the truth. (R. 221; E. 687)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Being Rich

When you have read this lesson in the Gospel by Matthew, turn to the next Gospel (Mark 10:31) and you will find some additional teaching which will help you to understand better what the Lord meant. It sounds at first, as if the Lord said, that no one who is rich can enter heaven unless he first gives his wealth away. But that the Lord did not mean this, you can see from what He says in the story as told in Mark 10:24, where, when the disciples were astonished at what He had said, He explained, "How hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!"

"To trust in riches," means to set one's heart upon them, that is, to think, of them all the time, and love them better than the use that may be performed by means of them. It is not wrong to be rich, provided the man uses his wealth to be of use to others, to his country, and to his church. Indeed, it is a good thing to be rich, because the more money one has, the more good he can do with it. Swedenborg tells us that he has seen many rich people in heaven, and living there in splendor, in palaces, surrounded by beautiful grounds, and the palaces themselves most beautifully furnished and containing exquisite ornaments. But they are people who, when in the world, cared more for the good they could do by means of their wealth, than for the wealth itself. (H. 361, 362)

He saw also - in hell - other people, who when they had lived in the world, had been rich. They now lead a miserable, poor and squalid life. They are such as, when they had been in the world, had cared for their wealth only for themselves. They loved to hoard their money and their jewels, and to count them. When they spent their money it was only for the purpose of gratifying their own pleasure. They cared little or nothing for being of use to their fellow men.

Again there are those in hell who, when they were in the world, did indeed employ their money in business where it could be of use to others, but the richer they grew the more did they trust in themselves, and think that they deserved to be praised and rewarded for their success. They had paid no attention to the Lord's warning in the Word, that it is wrong to imagine, "My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth." (Deuteronomy 8:17)

What the Lord said, about its being easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God, must therefore be understood as meaning those rich people who trust in their riches, who care too much for them, and who become proud and conceited over them.

But one can be rich in other ways besides possessing money, and other material wealth. One can be rich in knowledges. This is what the Lord meant in the spiritual sense of His words. The rich young man who came to Him, represented the Jewish church where they had the Word, and so knew very, very many truths which people outside of the Jewish church did not know. The Jews were spiritually rich. But did the Lord then mean that those who have learned many things from the Word would not enter into heaven? On the contrary, the more one knows from the Word, the greater is his wealth and the more excellent his use in heaven, provided he makes the proper use of his knowledge and remains humble, recognizing that the Lord has given it to him, and that he cannot take any credit to himself for what he knows and for the good things he does with his knowledge. He also, like the man who possesses material wealth, must not "put his trust in riches"; that is, he must not become conceited because he knows much, for then he really steals it from the Lord, for he claims as his own what belongs to his heavenly Father.

You will notice in the story in Mark, that after the young man had told the Lord how he had kept the Commandments from his youth up, the Lord looked on him and loved him. This is what made him really rich. And the Lord loved to see him rich in goodness. But even the keeping of the Commandments will not help people to enter the kingdom of God, unless they realize and acknowledge that the power to keep them, and thus to be wise and good, is not theirs, but the Lord's; that therefore they are themselves not "rich," but that what they have is the Lord's.

This, then, is what constitutes wealth in heaven. And the fine clothes that the angels have, the jewels they wear, the beautiful gold and silver utensils they have in their homes, the houses built of costly stones, the magnificent lawns and flowerbeds and parks that surround their homes, the musical fountains that play in their gardens, the gentle birds that sing in the bushes and the trees, the mild and graceful beasts that are to be seen there - all these belong to the angels, because they are rich in knowledges, they know so many truths and live according to them. Every single thing about their persons and their homes is a picture of something good and true in their characters. And yet these things do not belong to them in any way different from that in which things in your home belong to you. The rooms, the tables, the chairs, the bed, the piano, the pictures, etc., in your home are yours; and yet they are not yours, but your parents. And so what the angels have is theirs, to use and do with just as they wish; and yet they know that all these things belong to their heavenly Father, and that He lets them use them because they make good use of them for the happiness of others. See about the rich and the poor in heaven, in H. 357-365.

## **Lesson 28**

### **Matthew 20: Laborers in the Vineyard**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The Lord in His teaching told a story of a vineyard. A vineyard is a field planted with grapevines. The vines cannot stand alone and in Palestine they are trained on low rails, or often when the vineyard is on a steep hillside they are trained on the stone walls which make the terraces. There is much work to do in a vineyard, in digging up the ground and picking out the stones, to make the

soil soft for the vines; in building a fence or planting a hedge around it to keep off the boars or other wild animals that do it harm. There was often a low tower built in the vineyard for the watchmen, from which they could look around and see if any harm was coming. The vines must be pruned and trained up. At the right time the grapes must be gathered, and those that were for wine must be trodden in the wine-press. The wine-press was a trough cut in the rock, and as the grapes were crushed the juice ran off into another trough made for it. You find these old wine-presses overgrown with bushes on many hills in Palestine, showing that there were once vineyards there.

The story that the Lord told was about such a vineyard, and how the owner of the vineyard went into the marketplace early in the morning to hire laborers to work in his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a penny a day and sent them to their work. This was about six o'clock in the morning, when work should begin. Again he went out about nine o'clock, and again at noon, and again at three o'clock, and once more about five o'clock when the day was nearly done; and each time he found more men in the market-place and sent them into the vineyard. He agreed with the first workmen to pay them a penny a day. The penny was a little silver piece worth about fifteen cents, and it was a day's wages in those times.

At evening when the day's work was over the owner of the vineyard told his steward, the man who had charge of his affairs and his money, to call the laborers and give them their pay. So he called them and gave them each a penny. The workmen who were hired early thought they should have received more, and murmured against the good man of the house, the owner of the vineyard, because he had given the same to those who had worked but one hour and to them who had borne the burden and heat of the day. But the lord of the vineyard told them that he did them no wrong; that it was right for him to do what he willed with his own.

When we learned about the Lord's blessing little children we were with Him in the country beyond Jordan. He was in that same country when He spoke the parable of the vineyard. As we head on in the chapter we find that He was journeying toward Jerusalem. Near the end of the chapter we find that He was near the town of Jericho. They had crossed the meadows of the Jordan and the river and were among the gardens of Jericho. Palm trees grew finely there: The very name Jericho means "a fragrant place." As they passed along, perhaps between high garden walls with fruit trees overhanging and shading the path, two blind men cried out for help. The people rebuked them and told them to hold their peace, to be quiet. It reminds us how the disciples rebuked those who brought the little children to the Lord. But He blessed the little children, and now He had pity on the blind men. He called them to Him and touched their eyes and they could see; and they followed Him as He went on His way from Jericho up toward Jerusalem. Let me read the two stories of the vineyard and of the blind men. (Matthew 20:1-16; 29-34)

## **Junior**

Our chapter opens with a parable of a vineyard. There were many vineyards in that country, especially on the terraced hillsides, and all the things about the vineyard were familiar to the disciples and others to whom the Lord was speaking. You can get a good idea of the vineyards from many things that are said about them in the Bible. Turn to Isaiah 5:1, 2. You read there of a vineyard planted in a very fruitful hill, and how it was fenced or walled in, and the stones

gathered out. The tower was for the watchmen to see when thieves or wild beasts were near. The wine-press was a vat cut in the rock in which the grapes were trodden. Turn to Matthew 21:33, where you find another description of a vineyard. Here the vineyard was protected by a hedge. A hedge is also mentioned in Psalm 80:12, 13. You often read of wine-presses, as when Gideon used one for a hiding place for his wheat. (Judges 6: 11) Sometimes the singing of those that gathered the grapes is mentioned. (Isaiah 16:9, 10) Putting these different things together, you get a good idea of the vineyard, and the work which there was for laborers to do.

The parable tells of hiring laborers to work in the vineyard. Work began about six o'clock. The third hour was nine o'clock, and you see what time is meant by the sixth, the ninth, and the eleventh hour. The penny was a silver piece called a denarius. You read of the penny again in Matthew 22:19-21, and you see there it was a Roman coin with the head of Caesar on it. You read again of pence in the parable of the Good Samaritan. (Luke 10:35) Both from the mention of the penny in that parable and in this parable of the vineyard you see that a little coin was worth more in those days than now. The good Samaritan was generous in giving two pence, and a penny was fair wages for a workman. We read in other places of stewards; of a faithful and wise steward in Luke 12:42, and of an unjust steward in Luke 16:1-8. The laborers had worked for different times in the vineyard, but at evening each one received a penny. At first thought this seems unjust, and it seemed to some of the laborers unjust, but the householder said that it was not so.

You can think of the meaning of the parable in two ways. First, think of the whole story as taking place in each one of us. The laborers called at different periods of the day are the faculties that are successively developed and called into active service as life advances. Some which are not developed till near the end of life may be the most precious to the Lord.

Second, think of the laborers as different people. The parable points out how different the conditions of different lives are, and the work that different ones must do. Some live many years on earth, some pass from earth as little children. Some have harder work to do in resisting evil and doing right, and for some it seems easy. And does it seem unjust that little children are received into heaven as surely as men who have lived and labored long, and have met many and severe temptations? The root of the difficulty is touched in the answer of the lord of the vineyard to those who murmured: "Friend, I do thee no wrong. . . Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?" The fact is, that no one earns or deserves heaven. It is the Lord's gift from the greatness of His love. Heaven is ours, if at all, as the sunshine is ours, as life is ours, by the Lord's free gift. He does not ask how much anyone deserves, for no one deserves anything of heaven. But He loves to give to everyone all he can receive. So He wills to do with His own.

Verse 17 reminds us where we are - journeying with the Lord from the country east of Jordan toward Jerusalem. In verse 29 we have come as far as Jericho. In our last lesson we learned that the Lord had left Galilee not to return again to that part of the country. Now He was journeying up to Jerusalem for the last time, and His betrayal and crucifixion were near. As they walked together He talked with the disciples to prepare them for these things. Read carefully verses 18, 19, and think how each particular was fulfilled - the betrayal, the condemnation by the chief priests and scribes, who delivered Him to the Gentiles, to Pilate and the Romans, to mock and to scourge and to crucify; and then the resurrection.

Now follows the question of Zebedee's sons. Which two disciples were they? How little even they had yet learned of the real meaning of the kingdom which the Lord had come to establish! They still hoped for earthly power; and even after the Lord's resurrection the disciples still hoped for such a kingdom. (Acts 1:6) See how gently the Lord answered them, and showed them again that the greatest in His kingdom are those who serve; and that He, who was their Lord and Master, was spending His life in service.

The chapter closes with a beautiful example of the Lord's service.

1. What things that belong to a vineyard are mentioned in the Bible? What kind of a coin was the penny? What time was the sixth hour?
2. Who is meant by the owner of the vineyard? Who or what are meant by the laborers?
3. Is one necessarily more ready for heaven who has lived many years, or whose life has had many natural trials? Are little children ready for heaven?
4. When had the Lord before foretold to the disciples His suffering and His death? (Verses 17-19. Matthew 16:21; 17:22,23)
5. Who is the greatest, one who rules the largest kingdom, who has the most money, who knows the most, or who does the most good in the most humble spirit?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The work in the vineyard plainly represents the work which the Lord appoints for us to do. It is not directly our natural occupation in this world, but the spiritual work contained within this occupation - the learning of the Lord's truth, the resisting of evil and doing good. The vine and wine are types of spiritual intelligence. When the church is likened to a vineyard, and Christian work to labor in a vineyard, the work which is especially meant is the learning the Lord's truth, cultivating it and bringing forth its fruits in a life of charity. There is much work to do in the vineyard; softening the ground of our hearts, receiving the Lord's truth and giving it deep root, restraining merely intellectual interest in knowledge, which is the vigorous pruning of the vine, directing its knowledge into those branches which will bear fruit and the best fruit. (A. 3220, 9139; E. 376)

Think again of the laborers in the vineyard as the faculties which are successively developed as regeneration advances, and as persons who go from earth some after a long life of preparation, and some with the open hearts and minds of children. The laborers first called are the early, youthful efforts to learn the Lord's truth and do it. They are worthy efforts, and the Lord loves them as He loved the rich young man who claimed that he had kept the Commandments, but they have in them much self-confidence, and idea of merit and of deserving reward. This is shown in the bargaining of the first laborers for their pay, and in their dissatisfaction at the close of the day when others received more than they. Later efforts are more trustful. The laborers called later were satisfied with the assurance of the householder: "Whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive." The laborers called at the eleventh hour, who seem to have stood all the day unnoticed, represent

the most innocent, trustful states, which indeed were given us in childhood, but are not for a long time called into consciousness and active use, perhaps not until old age. These trustful, childlike qualities which seem of small account from a worldly point of view are most precious to the Lord and most open to His blessing. It is what He means in saying that "the last shall be the first, and the first last." The "many" who are called also mean the more external states and efforts. The "few" who are chosen mean the deeper, gentler states which bring us nearer to the Lord. Both the "called" and the "chosen" are mentioned in the Revelation as with the Lord in heaven. (Revelation 17:14; R. 744; E. 194; A. 3820)

A further lesson follows as to the true spirit of the Lord's kingdom, in His answer to James and John. It is not the spirit of ruling but of serving. In a sense James and John may be thought of as at the Lord's right hand and left hand in His kingdom, for they represent the love of the Lord and the love of the neighbor, which are the two, strong powers in heavenly life. But the love of greatness and of power in which the disciples asked, could have no place in His kingdom. (A. 9511, 10582.)

Through all the chapter the Lord was teaching about the true nature of heaven. He was opening the eyes of His disciples to see the true way that they might go with Him in it. It seems like a little picture of all this when at the close of the chapter we read how He touched the eyes of blind men by the wayside, and they received their sight and followed Him. (E. 239)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Vineyard

Whenever our Lord the Savior, Jesus Christ, spoke a parable, every word in it meant something much deeper than people then thought, and than people now think. It was so when He spoke the parable about the laborers in the vineyard. To understand why He selected a vineyard in this parable, or a field where grain was sown, in some other parable, we need to know what the heavenly Doctrines reveal to us about the other world. There, whenever the Lord teaches the angels of heaven, what He teaches is shown by means of an interesting display of scenery in the lower part of heaven. When He speaks of one thing, fields appear planted with wheat or barley or oats, or other grain. When He speaks of another subject then vineyards appear, with their terraces, bearing the beautiful grapevines, with watch-towers, and with wine-presses.

Every Christian knows in a general way that when the Lord spoke of fields, and sowing seed in the field, He meant the minds of people in which is sown the truth of the Word. And so when they read of a vineyard and working in it, people know in a general way, that the Lord meant the church and working in the church.

But they have not known that there are two kinds of churches, one represented by a field, the other by a vineyard. Nor could we know it in the New Church, if the Lord had not opened the eyes of Swedenborg's spirit, so that he could see what takes place in the other world, and the wonderful scenes unrolling in the lower part of heaven, while the Lord fills the minds of the angels higher up with thoughts about spiritual and heavenly things; and also unless the Lord had instructed Swedenborg in the internal sense while he was reading the Word, so that he could make it known to men on earth.

Now, what do the angels of heaven learn from the Lord while the scene of a vineyard appears below them? They learn about the Lord's spiritual church, and how this is established by Him in the minds of men.

Remember that there are two kinds of churches: one called "celestial" and the other "spiritual;" the one being more in love with the good that comes from the Lord, and the other more in love with the truth which comes from Him. The vineyard means the second kind of church.

How do the people of this church show their love for the truth? They work for it. How? Why, they study it. They read and study the Word; and, in the New Church, they learn to understand the Word aright by studying the heavenly Doctrines of the New Jerusalem. This is the beginning of their work.

With grown people who have not been taught aright when they were young, learning the truth involves getting rid of mistaken ideas, and removing falsities.

What kind of falsities? Oh, there are many kinds. Here are a few: That Jesus Christ was only a good man, not Divine; that we must pray to St. Mary; that we must pray to God to do things for us "for Christ's sake;" that it does not matter what a man believes, so long as he lives a virtuous life; that the Bible is not the Word of God, but merely the literature of an interesting people, etc., etc. There are many mistaken ideas and falsities that people who learn the truth must get rid of, and it means hard work to get rid of them.

While the angels are thinking about these things, or talking about them among themselves, laborers appear down below in the vineyard, who are clearing the ground of stones, and rooting out weeds, for stones and weeds which obstruct the growth of the grapevines correspond to falsities which are in the way of truths.

And while the angels think of how the truths learned from the Word are loved and cherished and received as things to be obeyed, the vines down below shoot out leaves and buds; and while the angels talk about the good things that people do in consequence of living in accordance with the truth, the grapes on the vines down below are seen to grow larger and turn into the beautiful colors of ripe grapes.

While the angels think of evil habits that threaten to destroy the good thoughts and affections of a man who has learned the truth and strives to live according to it, there appear in the vineyard below, foxes and other thieves, who are driven away by the men on the watch-tower.

And as the angels further think about the good influences that are exerted on others through one's understanding of the truth and real genuine love for it and pleasure in it, the men of the vineyard are seen to labor in gathering the ripe grapes, and taking them to the wine-press to press the wine out of them.

Now you begin to see why the Lord spoke the parable about the men who labored in the vineyard. It means the work we have to do in removing false ideas out of our minds, in guarding against evils which are forbidden by the Lord's truth, and in doing good to others in accordance with the same truth.

Some people have a very hard time in doing all this. For they have long held false views and confirmed or strengthened themselves in them, by quotations from the Word which seem to teach

such falsities. It is hard for them to get rid of their old ideas, and they labor harder than others in doing so. Or, they may have had bad habits of life, and they have to work so hard to get rid of them that they sometimes sweat and cry, - it is so hard and painful. These are meant by the laborers who were hired early in the morning, bearing "the burden and the heat of the day." And they sometimes think that because they have labored so hard while on earth, they deserve to have, after death, a better heaven than others who have not had to work so hard, as for instance those who die young. Those who die as babies or as children are brought up in heaven, and do not have to labor so hard as many who grow up and spend a long life on earth; for they do not learn any false religions from their angel teachers, but the truth, and they do not acquire any evil habits, but soon discover and shun the evil which crops out from their inherited inclinations. These were meant by the Lord when He spoke of the laborers who were hired at the eleventh hour, and so worked only one hour in the vineyard.

But it is from the merciful goodness of the Lord, that He is willing to give heaven to all, and with it the truth of heaven; which is meant by the amount of money which the householder gave to all alike, whether they had come at daybreak, or at the eleventh hour.

## Lesson 29

### Matthew 21:1-22: Riding into Jerusalem

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

The Lord was journeying with the disciples toward Jerusalem. The road from Jericho climbs up into the hills - you can follow it on the map - and goes through a lonely desert country until it comes near to Jerusalem. It passes no town until it comes to the villages on the Mount of Olives. One of these villages is Bethany. It lay on a warm, sunny slope with gardens about it, and orchards of figs and olives. Do you remember people who lived in Bethany with whom the Lord used sometimes to stay? Another village, near to Bethany, was called Bethphage.

The Lord came to these villages on his way to Jerusalem.. It was the time of the great Passover feast which was kept each year in the spring. People were coming to the Passover from all parts of the land. Companies of pilgrims were meeting each other on the road and journeying on together.

Long before, one of the prophets had said that the King would come to Jerusalem, riding upon a young ass. It was the time for the prophecy to be fulfilled. The Lord sent two of His disciples into one of the villages to bring an ass's colt which they would find tied by a door, in a place where two ways met. He told them to say to anyone who asked why they loosed the colt, that the Lord had need of him. So they brought the young ass to the Lord and He rode on him. It made the people glad to see Him riding so, for in the old times, kings and judges used to ride on mules or asses. It seemed to the disciples that the Lord was now going to be their king - what they had long been hoping for.

We see them going before the Lord and following after, as He rode on over the hill to Jerusalem. Some were spreading their clothes and leafy branches as a carpet in the road. And they shouted,

"Hosanna!" which means "Save now;" and they called him the son of David. Others had come from Jerusalem to meet the Lord, with palm leaves in their hands, and joined in the glad shouts. So they passed over the hill and could look down upon the city and the temple, now gaily trimmed for the feast and filled with pilgrims. They went down the hill and in at the city gate, and all the city was moved. On the Sunday before Easter every year, we remember the Lord's riding into Jerusalem; it is called Palm Sunday from the palms that the people carried.

At night the Lord went out to Bethany, and in the morning came again into the city. One day He went into the temple and drove out from the temple courts the people that were selling animals and doves for sacrifice and those that were changing money, for they ought not to be doing these things in the temple; they were thinking about getting rich themselves and not about prayer and worship. The priests were angry. The people were glad - the blind and the lame and the children.

And one morning as the disciples came over the hill from Bethany with the Lord, the Lord spoke to a fig tree that was full of leaves but had no fruit, and said, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever," and it withered away. He did this to teach a lesson. A good man is "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season." But this tree with no fruit was like a man that does not do good useful works. He will lose his strength and beauty - will wither away.

## Junior

The chapter opens with the story of Palm Sunday, of the Lord's riding into Jerusalem. It will be interesting to compare the accounts in the four Gospels: Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19. Before you read the story, remember the occasion, how the Lord was coming from the country beyond Jordan to Jerusalem, by the road that passes Jericho and Bethany. It was the time of the Passover, and many pilgrims were taking the same journey. The prophecy that the King would come riding upon an ass, you find in Zechariah 9:9. Notice the saying in John 12:16, that the disciples did not remember the prophecy at the time, but after the Lord was glorified. Kings and judges used to ride on mules and asses. See reference to the custom in Judges 5:10; 10:3, 4; 12:14, 1 Kings 1:33-45.

Now you can enjoy the story. You can feel the enthusiasm of the disciples and the people, and of those who came out from Jerusalem to meet the Lord, as they waved their palms and shouted. And you can see that it pictures an enthusiasm that we ought to feel in welcoming the Lord as our King. Every day we say, "Thy kingdom come." There ought to be a gladness in making the Lord our King, and in obeying His laws. There may be hardship in it, but never mind, there is a wonderful strength and gladness. The palms too, the great feather-shaped palm leaves, were emblems of victory - victory in the strength of our Savior and King.

This entrance into the city was on Sunday, the Sunday before Easter. It will be worth while to make a careful list of the events of this last week. The rebuking of the fig tree and the cleansing of the temple belong to Monday. Tuesday morning, coming by the same way, they saw the fig tree withered, and there followed a long day of teaching in the temple, and parables spoken in the shade of evening on the Mount of Olives. There seems to be nothing told of Wednesday. On Thursday was the making ready of the Passover, and at evening the keeping of it with the Lord. That night was the trial in the high priests' palace, and in the early morning before Pilate. On

Friday was the crucifixion, on Saturday the Sabbath rest, and on Easter Sunday morning, the resurrection.

Our chapter today includes two of these events; the rebuking of the fig tree and the cleansing of the temple. You see at once that the fig tree was made a kind of parable or object lesson to teach something of spiritual life. You recall other places where a tree is the type of a man; and in that case what do the fruits of the tree represent? See, for example, Luke 3:8, 9; Matthew 7:15-20; Psalm 1:3. The fruits are the works, and good fruits are good works. To be more particular: figs represent works of natural kindness. The foliage, whose use is to digest the juices of the tree and prepare them for the fruit, represent the thought which prepares for the doing of good works. But suppose one knows what is good and thinks and talks about it, and gets no further; what kind of a tree is he like? And knowledge that is not used is soon forgotten, in the other world if not in this. The lesson of the fig tree applies to us all, but especially to the Jewish Church of that day, which had the Scriptures and plenty of knowledge, but no good, kind works. Such a church could not endure.

This cleansing of the temple reminds you of a similar event earlier in the Lord's ministry. (John 2:12-17) What does it show about the thoughts and feelings which we should bring into the Lord's house? When you remember that the Lord called Himself the temple what does it show that He was doing to make Himself the perfect dwelling-place of God with men?

1. Where was Bethany? What road led by the village? At what season did many people pass this way? Who lived in Bethany who loved the Lord?
2. Why is a certain Sunday in the spring called Palm Sunday? What are palms? Of what were they emblems? What did the people say who waved the palms?
3. What happened to a fig tree by the roadside? Why? What lesson did this teach?
4. Who were driven out from the temple by the Lord? Who were welcomed by Him there?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

When we pray, "Thy kingdom come," we ask that the Lord's truth may be received, and that its power may order and guide our lives. He comes as our King when the authority of His truth is acknowledged and its power is felt. See John 18:37. The welcome of the Lord on Palm Sunday represents this acknowledgment of Him as King. The careful discrimination in matters of natural right and justice which was exercised by kings and judges, was represented by the asses on which they rode. The Lord rode on an ass into Jerusalem - a young ass, on which no man ever had ridden - to show that He brought a new power of understanding the Divine truth of life. The spreading of garments and branches in the way represents the subjection of our thought to His instruction. The waving of palms and the Hosannas are confessions of the power of the Lord's truth to save. Palms are emblems of victory, and in their highest sense they are grateful acknowledgments of the Lord's power to save. Recall the palms in the Revelation, in the hands of those who cried, "Salvation to our God." (Revelation 7:9, 10) The whole scene describes our reception of the Lord

as King; our willing and glad submission to His instruction; our rejoicing in the power of His truth. (A. 2781, 8369; E. 458; R. 367)

In contrast with the palm with its single lofty stem, we have now the low-spreading, branching fig tree. The one represents the recognition of a lofty truth in regard to the Lord, the other truth in regard to kind uses to our neighbor on every hand. The sweet figs are types of kind uses of benevolence. Perhaps someone will make for the class a more careful study of the palm and the fig tree in "The Language of Parable." See also the chapter on "Leaf, Flower, and Fruit." You will then see more exactly what is represented by a fig tree with leaves but no fruit, and by its withering away. The Lord's hunger for the figs beautifully expresses His desire to find in the Jews and in us the good works which they represent. (E. 403; A. 885)

What did the tabernacle and the temple represent? Especially the church, and the Lord's own Divine Humanity. (John 2:19-22; Revelation 21:3) The traders and money changers in the temple, whom the Lord called thieves, are selfish greed, especially the desire to use holy things for personal advantage. The Lord drove out all traces of such selfishness from Himself, and He will drive it out for us so far as we are willing. Then the blind and the lame came to the Lord in the temple, and the children rejoiced. Those who were willing to be taught (the blind), and those who desired to be strengthened (the lame), recognized the Divine power in the Lord's Humanity, as day by day He cleansed and glorified it, as the proud priests did not. And childlike innocence in every heart was made glad. (E. 220, 325, 840; A. 3183, 5236)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### **Leading Thought: The Lord Jesus Christ, Our King**

While reading what our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ did, when on earth, it is very important to remember that he was "that prophet," who had been promised in Moses' time. Moses said to the people: "The Lord thy God shall raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him shall ye hearken. ... Jehovah said unto me, I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My Name, I will require it of him." (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, 19)

The Jews knew that this prophet had not made his appearance. Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, - in fact all the prophets that had visited Israel, none of these were the particular prophet promised.

Who then was that prophet? The Lord Jesus Christ.

Was He not our Lord? Yes, but He was also our Prophet, for He called Himself so, as you can see, if you wish, by turning to any of the following passages: Matthew 13:57; Mark 6:4; Luke 4:24; 13:33. The people realized that He was that prophet who had been promised in Moses' time, as you may see in John 6:14; 7:40; Luke 7:16. On this very occasion when He had entered the city of Jerusalem it was reported throughout the city that "This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." (Verse 11)

But what was a prophet? You will, perhaps, answer that he was one who foretells future events. That is only a small part of the true answer. A prophet was a teacher of the Word; and he taught in two ways. One was by telling people what the Lord told him. The other was by picturing forth, or representing, what the Lord wanted people to know. We have spoken of this before. But you need to be reminded of it so as to understand the Lord's entering into Jerusalem as a king. For kings and chief justices used to ride upon asses, since asses correspond to the reason. It was a badge of their office. So the Lord rode on an ass. Princes used to place their garments on the ass for the king to sit on. So this was done by the disciples for the Lord. People would lay garments or branches on the way for the king to pass over. So the people did this for the Lord. And all those who went before and those who went after shouted that He was king. Even the little children in the temple, whither He was going, took up the cry.

Yet the Lord was not intending to be an earthly king. He had told people clearly that His kingdom was not of this world. He knew that the Jews did not want Him. And yet He rode into Jerusalem as a king. Why did He do it? Because He was also a prophet, or a teacher, and by acting the part of an earthly king He taught by such representation that He was King of heaven, and of all who constitute His church on earth.

Now how does a king rule? By means of laws. No good king will ever rule arbitrarily, that is, force people to do what he wants. The king rules by means of law. And our great King, our Divine King, the Lord Jesus Christ, reigns by the Divine law, that is by the Divine truth. You know that the name "Christ" means the "anointed one" or "king;" while "Jesus" means Jehovah the Savior. The Lord saves us as we live according to His Divine law, or the Divine truth which He has given us in His holy Word.

This law tells us the good things that we must do, and the wrong things that we must shun. And as we shun the wrong things He cleanses us. He casts evil thoughts and wishes and pleasures out of our mind, just as He cast out the traders out of the temple. The temple represented the mind or soul of man. You see that what He did in the temple also "represented" or pictured forth what He does to the souls of men, just as His riding into the city as king "represented" that He was to rule their souls.

And the subsequent story about the drying up of the fig tree again "represented" what the Jewish Church was at that time. They did not do what was good in the Lord's sight - they brought forth no fruit, and therefore the Church among them came to an end, and the Lord established a new church of that time, which came to be called "The Christian Church," from the Lord's name "Christ," because He was acknowledged in it as king, whose Divine truth must be obeyed.

The story of the fig tree reminds us of the first Psalm. The man who studies the Lord's law and lives according to it, is "like a tree planted by streams of waters, whose leaf does not wither," and which "bringeth forth fruit in its season." But the fig tree did not bring forth fruit, for the Jewish Church which it represented did not live according to the Lord's Word. It had only leaves; and this means the things that were taught by the learned, the Rabbis and others, which they took from the Word, but misinterpreted. So the Lord "represented" the state of the Church by making the fig tree wither away. How do you suppose He did this? By not letting the spiritual nourishment which fed it, any longer flow in from the root.

## **Lesson 30**

### **Matthew 21:23-46: Wicked Husbandmen**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

We are now learning about the last week of the Lord's life on earth. It was Sunday when He rode into Jerusalem and the people welcomed Him with hosannas. The next Sunday would be Easter day. "And every day He was teaching in the temple; and every night He went out and lodged in the mount that is called the mount of Olives." (Luke 21:37, Revised Version) The Gospel of Mark gives the order of events most definitely. It was Monday that the fig tree was rebuked and the traders were driven from the temple. The next day in the temple the chief ones of the priests and Jews came to the Lord, asking by what authority He did these things. They meant His teaching, and especially His driving out the traders.

If they had been good men and had listened to John the Baptist's teaching and repented they would have felt the Divine goodness of the Lord, and would have known who He was. Remember that when the disciples of John saw the Lord's works of mercy, it was answer enough to the question which John sent them to ask. (Matthew 11:2-6) See also Luke 7:29, 30, and John 9:17-38. We see why the Lord answered the question about His authority by another question about the baptism of John. If they had listened to John, they would have known Him. If not there was no way in which He could tell them.

We think of the angry priests standing about the Lord in the courts of the temple, and a crowd of people eagerly listening and ready with an answer, when in this parable and the next the Lord stopped to ask a question. He told of two sons who were sent by their father to work in his vineyard. We know that it means the Lord and us. Every day there is a chance to do something for the Lord. Every morning He says to us, "Son, go work today in my vineyard."

Tell me about a vineyard: The grapevines trailed on rails or stone walls, the wall or hedge about it, the tower for the watchman, the wine-press cut into the rock where the grapes were trodden out. As you read about the vineyard in Isaiah 5:1-7, and Psalm 80:8-16, in both places you see that the vineyard means the Lord's people. The husbandmen who are given charge of the vineyard are those who have the Scriptures and know about the Lord and heaven.

At the time the Lord was speaking they were especially the Jews and their priests and teachers, and we know how little fruit of good kind works they were bearing. But let us remember that at this day the Lord has taught us about heaven, and we are the husbandmen. Are we faithful? As we read of the messengers sent to the husbandmen we think of the prophets who came to teach and help the people, but they hardly listened to them; and when we read of the son coming last of all, we think of the Lord Himself. But the priests hated Him, and while the Lord was speaking in the temple, they were plotting how they could kill Him.

1. Where did the Lord spend the days of this last week of His life on earth? Where did He spend the nights?

2. What had He done in the temple which made the priests ask for His authority? What question did He ask in answer to the priests?
3. What parable about a vineyard have we learned in another lesson? Tell me the parable of the two sons. Tell me the parable of the husbandmen.
4. Who were meant by the disobedient son and the wicked husbandmen? Who else are meant?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

In parables of a vineyard we see that the vineyard means the Lord's people or His church. But sometimes the Lord's people are called a flock, and He the shepherd. What is the difference? What quality or element of the church, or in each soul, is meant by the sheep? What by the vineyard? The sheep mean the heavenly affection; the vineyard or the vine means the heavenly intelligence which understands things of heaven and carries out its understanding in good works. Parables about the vineyard are about the precious truth which the Lord has given us, and the use we make of it. (A. 5113, 9139)

The words to the two sons, "Go work in my vineyard," are to us all. We say, I go, and go not, when we know what is right and do not do it. Those who do wrong through ignorance, and repent when they learn better, are like the son who said, I go not, and afterward went. Of which kind were the learned Jews? Of which kind were many of the publicans and sinners?

The Lord prepares the vineyard when He gives us the ability and opportunity to learn heavenly truth and to live from it. He hedges about the tender spiritual intelligence with knowledge of what is outwardly right and proper. The wine-press means the ability to enter deeply into life and to enjoy an inner blessing even through experiences of trial and temptation. The tower is the ability to rise into inner thought and look down upon ourselves, to correct our life where there is danger of going wrong.

Having given us these faculties the Lord goes into a far country; He does not make us always conscious of His presence, but leaves us free to use His gifts well or to neglect them. Sending three times for the fruit suggests the Lord's desire at each stage of our development for the good life appropriate to that stage; and it means His effort at all times and in every possible way, through angels and prophets, through His Word and every heavenly influence, to lead us to bear the fruits of goodness. Killing the servants means the total rejection of the Lord's appeals. Stoning them means especially intellectual rejection; for stones represent facts, or here, false thoughts contrary to the Lord's Word. Beating seems to represent the other kind of opposition, opposition of the will to the Lord's goodness.

The conspiracy of the husbandmen suggests the hatred of the Jews against the Lord, and also the banding together of evil spirits of hell to do their utmost to overcome Him. A church which does not use the Lord's truth in good life ceases to be the Lord's church; and every soul that does not render the fruits of goodness sooner or later loses its intelligence and other spiritual faculties, the precious vineyard which the Lord entrusted to it. (E.922)

The stone which the Jewish priests, the builders of the church in those days, were rejecting was the Lord, especially the eternal fact of His Divine presence in the world. When Peter confessed His Divinity the Lord said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." (Matthew 16:18) The apostles knew that the Lord meant Himself when He spoke of the cornerstone. (I Peter 2:1-6; Ephesians 2:20) If we oppose ourselves to any eternal truth of the natural world or the spiritual world, it is not the truth that suffers but we. To fall upon the stone describes a less serious opposition due to failure to understand the truth; to be crushed beneath the stone means the destruction of spiritual life when the opposition is deep and of the heart. (E. 417)

## Lesson 31

### Matthew 22:1-22: Tribute to Caesar

#### THE STORY

##### Junior

It was Tuesday, and the Lord was teaching in the temple courts. It is sad as we read of the Lord's teaching, to see how little the leaders of the people cared to listen to Him. They were even plotting how they could take Him, and inventing questions to entrap Him in His talk. This is still more sad when we remember that it was the last day of the Lord's public teaching.

The Lord spoke a parable about a marriage feast. It brings to mind what we learn in other places about an Eastern marriage. In the parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) we have the picture of the bridegroom bringing the bride to the house where the feast is spread, their friends waiting to join them on the way. In the story of the marriage at Cana (John 2: 1-11) we have the picture of a marriage feast. The story of Samson (Judges 14:10-12) tells of a wedding feast that lasted seven days. As you read the parable you will not need help to see who the King is who makes the feast, and who the people are who turn away and will not come.

Notice the last verses of the parable. (Verses 11-13) The king would give wedding garments to the guests. If one of them did not have on such a garment it was because he did not wish to wear one. He was cast into outer darkness. Perhaps it means the dark night outside the lighted hall, or perhaps a dark dungeon in the king's palace. Who can be meant by this man without a wedding garment? Plainly he is one who tries to enter heaven, who is not heavenly in character. There is no place for him there. He cannot endure the light of heaven, for his state is one of darkness. Such experiences are described in A. 2132, H. 48, and other places, where it is made very plain that the Lord does not cast anyone out of heaven, but the disagreement of his own life with the life of heaven.

In reading the verses about the tribute money, you see the cunning of the Pharisees in sending some of their disciples with the Herodians to ask the question. It was a much disputed question, whether it was right to pay the Roman tax. The Pharisees said that it was not, that tribute ought not to be paid to any one but God. The Herodians were friendly to the Romans. They thought if the Lord said, Yes, He would offend the Pharisees; if He said, No, He would offend the Herodians. But He showed that both tributes are right, each in its place. We have duties to the Lord and duties to

earthly rulers. A man ought to be a good citizen, faithful in paying his taxes and in voting, and doing his other duties as a citizen, and also faithful in his duty to the church and to the Lord. He ought to obey the laws of health which keep his body well, and to obey the laws of spiritual life which make his spirit strong.

1. What difference do you find between this parable of the marriage feast and the parable in Luke 14:16-24?
2. What things do you find alike between this parable and the parable of the wicked husbandmen?
3. Who is meant by the king? What is meant by the feast which he prepares?
4. Who were the Pharisees? The Herodians? Who was Caesar? What else have we learned about the penny?
5. Is the accusation true or false in Luke 23:2?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Let someone find for us other places where heaven is called a feast and explain to us why it is so called. (Isaiah 25:6; Luke 16:16; Revelation 19:9) The food and drink are the goodness and the truth, and in general all things which the Lord gives which make the life of heaven satisfying and happy.

Can we also see why heaven is called a marriage and a marriage feast? Because heaven is a union with the Lord; and in the life of every angel love and wisdom are united. (E. 252, 617)

The preparing of the feast by the king represents the Lord's Divine care to prepare for us the blessings of heavenly life. "All things are now ready." He does His part, all that He can do; it only waits for us to do our part to receive His blessings. The oxen represent external affections of the heavenly life, the fatlings interior affections. The farm and the merchandise seem to stand especially for the conceit in knowledge and intellectual power, which led the Jews and which lead us to despise the heavenly life which the Lord offers. The king's anger when the guests would not come suggests the intensity of the Lord's desire that we shall receive His gifts. The punishment of those who were bidden and would not come describes the inevitable destruction by the fire of their own evil, of those who have opportunity but willfully reject the Lord and heaven. The people brought in from the highways are those who can be led to a life that is outwardly good; but among them there are both bad and good. The king's coming in to see the guests suggests the Lord's looking into our hearts, seeing the real character of our life; also the revealing of our inner character when we die. Then if the spirit of heaven is not there, all appearance of heavenly life and heavenly wisdom is lost; there is no wedding garment. Binding hand and foot means that such a hypocrite can no longer do works that seem good, and even his evil acts must be restrained. Casting into outer darkness means that the power to see truth is gone. The wailing is the unhappiness of evil affection; the gnashing of teeth is the conflict of false thought. (E. 195; A. 2132)

Can someone apply the lesson of tribute to Caesar and to God, to our duty as citizens of the country and members of the church? To our care for the natural body and for the soul? A well-balanced life must be outwardly in touch with the world, and inwardly in touch with God.

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### **Leading Thought: The Things That are God's and the Things which are Caesar's**

Our last lesson treated of the beautiful story of the Lord's riding into Jerusalem as King, and we learned that there are two kinds of kings. The one kind rules over a kingdom that belongs to this world; the other rules over the kingdom that is not of this world.

Kings of the world maintain order among men: they see to it that people can go about their business peacefully, without interference by thieves and robbers. If there is wrong done, they see to it that the wrong is righted. They provide for the opening and maintenance of streets and roads; and in very many other ways insure the peaceful and happy living together of the citizens of the kingdom.

The Lord's kingdom, although it is not of the world, is nevertheless in the world. The difference is that the worldly kingdom has to do with things of the world on earth; the Lord's kingdom has to do with heavenly things upon earth.

Affairs that belong to a worldly kingdom are called "civil," or, "belonging to the State"; the affairs that belong to the Lord's kingdom on earth are called "ecclesiastical," or "belonging to the church." "Ecclesiastical" affairs, therefore, and "civil" affairs are quite distinct. They belong to two different regions of our being. And they must also be kept in order. And this is what the Lord teaches us in today's lesson, where He says, "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

When the Lord Jesus Christ was on earth the chief king who ruled over the worldly affairs of the land of Judea was entitled "Caesar." He was the emperor of the Roman Empire, to which the land of Judea belonged where Jerusalem was.

The Pharisees, and the political party called the Herodians, wanted to catch the Lord by their question. They thought they could make Him say that the tribute should not be paid to Caesar because Jesus Himself was king. They could not understand that the Lord did not want to be an earthly or worldly king, and so when He told them to give Caesar whatever was due to him, but not to neglect giving God what was due to Him, they were astonished and left Jesus.

They did not make the distinction, which you can and will make, between things of the world, and things of heaven.

In order that the two may be kept distinct, the Lord has given us two minds, one of which is engaged in learning about the world and how to do business in the world, how to take care of our bodies, our homes, our work, how to behave toward others in a polite and courteous and honest and moral and just manner; and the other mind is engaged with things that belong to the Lord, with love to Him and His heavenly kingdom, and is filled with truths that show how the love is to be carried out.

The things that tell us about the world are called "civil and moral" truths. The truths that tell us about the Lord are called "spiritual," and "celestial" or "heavenly" truths.

How very distinct the things that are God's are from those that are Caesar's; or, to put it in another way, how very distinct "civil truths" are from "spiritual truths"; we can see from this, that a man may be a very good citizen, he may obey all the laws of his country, and yet not be a member of the Lord's kingdom; he may not care for the Lord, nor believe in Him and so not learn His laws nor obey Him. But one who is a loyal and true member of the Lord's kingdom, or of His church, will also be a true and loyal citizen of his country.

Why is this? Because, being loyal and obedient to his Divine King, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, he obeys this same law of the Lord's, "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Don't you see, that if he should fail to obey the laws of his country, he would not be obeying the law of the Lord, which tells him to obey them?

The tribute money was a tax. And one of the most important things for a citizen of a country to do is to pay his taxes and duties. To try to evade paying them is to be disloyal to his country and to his Lord.

To be a good citizen and to be a good churchman, we must learn the laws of our-country and the laws of heaven, and be true to both.

## **Lesson 32**

### **Matthew 22:23-46: The Two Great Commandments**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

It was the last day of the Lord's teaching in the temple. Pharisees and Herodians had tried to entangle Him in His talk, asking about the tribute money. Then there came Sadducees. They brought a question from the law of Moses, for they believed in the law of Moses, but not in the traditions of the Pharisees. They did not believe in a resurrection and life in heaven; for they said that the law of Moses did not teach it. They asked about a woman who was married in turn to seven brethren; whose wife she should be if there were a resurrection.

The Lord's answer showed that the law of Moses does teach that there is a resurrection. The Lord said to Moses at the burning bush, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." It meant that these and all other good men were living in heaven. The Lord also told the Sadducees in His answer, that marriage, in heaven is not such marriage as they knew. If they understood more about heaven, and how marriage and all other relations there are just according to each one's character, such questions as they asked would all be answered.

You have learned the Two Great Commandments. They had been given to the people long before, the first in Deuteronomy 6:5 and the second in Leviticus 19:18. They are not among the Ten Commandments which were written upon the tables, but they have the same meaning. All the

lessons of the Bible are included in these commandments. That is what the Lord meant when He said, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. "How shall we love our neighbor? How shall children love their father and mother, or their brothers and sisters? Is it enough to feel fond of them, or to kiss them and tell them that we love them? If we really love them we shall try first of all not to do things to trouble them, and we shall try to do all that we can to help them and please them. If we love our neighbor as ourselves we shall want to share with others any good thing that we have, and we shall be as quick to think what they want as what we want. And how can we love the Lord? In the same way as we love one another, by not doing the things which displease Him, and by doing what we know He wants us to do. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments," the Lord said to the disciples. We love Him every time that we try to do right. We love Him with heart and soul and mind, with our hands and tongue and voice and every other power that we have, when we make our faculties do His will.

The question, "What think ye of Christ?" reminds us of the question which the Lord asked the disciples at Caesarea Philippi. Peter then answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," but the Pharisees answered, "The son of David." He seemed to them only a man. Again the Lord showed them out of their own law that they were wrong; for in a Psalm (110: 1) David had called the Christ who was coming "Lord," and that showed that He was more than a man. We must keep the Two Great Commandments, and we must know and acknowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ is God. This is all that the Lord asks. (Micah 6:8)

1. Who were the Pharisees? Who were the Sadducees? What did the Sadducees believe in regard to resurrection?
2. Were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob living when the Lord spoke to Moses at the bush? Where?
3. What is the first Great Commandment? How can I love the Lord with my mind? With my hand? With my voice?
4. What is the second Great Commandment? Who is our neighbor? How did the Lord teach who the neighbor is? Can we love a person in any other way than by being fond of him? How?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The Lord's answer to the Sadducees is often quoted as proof that there is no marriage in heaven. It does mean that there is no such marriage as the, Sadducees knew, but there is heavenly marriage. Heaven itself is called a marriage and a marriage feast, because the very essence of it is a holy union with the Lord, and because in the heavenly life there is a marriage of truth and goodness in each angel. Yet the marriage with the Lord, and the marriage of truth and goodness do not begin in heaven, but have their beginning in the life of this world. The same is true of marriage among the angels; it depends upon their character, and the character is formed in this world. So it is true in every sense, that while there is marriage in heaven, there is no giving in marriage there; it does not have its beginning there but in this life. (M. 41, 44)

In the story of the seven brethren the Sadducees were unconsciously describing their own spiritual state. The wife represents the affection for heavenly truth and life; in a word, the church among them. The brethren who successively married her and died without children, represent the natural, worldly spirit, like that of the Sadducees themselves, in which the church had been held, totally unproductive of spiritual life. The number seven in a good sense is associated with what is complete and holy, but here it suggests that the unheavenly spirit had been carried to the last extreme. Last of all the woman died also; the church could not longer exist in such hands.

We have thought of the first Great Commandment as requiring service of the Lord with all our faculties. The heart means especially the inner affection and purpose; the soul means the inner understanding and thought; the mind means the more external faculties, as is still more plain in, Luke, where mind and strength are both mentioned. We are to serve the Lord in affection and thought and action; these in general include all our powers. (A. 9936)

In Luke 10: 2 5-3 7 we read that when the Lord spoke the Two Great Commandments, He was asked, "Who is my neighbor?" and He gave the parable of the good Samaritan, to teach that the neighbor is one who shows mercy. We keep something of this meaning in the word "neighborly." Our neighbors are not merely those who live near to us, but all who are kind and useful and who try to do right. If we love our neighbor we try to see the goodness in everyone and to encourage and help it. Associations or bodies of people also stand for use and goodness of different kinds, are our neighbor, as well as individuals. Societies and the nation and the church are our neighbor according to the good use that each does. The commandment requires that we shall serve the neighbor in these larger forms, giving faithful service to our country and loyal devotion to the church. (T. 415, 416)

The Lord quoted from the Psalm, "Jehovah said unto my Lord (that is, unto Christ), Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." He pointed out that David called Him Lord, and that He was therefore more than human. In a deeper sense the words teach how the Divine love in the Lord (Jehovah) gave Him all power (right hand) to overcome every form of evil (make thine enemies thy footstool), till He became wholly Divine. (E. 298)

## **Lesson 33**

### **Matthew 24: The Second Coming**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

The Lord had been teaching in the temple courts on the Tuesday of that last week. Perhaps it was toward sunset that He left the temple. (Matthew 24:1-3.) The disciples pointed out the great stones of the buildings, and of the wall that rose up from the hillside to support the temple courts. He told them that these would all be overthrown; and before forty years had passed, the Roman army came under Titus and the city was destroyed and the temple was burned. But we all know that fine buildings do not make a church, but truth and goodness in the lives of the people. When

the Lord said that the temple would fall, He meant that there was almost nothing of truth and goodness left among the Jews.

So they crossed the Kidron, and as the Lord sat on the Mount of Olives, looking down with love and pity on the ungrateful city, He told to Peter and James and John and Andrew (Mark 13:3) other things about the destruction that was coming. There would be a natural destruction by the Roman armies, but the Lord was far more grieved because truth and goodness were coming to an end among His people.

And the Lord went on to tell the four disciples about things that would come to the Christian Church which He was beginning and leaving in their care. He told them in parables, which they did not understand very well at the time, and which could not be really understood until the things that He foretold had taken place. He said that the sun and moon would be darkened. As we study the history of the Christian Church we do not find that the natural sun and moon were darkened, but that there came times of great darkness in men's minds, of great ignorance about the Lord and heavenly things. The Lord said that then He would come again in the clouds of heaven. He has not come again in the clouds of the natural sky, and He never will come so; but we find that Christian people are awaking to the fact that the Lord is still living with us and are finding new interest in studying the Bible.

And all this centers around the revelation of the deeper meaning of the Bible which was given by the Lord through Swedenborg. The letter of the Bible is the cloud; it had been dark, but from that time it has been brightening and opening and showing people that the Lord is near. This is the second coming of the Lord.

He said that His coming would be like the budding of the fig tree in the spring, when it begins to form its sweet fruit. It meant that people would begin to think more about good works of kindness. And this sign has come true at the present time. People now are thinking a great deal about caring for the sick and the poor, and teaching little children, and being kind to animals; and all this is new in the world. It is the budding of the fig tree, the sign that the Lord has come.

The Lord commands us to watch and be ready for His coming. Does it mean that we ought to stand looking up into the sky? He is not coming in that way. But He wants that we shall be interested in the new teaching from the Bible, and that we shall receive the new spirit of kindness and learn to feel that He is with us.

And there is another way in which the Lord comes to each one. He comes to call us to the other world. No one can know the day and hour when the Lord will come for him. Ought we to be afraid and anxious about it? Surely not; and yet we must watch. It means that we must try always to do as the Lord wants us to do, and then whether it is by night or day, whether we are children or young men or old men, we are watching and are ready when the Lord comes for us.

1. How did the apostles expect that the Lord would come again? How has He really come again?
2. What are the clouds in which He comes?
3. In what special way does the Lord come to each one of us? How can we watch for His coming?

4. How are we stewards? What has the Lord left in our charge?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The Lord spoke the sad words about His church, sitting on the Mount of Olives. It means that He was speaking from the tenderest Divine love. Mountains represent states of heavenly affection, especially the Mount of Olives, for the precious oil and the olives are emblems of perfect love. Read Psalm 125:2. (A. 10261; R. 336)

It was predicted of the time of the Lord's first coming, that it would be dark. (Isaiah 60:1, 2; Joel 2:10; 3:15) But then as at the Lord's second coming, the darkness was not in the natural sky, but in the minds of men. The light of understanding of heavenly things had gone out. The fullest kind of understanding is represented by the fiery sun: it is the perception of a loving heart. A less degree is represented by the moon; it is a clear intelligence. The least degree is represented by the stars; they fall from heaven when even the little bits of knowledge about heavenly things are lost. (Revelation 6:12, 13; E. 401-403; R. 332-334; A. 1808)

The Lord said that He would come in the clouds. He revealed Himself to the children of Israel in a pillar of cloud and fire. A dark cloud veiled His presence on Mount Sinai, and a bright cloud on the mountain of transfiguration. The Psalms too speak of His making the clouds His chariot. The cloud must represent something which He uses as a means of veiling and yet revealing His Divinity to us. The clouds are made of water, and water is a symbol of truth which shows what is wrong and what is right to do. Where is there such truth which conceals and yet reveals the Lord? The letter of the Word. Angels attend His coming, and they, like prophets, represent in an impersonal sense the many messages of truth which come to us from the Lord. The sound of a trumpet, like the trumpet at Mount Sinai and the trumpets at Jericho, is a symbol of the great power of the Lord's truth. (A. 4060, 10574)

How do you suppose the disciples understood the words of the 34th verse? The words really meant that some little of the elements of heaven which the disciples represented, especially something of the love represented by John (John 21:22, 23), would endure through the dark times till brighter times should come. (E. 821; R. 17) For another interesting meaning of the words see A. 3470, 4231.

The Lord likened His coming to the days of Noah. For the story of Noah also describes a dark time in the church, when the Lord revealed Himself anew to men. Then as in the Christian Church, men were going their own ways heedlessly. Yet while all people seemed much alike to men, the Lord knew that some had a heavenly spirit in their lives, and some did not. This is meant by two being together; the one being taken and the other left. (A. 4332-4335)

The Lord says that we are stewards, and asks us to be faithful stewards. If we make good use of our little powers and opportunities in this world, what will happen when we come into the other world? If we make bad use of them here, what will happen there?

## **Lesson 34**

### **Matthew 25: Parables of Judgment**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

As the Lord sat with some of the disciples in the twilight on the Mount of Olives, looking down upon Jerusalem, He spoke three parables.

He told them about ten virgins who were waiting to meet a bridegroom as he brought home his bride to the marriage supper. For it was the custom in that country for the bride to be brought with rejoicing to the bridegroom's house, and many friends joined the glad procession. In the parable it was at night, and the virgins had their lamps. The lamps most commonly used were little earthen saucers, covered over except a hole near the middle where the oil was poured in and a hole at one end where the wick was lighted. They burned olive oil. Let me read you the story, and you will see why some of the virgins are called wise and some foolish. (Matthew 25:1-13)

What does the parable mean? The first line tells us that it is a lesson of the kingdom of heaven. You will see that the marriage feast means heaven, and verse 13 makes it plain that the coming of the bridegroom is the coming of the Lord, as He comes for each one of us and calls us to the other world. But some are ready and able to go in to the marriage and some are not. They have no oil. What can it mean; empty lamps, no oil? What is the oil which is so necessary for heaven? The oil of love to the Lord and one another. If we do not gain it in this world, shall we be able to gain it when we die?

Another parable was about a man who traveled into a far country, and before leaving home gave money to his servants to make use of until he came back again. A talent was a great sum of money. To one servant he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; for he knew what amount each one was able to make good use of. And what did the servants do with the money? What could they tell their master when, after a long time, he came back and reckoned with them? Listen and I will read you this story. (Verses 14-30) As you hear the story you will see that the master in the parable is the Lord, and that we are the servants who have abilities of many kinds entrusted to us to use. The talent was a weight of silver equal to more than a thousand dollars. It is from this parable that all abilities are called talents.

Plainly all talents are given us to use for the Lord, and not to be kept idle. What happens to talents that are well used, as knowledge or strength or skill of any kind? They increase, and faithful use of them prepares us for still larger uses in the other world. And what becomes of knowledge and other talents if we do not use them? We forget the knowledge, we lose the ability, in the other world if not in this. In heaven knowledge and all good things are given only to those who will use them well.

The other story is about a shepherd with his sheep and goats. This story explains itself as it goes along. It says plainly that the shepherd is the Lord. Do you know a Psalm which calls the Lord a shepherd? And in the Psalm who are the sheep that He leads in green pastures and beside still

waters, and protects with His rod and staff? Often sheep and goats follow the same shepherd, the sheep feeding in the softer grass in the valley and the goats climbing the rocky hillside. In the story we think of the shepherd coming at evening to the fold and separating the sheep from the goats, each to go to their own place for the night. So the Lord separates us when we go to the other world. The story tells us who the two kinds of people are. They are those who have done good, kind things and loved to do them, and those who have not done good, kind things, or have done them only for show. See, as I read the story, which kind of people are called sheep, and which are called goats. You will see, too, which kind the Lord wishes us to be, and which can live in heaven. (Verses 31-46)

1. What were the ten virgins waiting for? Why could some go in to the feast and others not? What is the oil that we must have, to be ready for heaven?
2. What did the man give to his servants before taking his journey? What did he expect them to do with it?
3. What will become of knowledge that we do not make use of?
4. Who are meant by the sheep in the parable, and who by the goats? When are they separated?
5. How can we do any good, kind thing to the Lord?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The chapter is made up of three lessons of the judgment: the parables of the oil, and of the talents, and the lesson of the sheep and goats, which is hardly a parable, but a picture full of beautiful representatives. Each relates particularly to one element of character: Oil is the type of love, the silver talent is the type of knowledge, and the story of the sheep and goats relates to works, and shows the difference between works that prepare for heaven and those that do not. The meaning of each parable has been in a general way suggested. Take each by itself and consider a few particulars which will make the lesson more full.

Virgins represent those who love truth and desire to live from the Lord. (R.620) Here the ten virgins represent those who are really in this desire and also those who only appear to be in it. The oil is the love of the Lord and goodness. The lamps and vessels represent the outward forms of faith and life which should contain and express the love. The sleeping of all describes the dullness of our spiritual faculties in this life. The inability to borrow oil or to buy it in time to enter with the bridegroom suggests the impossibility after death of gaining a heavenly love if we have not gained it in life in this world; one cannot live and love for another. The closing of the door and the refusal of the bridegroom express no unwillingness of the Lord to give the joys of heaven, but the impossibility of enjoying heaven if the love of heaven is not in the heart. We know neither the day nor the hour when the Lord will come for each one. If the life of heaven is within our natural life, we are watchful and always ready. (E. 675; R. 158; A. 4635-4638)

The traveling of the man into a far country describes the Lord's seeming remoteness, in order that we may be free in serving Him. The silver committed to each one represents strictly the spiritual knowledge which the Lord gives to each one of us to use. The five talents and two talents describe different qualities of knowledge, the five meaning knowledge received in an innocent, childlike way, and the two, knowledge received in a more intellectual, youthful way. Each sum was doubled, which suggests the adding to each knowledge its appropriate goodness as it is faithfully used. The one talent means knowledge which remains alone; it is not used and is not joined with goodness. The words to the servant with one talent show that we ought to use the knowledge that is given us, even if it seems a hard duty and the Lord severe. Blessing will follow. Knowledge that is not used is not remembered in the other world. The giving of the one talent to him who had ten, suggests, among other things, that even from a bad person one may learn a truth and put it to good use. (E. 675 A. 7770; P. 16, 17)

The nations are gathered for judgment. The word "nations" refers to kinds of human affection, and it is by this that men are judged. Sheep are types of innocent affection; goats in a good sense have a similar meaning, but with this difference, that sheep represent a more tender, loving innocence, and goats innocence of a more intellectual kind. So in a bad sense goats may mean the mere knowledge of good life without genuine goodness. The sheep are on the right hand, for this hand means the power of love in actions, while the left hand means thought without love. The works of charity named represent also works of spiritual charity, of ministry to men's souls. The hungry and thirsty are those who desire goodness and truth. The stranger or sojourner is one who is willing to be instructed. The naked are those who know that they have nothing of goodness and truth. The sick and in prison are those who feel that they are in evil and falsity. The good are called to the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. The Lord's purpose for them is realized. The evil also have their place, and the Lord's care attends them, but it is not the fulfillment of His purpose. (A. 4807-4810, 4954-4959, 5063-5071)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Judgment

We have three of the Lord's parables in this lesson. The first is about ten virgins who were going to a wedding. The second is about three stewards who received money to trade with. The third is about sheep and goats. All three tell us about what happens when people die, and that it makes a great difference whether they have led good lives or bad lives. For when people die, the Lord judges them according to the life they have lived here. The good go to heaven, the evil to hell.

But this judgment does not always take place directly after death; that is to say, on the day of their resurrection. Those who have become thoroughly good while on earth, and have known and loved the truths of heaven and the church, are judged at once to heaven. Others who have been at heart thoroughly bad, although they pretended to be good, are at once judged to hell. But most people stay for some length of time, for several days, several weeks, several months, or several years - none longer than thirty years - in the world of spirits until they are judged to heaven or to hell. It takes time to prepare the good for heaven, for often they have faults, or mistaken ideas about religion, which must first be corrected.

This is the way it has been since the year 1757. It was different before that year. Nearly all the people who lived from the time that our Lord was in the world, until 1757, continued to live in the world of spirits, which is between heaven and hell, until that year, when the great Last judgment was held.

In some places the good lived together, in other places the wicked lived together, in others again the good and evil were mixed. For the most part the wicked were the ones who had the most beautiful houses and palaces, and were the rulers. They had magnificent churches, and conducted worship in them, but they did not believe in the worship, but carried it on so as to be respected by the good and be able to rule over them. Some of the good were kept in "the lower earth," a region in the lower parts of the world of spirits, where are the ways that lead to hell, and where they were surrounded and often troubled and persecuted by the wicked. But the Lord kept them in mind and watched over them. Their condition was just like that of the children of Israel when these lived in the land of Goshen, in the midst of Egypt, where they suffered hard things; yet the Lord remembered them and finally carried them away.

Not only Christians, but also Jews and Mohammedans and idolaters, remained in the vast world of spirits until the Last Judgment. The most wicked and hypocritical of them lived on mountains, and through their pretended goodness deceived even some of the angels of the lower heavens. They seemed to themselves to be in heaven, but it was not a true but a false heaven.

All this went on until "the Son of Man came with His holy angels." Then the sheep, that is, the good, were separated from the wicked, the goats, and the good were raised into heaven and the wicked cast into hell. The beautiful mountains where the wicked had been living were shaken by earthquakes. The great cities they had built there went to pieces. The magnificent cathedrals and palaces, and their rich treasure chambers were all destroyed. And what do you suppose became of that great extent of mountain country where they had lived? It was given in possession to the good who had lived in the lower earth, and who were led forth by the Lord. Just as the land of Canaan, which had been inhabited by the seven idolatrous nations, was given to the children of Israel to live in, so the false or former heaven passed away, and the Lord formed the new heaven.

It took an entire year to execute this Last Judgment in 1757. Swedenborg saw it taking place, and he has written about it in several of his works, especially in the one entitled On the Last Judgment and on Babylon Destroyed, which you will want to read some time. In his Spiritual Diary he gives outline pictures of scenes at the time of the Last Judgment.

The Lord actually appeared among the angels in the spiritual world at the time. You may be sure that the good people were made very happy indeed by the judgment. As happy as the children of Israel, and indeed much happier than they, when, after their slavery in Egypt, and after their forty years' wanderings in the wilderness, they entered the land of Canaan and came into possession of it.

What caused the judgment after seventeen hundred years? It was the coming of the Lord, for when He comes then people can no longer pretend. He is the Truth and the Light, which sees through everything, and exposes everything, so that people appear just as they really are.

You will remember that the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world the second time, not in person, but as the truth of His Word. He revealed the truth about Himself, about the Word, about the

other life, about the Church, about the life people must lead here, and these revelations of Divine truth constitute the heavenly Doctrines of the New Church, which the Lord taught Swedenborg to write out and publish in books in the world. Without this revelation, which came to people in the spiritual world as well as to people in the natural world, the Last Judgment could not have been executed, for the Lord judges people by means of the Truth. And, therefore, some of the revelations were made before the Last Judgment.

Perhaps you will ask whether, if there was a judgment at the Second Coming of the Lord, there was one at His First Coming?

Yes. All the people who had lived since the time of the flood were judged by the Lord at the time that He was in the world. There was a general judgment then, and the Lord spoke of it, when He said, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." (John 12:31) "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." (Luke 10:18)

There will never again be such a general judgment. For now and forever people are judged soon after they enter the other world by the death of the material body.

## Lesson 35

### Matthew 26:1-35: The Last Supper

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

There are two beautiful stories in our chapter today, both of them about the Lord sitting at the table—or reclining; for in those days they did not sit at the table in chairs, but reclined on low couches around the table. The first story is of a supper that they made for the Lord in Bethany, the little village on the Mount of Olives, where the Lord often stayed and where two sisters and their brother lived whom He loved. Do you remember their names, and anything about them? We hear of them again in this story, for Martha served at the supper, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with the Lord, and Mary - the story is about her and what she did.

Mary came behind the Lord as He reclined at the table, bringing an alabaster box or jar of ointment of spikenard, very precious; she broke the jar and poured the ointment on His head and feet, and wiped His feet with her hair. Alabaster is a white stone like marble. The little jar may have had a slender neck which Mary broke, or it may be that she broke the seal that held the lid. The ointment was made of olive oil made sweet with the blossoms of nard, which grew in India or Arabia. As Mary poured out the ointment and wiped the Lord's feet the house was filled with the sweet odor. It was a very precious gift that Mary made; some of those at the table said that it was too precious, that it was wasteful; but Mary did it because she loved the Lord. To Him it was a token of her love, and He was glad to have her do it. It is like a sweet odor in the house when any kind, loving thing is done; some may say it is wasteful, not worth while, but it is precious to the Lord. Let me read verses 6-13.

The other supper that we learn about was in Jerusalem. The Lord sent two of the disciples, Peter and John, from Bethany to make ready; for it was the time when all the people in Jerusalem, and many who had come from other places for the purpose, kept the Passover. He told the two disciples how they would find the house, by following a man who carried a pitcher or jar of water, and how the keeper of the house would show them a large upper room furnished. It all happened as the Lord told them, and they made things ready - the lamb, the bitter herbs, the unleavened bread, the preserve of fruits, and the wine. In the evening the Lord came with the other disciples, and He gathered them about Him at the table.

(If possible show Leonardo da Vinci's picture of the Last Supper.) If you count the men at the table with the Lord, you will find that there are twelve. They are the twelve apostles. They are troubled and are earnestly talking about something; they are asking, "Lord, is it I?" For the Lord had told them that one of them would betray Him. It was Judas, for he had already gone to the chief priests and agreed to deliver the Lord up to them, and they had promised him thirty pieces of silver. The Lord knew it all; nothing is ever hidden from Him; and when Judas asked, "Is it I?" the Lord answered, "Thou hast said," which meant that it was he. After that, Judas left the table and went out, and it was night.

As they sat there about the table with the Lord, in the large upper room on the Passover night, the Lord showed them how to keep His Holy Supper. He blessed the bread and the wine, calling them His flesh and blood, and gave them to the disciples; and He told them to keep the Holy Supper in remembrance of Him. This is the Holy Supper that we keep in church when the bread and wine are passed, and these words of the Lord are read. It is the holiest act of worship.

Joyful Psalms were sung at the close of the Passover: "O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; because His mercy endureth forever." (Psalm 118:1) These no doubt were the "hymn" that the disciples sang before they went out with the Lord to the Mount of Olives. And there in the large upper room, and as they went through the street and out at the city gate, the Lord spoke to them wonderfully tender words that John has written for us in his Gospel: "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27) Let me read you the story as Matthew tells it to us, another of the disciples who was there. (Matthew 26:17-35)

## **Junior**

The first verses of our chapter tell of the plotting of the priests to take the Lord (verses 1-5), and later we learn how Judas, one of the Lord's disciples, went to them and agreed to betray the Lord to them for money. (Verses 14-16) Right in the midst of this account of hatred and unfaithfulness is set a beautiful story of love for the Lord. Now at the end of His life on earth the hatred of evil men grew more bitter, and the love of those who loved Him grew more tender. The two were coming daily into sharper contrast.

You will wish to read the story of the supper in Bethany, in all three of the Gospels where it is told. (Matthew 26: 6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:2-11.) In Luke 7:36-50 there is another account, something like this, but it is enough different to make it plain that it refers to a different anointing.

From the account in John it seems that the supper was made for the Lord in Bethany on His arrival six days before the Passover. It was perhaps on the evening before the Palm Sunday. You

will wish to recall what we know of Mary and Martha and Lazarus: the visit to their home when Martha served and Mary sat at the Lord's feet (Luke 10:38-42), and the Lord's raising Lazarus from death. (John 11:1-46) Notice in John 11: 2 how the sister of Lazarus is described as "that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment." In the days when the Gospel was written it was for this act that she was known, reminding us of the Lord's saying in Matthew 26:13.

In learning of the Passover and the Last Supper, you will wish to read the account in all the Gospels. (Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-39; John 13) The account of sending the disciples to prepare is very brief in Matthew, and is more full in Mark and Luke. John omits mention of the jar of water, but tells of the washing of the disciples' feet at the table. John also does not mention the giving of the bread and wine, but gives, as it were, instead those wonderful words of love in chapters 14 to 17. You see that the feast began as the Jewish Passover, and that the Lord taught the disciples to keep the Holy Supper, which should take the place of the Passover in the Christian Church.

Can you tell me about the Passover: when it was first kept, and how it was kept each year? What was the important dish on the Passover table? What are the two things used in the Holy Supper? Both feasts represented the strengthening of men's souls with new life from the Lord. You can see that the Holy Supper represents the giving us of His own life, when the Lord calls the bread and wine His flesh and blood. The Psalms that were usually sung at the close of the Passover feast were Psalms 115 to 118. They are glad songs of rejoicing.

But there was a note of sadness in this last feast with the Lord. It was the treachery of Judas, and the searching it out. So there must always be self-examination, a questioning, "Lord, is it I?" and repentance in preparation for new life from the Lord; and this should always be a part of the keeping of the Holy Supper.

Now we see the Lord and the disciples leaving the upper room and passing out across the Kidron. It was near midnight, but the Passover moon was shining. The Lord was warning the disciples that they would be scattered and would deny Him, and they were promising to be faithful.

1. What was the Passover? When was it kept and where? In memory of what? What does the name mean?
2. Where was Bethany? Who lived there who loved the Lord? What sign of love did Mary show? Find another place in the Bible where ointment is a type of love.
3. Where did the Lord keep the Last Supper with the disciples? How did they find the place?
4. What two things did the Lord bless and give to them at the table?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The scenes of the two suppers are in mind; we can study a few particulars.

The loving reception of the Lord in Bethany, the village outside Jerusalem, represents His reception in simple Gentile hearts. Lazarus especially represents the simple Gentile character, like

the beggar Lazarus in the parable (Luke 16:19-31), and the two sisters are the love for the Lord that belongs to such a state: Martha a more external, strenuous love; Mary a more internal, peaceful love. This love is represented by the precious ointment.

You can mention many places in the Word, where oil is a type of love. The sweet spices used to make ointments fragrant represent the humility and gratitude and other sweet thoughts which blend with love and make it delightful. (A. 9474) What is love for? Not to save up for our own enjoyment, nor to use in any selfish way, but to pour out in kindness and service to one another and to the Lord. Mary's action was very expressive of generous, self-forgetful love.

The remonstrance of some, especially of Judas, at what Mary did was from a selfish spirit that gives grudgingly and looks even in acts of kindness and service for selfish gain. With Judas the giving to the poor was only a pretense. There is in the Lord's words about Mary a beautiful suggestion that in truly loving the Lord we find eternal life; by this act she would be herself remembered. (E. 375; A. 3016)

The Passover and Last Supper with the Lord represent in a special and perfect way union with Him by the reception of His goodness and truth into our lives. These are especially represented by the bread and wine. First notice how much the Gospels tell us of the necessary preparation for this union - the following of the jar of water, and the washing of the disciples' feet by the Lord. These both teach the duty of repentance. And the large upper room: it represents no common state, no low, natural state, but one elevated as much as possible into spiritual light and freedom. (T. 722; A. 3147,10243)

Yet even here a deep selfishness intrudes, which by the Lord's help must be searched out. Judas stands for this self-love, for the desire to make gain of holy things which is more subtle and contemptible than open opposition. It is the betrayal by a friend, which is so touchingly spoken of in the Psalms. (Psalm 41:9; 55:12, 13) The acceptance of holy things from the Lord in this spirit of the hypocrite and traitor is represented by Judas' dipping with the Lord in the dish and receiving the morsel from His hand. Let us not judge Judas as a man; the after story would seem to show that he repented of his wrongs; but let us take the lesson to ourselves and ask, "Lord, is it I?" In what ways am I betraying the Lord, making selfish use of His good and holy gifts? (A. 4751; E. 433)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Holy Supper

The two most holy things in church are Baptism and the Holy Supper. These are the two "sacraments" which the Lord Jesus Christ Himself commanded His disciples. The word "sacrament" means something that must be kept "sacred" or holy. The two sacraments are like the two doorways to the tabernacle, through the first of which a person came into the courtyard where was the laver at which the priests washed their hands and feet; and the second of which admitted to the tabernacle itself, where stood the gilded table with the showbread, and other sacred furniture.

The first sacrament, Baptism, shows that the person baptized belongs to the church, where he can be regenerated, and that he must be regenerated. One may be baptized as a babe, and if he has not been baptized then, he may be when grown up. It is a great privilege to be admitted by baptism to the New Church, for here we have the Word of the Lord, and the Writings in which He explains the Word so that we can understand it aright; here we learn to know the Lord our God, who is our Creator, our Redeemer and our Savior; here we are taught His laws; and about His kingdom on earth and in heaven.

By baptism in which the Lord's new Advent is recognized, the person is introduced into the New Church, and inserted in the company of angels of the New Heaven. By the other sacrament, the Holy Supper, if a person goes to it properly, he comes very near to the Lord, for the Lord Himself is present in the Holy Supper, and sups with man, and fills his heart with love and his head with wisdom.

Do you know how a person comes properly or "worthily" to the Holy Supper? Tell me what a person does when he is asked to dine with someone whom he loves and honors. Does he not wash himself and put on his best clothes and take his most cheerful and happy feelings along with him, and prepare himself to talk at table about things which will please his friend? So when a person goes to the Holy Supper, at the invitation of His Divine Lord, he gets his soul ready, by examining himself to see whether he has done or said or wished or thought what is right, and why he has done so, and if he finds anything wrong in his life he is sincerely sorry for it and repents of it and prays to the Lord for help, making up his mind earnestly to be on his guard not to give way to what is evil and false in the future. In this way he washes himself spiritually, and puts on his best clothes spiritually, and comes to the Supper trying to please the Lord; and the Lord gives him for his soul the wonderful food which He calls His "body" and "blood," while He gives him for his body the good pure bread and wine. For the unleavened bread which is used in the Holy Supper represents the good things which belong to love; while the wine there used represents the truths which belong to wisdom or faith. And to eat and drink means to make the goods and truths one's own.

In this connection you may, perhaps, remember our lesson about the feeding of the multitude with the five loaves and two fishes, and that there is an inside bread and an outside bread, - that is to say, food for body and food for soul. The body is fed with bread and wine, but the soul with goodness and truth. If we had no food for the body, we should die. If we do not take in goodness, our soul shrivels: but it must be real good - good which has real love back of it, living love for the Lord and for the neighbor. And when you stop to think that some day the body must die, but that the soul keeps on living forever, you will realize how important it is to nourish the soul so that it may be healthy and strong and beautiful.

Now the body needs drink as well as food. We drink water and milk and wine. So the soul needs something besides goodness, and this something else is truth. Just as drink helps the food to digest so that it may become part of the body, so the truth helps the good to become part of our soul. We need both good and truth, and this the Lord shows us by giving us bread and wine in the Holy Supper. It is therefore a great mistake to have only bread at the Holy Supper as was done in the Roman Catholic Church.

The Lord instituted the Holy Supper immediately after He had partaken of the Passover with His disciples. The Passover was the great annual religious feast on which the Jews celebrated their

deliverance from the Egyptian slavery, and it had a very deep spiritual significance. From the time when it was first instituted, it represented that the Lord was going to deliver or redeem mankind from hell. Therefore when the Lord Jesus Christ had accomplished this deliverance or redemption, it was no longer appropriate to celebrate the Passover, for what it represented was fulfilled. And yet it was very important indeed that Christians should always have something to remind them that the Lord did what the Passover represented, namely, to remind them that He came on earth and redeemed mankind. And so He instituted the Holy Supper, saying to His disciples as He did so, "This do in remembrance of Me." That is to say, that we should keep the Holy Supper, so as to remember what the Lord did for us: that He fought for us even harder than ever anybody else could fight, and that He died for us in order that we might be free from the government of hell. Oh, how much He loves us! And what a great hero He is!

And now, after His second coming, with its attendant final redemption in the year 1757, when we of the New Church partake of the Holy Supper we remember this final redemption as well as that redemption which He wrought when He was on earth in person; and we love the Lord for all that He has done for men, and for what He is doing for each one of us now in helping us to fight against our evils; and every time we partake of the Holy Supper we make up our minds anew, to be truer and better New Church people, working for His Church and serving His heavenly Kingdom, for we can never be true and good enough.

You must look forward to the time when you are grown up and come to the Holy Supper, as the holiest event in your church life.

## **Lesson 36**

### **Matthew 26:36-75: The Night of the Trial**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

In our last story we were with the Lord and the disciples in the large upper room in Jerusalem, where He kept the Last Supper with them. Now we go with them as they leave the room and pass through the street and out by the city gate. They went down the hill from the city and across the brook Kidron in the bottom of the valley, to the garden of Gethsemane on the lower slope of the Mount of Olives. It was near midnight but the Passover moon was shining. Gethsemane means "oil-press," and there were no doubt olive trees there, perhaps like gnarled old trees that now grow at the place. The Lord told the disciples to sit down. Three of them, Peter, James, and John, He took a little further with Him and then left them to watch while He went still further alone. The Lord was in great trial, and prayed three times so earnestly that His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Meantime the disciples fell asleep. After the prayer the Lord was strong.

Just then came Judas with a company of men from the chief priests and elders to take the Lord. You remember how the Lord had said at the table of the Last Supper that Judas would betray Him, and he had gone out into the night. He went to the priests and they gave him this band of men. He

came and kissed the Lord, for this was the sign to show them which was the Lord. The disciples were frightened. Peter at first drew his sword; then all the disciples forsook the Lord and fled.

Then the men who had taken the Lord led Him up into the city, and soon into the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest. The palace was no doubt built around an open court, and the Lord was probably taken into one of the rooms opening from the court and raised above it by a few steps. He stood there guarded by soldiers while the priests came hastily together and took their places on the seat around the room. They hated the Lord; some of them were angry because He had driven the traders from the temple who paid them much money and made them rich. They were determined that the Lord should be put to death. They could not do it themselves; it must be done by the Roman governor. That night in the high priest's palace they were trying to find some excuse which they could take to Pilate, the governor, and persuade him to do what they wished.

When the Lord was taken at the garden of Gethsemane all the disciples had fled; but two of them followed afar off, John and Peter, and Peter was now in the courtyard of the palace with the servants around a little fire warming himself, for the night was cold. The Lord had told Peter that he would three times deny Him, and this very night at three different times, one and another spoke to Peter as one of the Lord's disciples, and Peter three times said that he did not know Him. Now the cock crew; it was a sign of the early morning; the Lord had also said to Peter, "The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice." Then Peter was very sorry and he went out and wept bitterly. Afterward Peter had many chances to show that he loved the Lord, and he was one of the bravest of the Lord's disciples. Let me read you a part of the story looking back a few verses into our last lesson. (Matthew 26: 30-50; 69-75)

## **Junior**

Our lesson gives us two scenes, the first in the garden of Gethsemane, and the second in the high priest's palace. You will be interested to open to the four Gospels and learn all the particulars that they give us. (Matthew 26: 36- 75; Mark 14:32-72; Luke 22:39-62 John 18:1-27)

The Lord's going beyond the disciples into the garden suggests how little they were able to understand and enter with Him into His trial; it is further suggested by their falling asleep when He asked them to watch with Him, even the three who knew and loved Him best. We see how severe the Lord's trial was by His being exceeding sorrowful and by the earnestness of His prayer. He knew all that was coming, and He knew that He must feel only Divine love for those who would take Him and condemn and crucify Him. The trial was deeper and more severe than we can understand.

You know that the Lord gained a victory in the trial when you see how calm and strong He was when Judas and his men came presently to take Him; even they felt the majesty of His presence as they went backward and fell to the ground. Peter drew his sword and struck a servant of the high priest. The Lord did not need to be protected by violence. Violence with anger or resentment in it, does the most harm to the one who indulges it. The Lord was gaining and making it possible for men to gain a much greater victory through the power of forgiveness and love. A legion was a division of the Roman army, when full containing about six thousand men. The word came to mean any very great number of people. "Presently" means "immediately." As you read how the disciples all left the Lord and fled, look back at the Lord's prediction in verse 31.

Now we follow from the garden of Gethsemane up into the city. The Lord was taken first to the palace of Annas. He was a man of very great influence among the priests. He had himself been high priest and was father-in-law of Caiaphas who now held the office. Annas was one of those who profited most by allowing the traders and money-changers in the temple, and was a leader among those who hated the Lord. Little is told of what happened at the house of Annas, for the Lord was soon taken to the palace of Caiaphas. A picture of the courtyard of an Eastern house helps you to imagine the palace - the court where soldiers and servants were passing, and standing or sitting in groups, some warming themselves at a brazier of glowing charcoal; a large room a little above and in sight of the court, where the priests were gathering to find excuse to accuse the Lord to the governor and to demand His death. False witnesses were called; the high priest himself tried to provoke the Lord to speak; they spit in His face and struck Him.

While this was happening in the room above, how did it fare with Peter who had followed with John and was standing in the court with the servants warming himself? It was so easy a little while before to declare that he would never deny the Lord, and now he had denied Him three times, just as the Lord had predicted. The Lord turned and looked upon Peter and it all came back. And so it is with us if we let ourselves deny the Lord by being unfaithful to Him. We must have more courage and be more faithful, and we shall be saved the painful moments when we realize that we have denied Him.

1. Where was Gethsemane? What was it? What does the name mean? Had the disciples been there before?
2. Who came with Judas to Gethsemane? Why did they come? What did Peter do?
3. To what house did they take the Lord? Who were there? What did the priests wish to do? Why?
4. Which disciples followed to the palace? What did Peter do that made him weep bitterly?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The temptation in Gethsemane, the betrayal, and the trial in the high priest's palace were in the night. Do you see that it was night spiritually as well as naturally? Of which was the Lord especially speaking when He said to those who came to take Him, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness"? (Luke 22:53; A. 6000)

The garden of Gethsemane is spoken of as on the Mount of Olives. These trees of oil and this mount stand for the Divine love so tender and so strong. The name Gethsemane means "oil-press." A threshing-floor and a wine-press often represent states of temptation by which external and evil things are rejected from the life and the deeper things of heavenly life are brought forth. So here the oil-press is associated with a state of severe temptation in which there was a crushing and laying down of natural life and a bringing forth of the pure oil of the Divine love. A garden also suggests a laying down of life that a higher life may arise. Remember that the Lord's sepulcher was in a garden, and with a similar meaning. (John 12:24; A. 10261; R.493; E.359)

What is represented by the sword in Peter's hand? Peter himself stands for faith in the Lord, and the sword in his hand is truth which exposes and condemns the wickedness of those who betray the Lord. But it here represents an exercise of truth with so much of selfishness and condemnation in it that it would do only harm. It would do harm to those whom it attacked; it would destroy their power to listen to the Lord willingly and obey Him freely. This violence to their free hearing and obedience is represented by the cutting off of the servant's ear, for which the Lord rebuked Peter, and He healed the wound. The resentful and condemnatory exercise of truth also would react with greater harm upon those who so used it. "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." The same truth was taught long before in the precept, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," and in the law, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," and in several different ways in the Sermon on the Mount. (E. 131; A. 1011, 2799, 3869)

We have been thinking of Peter as a type of faith in the Lord, but of faith which as yet had much of selfishness in it. The story of Peter's denials on the night of trial further shows the weakness of that faith. The Lord warned Peter, "This day, even in this night, thou shalt deny Me thrice." (Mark 14:30) It is in a time of spiritual darkness that faith fails. (A. 10134) We read also that it was cold, so that Peter warmed himself at the fire. As the night represents the absence of truth with its light, so the cold represents the absence of love and its warmth. When love grows cold faith is sure to lose its light. This accounts for the close connection in the story between Peter's warming himself at the fire and his denying the Lord. (A. 6000; E. 820)

There were three denials more and more emphatic. We associate the number three with what is complete. In this same lesson we have learned of the thrice repeated prayer in Gethsemane, expressing the extremity and completeness of the state of temptation and of the Lord's effort to meet it rightly. Three is especially associated with what is made complete in the three degrees of life, feeling, thought, and deed. It is a first denial when we admit any evil feeling contrary to the Lord. We deny Him a second time when we think the false thoughts which the evil feeling suggests; and it is a third and last denial when we do the evil deed. Then perhaps we first realize how unfaithful we have been. (A. 4495)

Weeping and mourning are two words used in the Scriptures expressive of grief. "To mourn has respect to grief on account of night as to goods in the church; and to weep as to truths." (A. 2910) Remembering how water is always a symbol of truth or falsity, you see why the expression of grief by tears is associated with the loss or perversion of truth, and you see why Peter's grief on account of his denial was expressed in bitter weeping.

The Lord made little answer to the high priest's questions; He was silent also before Pilate and before Herod. It had been said of Him, in prophecy, "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." (Isaiah 53:7) Hearing, spiritually, is a willingness to attend and to obey. To those who have this willingness the Lord can speak, but not to those whose hearts are closed against Him, who question only with idle curiosity, or to criticize and deny. It is exactly so in reading the Lord's Word. Only those who read with willingness to obey can find the precious wisdom in the Bible. Ask them that have heard the Lord what He has said, for they know. But to those who read the Bible in a hostile spirit, to criticize and deny, the Lord is always silent. (A. 2542)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Lord's Temptation in Gethsemane

In our lesson on Satan's tempting the Lord in the wilderness (Matthew 4), we learned that "temptation" means "trial." Satan tried with all his might and in very cunning ways to make the Lord do what was wrong, and think or say what was false. But he did not succeed. He tried to make it impossible for the Lord to save men, and put everything in the way of the Lord's Divine work. But the Lord overcame every stumbling-block.

As we learned in that lesson, this was not the first, nor was it the last temptation which the Lord Jesus Christ underwent. He fought against Satan and the Devil all His life, from babyhood until the crucifixion. When we read of "the Devil" and "Satan," we do not mean one devil, but it is an expression meaning all hell, which consists of millions of wicked men and women, or evil spirits, who are called devils and satans and genii. The Lord fought harder than any man ever did or can possibly fight. And He fought all alone against the hells. Of this great war that He was waging against hell; of the bitter and cruel attack of the devils and satans, and His brave fight, and victory, the gospels tell us very little in the literal sense, because it was carried on in the spiritual world, and men on earth could not see it, but they saw only what He was doing on earth. The little that is told us in the Gospels is about the temptation in the wilderness, and about the last of His temptations which took place in the garden of Gethsemane, and on the cross. Today we read about the temptation in Gethsemane, and in our next lesson we shall read about it on the cross.

But even what we read about this His last or final temptation tells us only a very small part of what He was suffering and what He fought for; the internal sense of the Gospels, and of the Word generally, tells us much more. Indeed, all the wars that you read about in the Old Testament, in the internal sense treat of the Lord's fights with the hells. And very many of the Psalms are in the internal sense prayers of the Lord to the Father, when in temptations.

As you read today's story, you will find that our dear loving Redeemer suffered so much that He sweat great drops of blood. This was even before the wicked men came and laid hands on Him to arrest Him and lead Him before the Priests and the King, and the Roman Governor.

Why did He suffer? And what was it that He was fighting for?

He was fighting for us, for all mankind, to set men free from the dominion of hell, which was making slaves of all men, so that they were no longer free to do or even will what was right, and to say or even think what was true. And because He felt how hard it was to free or deliver men, and at times it almost seemed as if He could not win, therefore He suffered so much.

There never was anyone who fought for so great and just a cause as our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. No one ever fought so long, nor with such bitter enemies, nor from such a great love as He. He fought from love for all mankind, and not only for love of the people of that time, on all the earth, but for men for all time to come; and not only for people on earth, but also for the angels of heaven. For, if hell had kept on being as strong as it was, no one on earth could ever have been good, and then the angels would no longer have been happy; for angels are with men, and their happiness depends upon men on earth being good and true. The Lord's love took in everyone. So He fought against all the hells, and He conquered them, and shut them up in their places, putting

them into a kind of order, such as we find on earth in prisons and mental hospitals. And He arranged heaven into new order, founded a new heaven, and so made the angels happier than they ever were before. The sun of heaven shone brighter, and they could do more for each other and for men on earth.

The Lord fought all alone. The prophet Isaiah, who lived more than seven hundred years before this took place, told beforehand about the Lord's combats and said, "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him; and His righteousness, it sustained Him." (Isaiah 59:16) And again he foretold the words which the Lord would use, when, comparing His fight, and His separating the good from the evil, to one treading in the wine-press (where the sweet juice is separated from the indigestible solid parts of the grapes), he said, "I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me." (Isaiah 63:3)

## Lesson 37

### Matthew 27:1-30: Before Pilate

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

When we left our story we were in the high priest's palace in Jerusalem; it was night. Peter was with the servants in the court of the palace and the Lord was in the room where the priests had gathered to find some excuse against Him. Early in the morning after this sad night the priests came again to the palace of Caiaphas and led the Lord to the palace of Pilate the Roman governor; for the Jews were not allowed to put anyone to death; they could only ask the governor to carry out their wish.

We find the priests with the Lord in the early morning (it was now Friday) standing before the gate of Pilate's palace. They would not go in, for Pilate was not a Jew, and they thought that if they went into the house of a Gentile they would be defiled; and they would not do that, especially at this holy Passover season. So Pilate came out to them outside the gate. They said that the Lord had perverted the nation, forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that He was Christ a king. You know how untrue this was when you remember what the Lord told those who asked Him about tribute: "Render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." The Lord was led inside into the judgment hall; Pilate went in to question Him and came out again to speak with the priests and the people at the gate. Pilate could find nothing wrong that the Lord had done. He knew that it was because the priests hated Him that they had brought Him and accused Him.

It was the custom every year at the Passover for the governor to let go one prisoner, whomever the people should choose. So he asked if he should release Jesus, but the priests persuaded the people and they asked for Barabbas who was in prison for wrong that he had done. And when Pilate said, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" they all cried, "Let Him be

crucified." And the governor said, "Why, what evil hath He done?" But they cried out the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified."

Pilate was afraid to refuse the people. He took water and washed his hands, as if that could free him from blame in doing an unjust thing. Then he delivered Barabbas to them, and Jesus to the soldiers to be crucified. If we look back to Matthew 20:17-19 we remember how the Lord, as He journeyed with the disciples to Jerusalem, had told them that these things would happen. "And the third day He shall rise again." Yes, that also happened as the Lord foretold. We shall learn about it.

## Junior

The trial and condemnation of the Lord includes two scenes, the first in the high priest's palace, and the second at Pilate's gate. The first scene was set before us in our last lesson; the second in our lesson today. The meeting of the priests on the Thursday night is thought to have been informal; the meeting in the early morning of Friday, mentioned in Matthew 27:1, 2, is thought to have been a session of the Council, the Sanhedrin, to take formal action upon the accusation to be made against the Lord to Pilate.

Pontius Pilate, mentioned in Luke 3:1 as the governor of Judea, lived usually at Caesarea on the Mediterranean shore; but he was often in Jerusalem at feast times to suppress disorders which might arise, and at such times occupied the palace of Herod on Mount Zion. We see the priests with the Lord and the gathering crowd of people, although it was yet very early, crossing to the palace of the governor and standing outside the gate.

At this point in the story we are told how Judas repented of his crime and went and hanged himself. Read also the account of Judas in Acts 1:15-20. The silver pieces were shekels, about sixty cents each in value; in all eighteen dollars. Thirty shekels was the price of a slave. (Exodus 21:32) It has been common to speak of Judas as the most wicked of men. He betrayed the Lord for gain; but repentance is possible of even the greatest sin. It is better instead of condemning Judas, to ask ourselves if we may be guilty of the same sin, loving the Lord and holy things for gain to ourselves, betraying the Lord by a kiss. The potter's field, Aceldama, "the field of blood," is thought to be the hillside across the valley of Hinnom, to the south of Mount Zion.

The scene at Pilate's gate. There were the angry priests ready with a false accusation which they thought Pilate would not dare to disregard, for they represented the Lord as opposing the Roman power. In their hatred of the Lord they were persuading the people to ask for the release of Barabbas and to demand the Lord's death, yet with this inward wickedness was their external sanctity which would not allow them to go into a Gentile's house, for fear of defilement. There was Pilate knowing that the Lord was blameless, yet afraid to offend the Jews, and still more fearful when his wife sent to him a word of warning telling of a dream which she had had. We see him passing in and out between the Lord in the judgment hall and the priests outside the gate: he was weakly delaying and losing ground with every moment of delay, till finally he yielded to their will. And there was the Lord, calm and silent before the angry priests and Pilate, except when He spoke to tell the simple truth that He was a King. Who was gaining the victory? The priests and people swept away by angry passion, or the Lord, who was holding every selfish thought and feeling in restraint and standing there in perfect strength? Who was truly a king? Pilate, weak and vacillating, doing what he knew was wrong, or the Lord, standing faithful to the perfect truth?

John tells us that as the Lord came forth before the people He said, "Behold the man!" (John 19:5) He was gaining the victory, not the priests or Pilate. He was the King. He was the perfect Man.

1. Who came together in the night to find some charge against the Lord? Where did they meet?
2. To whom did they take the Lord in the morning? What charge did they bring?
3. Was Pilate willing to release the Lord? Why did he not do it? Whom did he release?
4. Who was the real King, the perfect Man?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Judas in betraying the Lord was the tool of the priests who hated Him. Swedenborg often says of Judas that he represents the Jews in their attitude toward the Lord. Both the priests and Judas stand especially for the love of power and gain from holy things, which if unrestrained is perhaps the wickedest and cruelest of all passions, as has been shown at times when it has taken possession of the church and led to the greatest cruelties in the name of religion. This was the passion which inflamed the priests and the crowd at Pilate's palace and made them cry out for the release of Barabbas and for the Lord's death. They were choosing and releasing in their own souls the spirit of robbery and murder and were making of no account the Divine truth and love. (A. 4751; E. 740)

In close connection with this picture of the angry priests we are given the picture of Judas' repentance and death. It stands as an assurance of the possibility of repenting of this evil though it must be through extreme humiliation and despair. It is not for us to attempt to judge of the personal character of Judas or of any other man. While the Lord in speaking of the twelve said, "One of you is a devil," He also said to Peter, "Get thee behind Me, Satan." It was not the man in either case whom He meant, but the evil and the falsity which were then prompting their actions and words. Swedenborg speaks of the thirty pieces of silver as representing the "little esteem for the merit of the Lord, and redemption and salvation by Him." The spurning of the money by the priests and the use of it to buy the potter's field for the burial of strangers, represents the utter rejection of the Lord's redeeming work by the Jews and by those who loved holy things for selfish gain and the acceptance of it instead by simple Gentiles who find in it a means of reformation and resurrection to new life. The potter, Swedenborg adds, stands for reformation and regeneration, the fashioning and building of a heavenly spirit; and burial stands for resurrection and new life. (A. 2276, 2966)

Pilate was the weak tool of the priests. As the Lord said to him, "He that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin." The priests are the passion in the heart; Pilate is the understanding and external faculties which inevitably in the end yield to the desire which the heart chooses and confirms, and give it outward expression. The sin is not so much in the outward action which may depend often largely upon circumstances; but it is in the heart, in choosing and indulging the evil motive. (R. 20; E. 31)

Before the priests and Pilate the Lord stood in simple majesty: "Behold the man!" "Behold your King!" (John 19:5,14) He told Pilate that He was a King in bearing witness to the truth; by holding to the truth He gained the mastery. Especially at that time He was resisting and controlling the evil passions which were swaying the multitude before Him. He was resisting and controlling them not in Himself alone, but the evil spirits from whom those passions come. He was making Himself the perfect Man and King and gaining the power to help others to become so in their measure. Reading this story of victory in the scene at Pilate's palace, may not the story of Judas' repentance, which immediately precedes it, suggest remotely the repentance and the laying down of natural life which led to this victory of the Lord? Did anyone ever repent of the evil of misusing holy things for selfish advantage as the Lord did? And was it not through this repentance and victory that the potter's field was bought, the possibility secured of reformation and resurrection to new life for all humble souls? (A. 9144; L. 16)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Passion of the Cross

We often read in the heavenly Doctrines of our church of "the passion of the cross." The word "passion" means suffering. We have been learning about the Lord's sufferings, that they were sufferings of His heart and mind. But sometimes they were at the same time sufferings of the body also, and then they were hardest to be borne. This was so in the garden of Gethsemane, also before Pilate and on the cross.

We will once more call to mind that the Lord's sufferings were brought about by the devils of hell, who attacked the Lord in the spiritual world. And on earth men permitted themselves to be so influenced by the hells that they made the Lord suffer even in His body by treating Him cruelly. It was evil spirits that influenced Judas to betray the Lord. Afterward Judas was very, very sorry for it, and returned the thirty pieces of silver which had been given to him to pay him for the betrayal. It was the evil spirits of hell that influenced the Jews and the soldiers to mock the Lord, and treat Him cruelly, and finally to put Him to death on the cross.

Why did they do all this? Because they were evil and He was good. He was teaching men the truth and leading them to do good, and thus establishing His spiritual kingdom. The wicked hate what is spiritual and heavenly, and love only what is earthly. The Jews were like them.

You will remember that the Lord had shown Himself to the Jews as King, but He had taught them that His kingdom was not of this world. But the Jews wanted an earthly kingdom. They wanted the Messiah to free them from the Roman government and make them the conquerors of the world. Whatever was foretold in the Old Testament about the Messiah they explained to mean this, and so "perverted" or twisted the meaning of the Word. They laughed at whatever was said of the Messiah that plainly showed that His kingdom was not earthly but heavenly. They mocked at the Lord's spiritual teaching, and they showed this by mocking Him, dressing Him up in things which would look like a king's regalia, and yet were not - a crown, not of gold but of thorns; a scepter, not of some beautiful wood and adorned with precious stones, but a reed - making mock reverence to Him, and altogether showing that they laughed at and held in contempt what He said, and what the Old Testament foretold of Him about His being king. And when they at last put

Him to death, they thereby showed that they wanted to destroy everything that is heavenly and Divine in the Word.

Now remember that the Lord Jesus Christ had two natures, just as we have two which we call "spirit" and "flesh," or "soul" and "body", or "internal man" and "external man," or "spiritual man" and "natural man." In the Lord, these two natures were called "the Divine" and "the Human," or "the Father" and "the Son." The "Divine" nature did not suffer. It was the "Human" nature that suffered. This could be nailed to the cross. This could die. This could be put in the grave. This it was that rose again on that glorious day which we shall celebrate on Easter, but it was changed.

This was "the temple" of which the Lord had foretold them, that if they were to destroy it, He would raise it up in three days. And He did so.

This human nature suffered terribly, and at last it seemed as if He were forsaken by the Father. But that was the end. Then the curtain in the temple that hung between the holy of holies and the holy place was torn in two, and there was an earthquake, and the dead holy people arose out of their graves. You must not think that it was the dead material bodies that actually arose; but they seemed to do so, because the Lord, the great prophet, wanted to teach by this appearance, what He was accomplishing at the time; namely, that He died in order that men might live - in order that those who were not "alive" to the knowledge of Him and of heaven might become regenerated and live from Him.

Besides, these bodies represented those in the spiritual world who had been living for a long time in the lower earth, and who are called those "bound in the pit" and whom the Lord delivered after He had accomplished His whole work of redemption. There were many faithful or holy people, who were in the spiritual world, but who could not be saved until after the Lord had come into the world, and had subjugated the hells. In the meanwhile they were kept in those places in the world of spirits, which are called "pits," and were delivered by the Lord after His coming. These pits were represented by the "graves which were opened," and those who lived there are meant by those who were "sleeping," or "dead," who, after the Lord's resurrection, appeared to many in the holy city. The "holy city" was Zion and Jerusalem, but by these was meant heaven, whither they were taken up by the Lord.

So the Lord saved men in the other world, having accomplished the great judgment by means of the passion of the cross as the last temptation. The Lord was willing to pass through all the terrible trial and crucifixion in order to represent and show what a terrible thing it is when men do not believe in His spiritual kingdom, but wish only for earthly and natural pleasures and therefore do not care for His holy Word, and the truths it teaches, except as they may find things in it that they can so change as to help them to enjoy their sinful pleasures. To do this is to crucify the Lord.

## **Lesson 38**

### **Matthew 27:31-66: At the Cross**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

They went through the narrow streets and out by the north gate. They met a man named Simon from an African city, and made him carry the cross. So they came to a low, bare-topped hill, called from its shape "the place of a skull," and there they crucified the Lord. They offered Him the drink which was given to lessen the pain of those who were crucified, but He would not take it. The soldiers divided His garments among them, casting lots for the inner garment which was woven without seam. And sitting down, they watched Him there, and put over His head what Pilate had written in three languages, "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS." Two thieves also were crucified. It was now about nine o'clock. The people that went by, and especially the priests, mocked at the Lord, and one of the thieves did the same. From noon until three o'clock darkness was over all the land. Then the Lord cried aloud, and afterward all was still. The Lord's battle with all the powers of evil was ended, and He had won. Perfect peace had come!

There were other signs besides the darkness. The veil that hung between the holy and most holy chambers in the great temple in Jerusalem, was torn from top to bottom. There was an earthquake. The centurion who commanded the guard of Roman soldiers was afraid. There were faithful women too watching from afar off. As it drew near sunset the women saw two other men, Joseph from a town near by, and Nicodemus, both of them leaders of the Jews, who loved the Lord, but secretly. These men, with leave from Pilate, took down the body of the Lord and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in a new tomb cut out in the rocky hillside. The women saw where the body of the Lord was laid, and perhaps they saw too when some of the Pharisees came and put a seal of wax where it would be broken if the great stone should be moved from its place before the door, and set a watch so that no one might come and steal the body of the Lord away. So the Sabbath came, the day of rest. We know how little use the seal and guards were when on the Easter morning the angels came and the Lord arose as He had promised.

1. What writing was put upon the cross?
2. What did the soldiers do? the priests? the women who loved the Lord?
3. Who took down the body of the Lord? Where was the Lord's body laid?

#### **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

##### **Intermediate**

In what three languages was the title upon the cross written? Can you see a reason when you remember that the Hebrew has relation to childhood and its affection, Greek to youth and its intelligence, and Latin to adult age and its obedient life?

Find in the twenty-second Psalm words which the Lord spoke upon the cross. Read the whole Psalm, for it is all about this last trial of the Lord's life. The words, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" show how far removed the Divine strength seemed even to Him, in temptation. He was enduring alone a conflict with all the powers of evil, on which the fate of all people in earth and heaven depended. Do we realize how much the Lord cared for our salvation? Do we care as much as we should, and use the strength He has brought to us as faithfully as we ought? (T. 126)

What deeper meaning was there in the darkness over all the land at the time that the Lord was crucified? (E. 401) The rending of the temple veil suggests that the Jewish Church was at an end; the Christian Church had now begun. In this church the Lord's presence would not be veiled in representatives, but would be clearly seen and felt. (E. 400)

The opening of the graves and the rising of the saints were seen in the spiritual world, not in the earthly Jerusalem. (A. 9229 end) It represents the new freedom for good life which the Lord's victory over all evil brought to men on earth and to angels in heaven. (E. 659; A. 8018)

Remembering that garments represent any external thing which clothes a more internal, and that the Lord's garments represent especially His Word, which clothes His love to us, how do soldiers even today part His garments? What is the inner garment which they cannot rend? (A. 9093; E. 64)

## **Lesson 39**

### **Matthew 28: The Risen Lord**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

There were faithful women who sat watching on a sad Friday afternoon, when the body of the Lord was taken down from the cross, and wrapped in clean linen and laid in a sepulchre in a rocky hill outside Jerusalem. Who laid the body of the Lord in the sepulchre? What kind of a sepulchre did the women see? What was around it? What kind of a door did it have? What did the priests do to make sure that the stone should not be moved? But the women had gone to prepare ointments with spices, that after the Sabbath rest was past they might come, and anoint the body of the Lord.

Before it was light the first day of the week they were going from the house in Jerusalem where they stayed, carrying the ointments which they had prepared. They were talking sadly as they went, and were asking who would roll away the stone. Now they could see the hill, the garden, the sepulchre. The sun was just rising over the Mount of Olives, and they saw that the stone was rolled away. Were they very glad? Not at first. They were troubled, for they thought someone had taken away the body of their dear Lord. Bright angels were there, and the soldiers who were on guard were afraid; but the women need not be afraid, for they loved the Lord, and so did the angels. "Fear not ye," one of the angels said; "for I know that ye seek Jesus, who was crucified."

They told them that the Lord had risen, and showed them the place where He lay, to make them sure that He was not there. As the women began to understand, they were very glad.

There was no need for the ointments, but there was something else for the women to do. They must go back to the city and tell the Lord's disciples. As we read the story you will learn of another glad surprise which was in store for the faithful women.

## **Junior**

Can you recite the verses that tell of the women at the sepulchre Easter morning?

When they came to the disciples they could tell them not only that the stone was rolled away and that angels were there and what they said, but that they had seen the Lord and heard His own voice. He had said that the disciples should go into Galilee, and that they would see Him there. He had told them this before. (Matthew. 26:32) But even before that, they would see Him, for He came to them that very Easter Day in Jerusalem. (Luke 24: 36-49; John 20:19-23)

While the women and the disciples were rejoicing that the Lord had risen, the priests were giving the soldiers money to say that He was stolen away while they slept. To go to sleep on guard was punishable by death, but the priests promised to persuade the governor and protect the soldiers. So the false report was told among the Jews.

The apostles went into Galilee. We can think how lonely the paths seemed in which they had so often journeyed with the Lord, and the places which they had so often visited with Him. He had appointed a mountain where He would meet them. Eleven disciples were there, for Judas was not with them now. And it may have been at this same time that more than five hundred of those who had known the Lord saw Him once more. (1 Corinthians 15:6) "They worshiped Him, but some doubted." How slow they were to learn the glad lesson that the Lord was still alive, and was still with them! In that mountain of Galilee He told them of His perfect power now that His work on earth was done, and sent them to teach all nations, and to baptize. The command of the Lord and His promise to be with us, are read when a person is baptized.

It is the grand lesson of Easter Day, that the Lord still lives with us, just as really as He lived with the disciples.

1. Who were the first at the sepulchre Easter morning, the women or the disciples? Who were even before the women?
2. What did the angels say to the women?
3. Where were the women sent? What message were they to tell?
4. Where did the disciples go to meet the Lord? Who were there? What command did the Lord give them there? What promise?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

"The first day of the week." Was it spiritually as well as naturally the first day of the week, when the women came Easter morning to the sepulchre? Did it mark the beginning of a new state of thought and feeling for the women and the disciples? Can you also understand spiritually other words that describe their coming: "early," "while it was yet dark," "at the rising of the sun"? (A. 2405, 8211; E. 179)

"Rolled back the stone from the door." A stone, spiritually, is an unchanging truth, a fact, or what is believed to be a fact and asserted as a fact. Peter's declaration, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," the Lord said was a rock on which His church would be built. The stone which closed the sepulchre and was sealed by the priests to prevent its being moved, was denial of the Lord and the false belief that He was dead. The Easter angel was the messenger of the glad truth that, the Lord still lived. He dispelled the false belief, and at the same time rolled away the stone. A stone is rolled to the door of the sepulchre when in any natural disappointment there comes disbelief and denial of the Lord's loving presence and care. The stone is rolled away by angel hands when the truth is received of His continued love and care. (E. 400; R. 900)

The guards were afraid of the bright angel, but the angel told the women not to be afraid. How will it be when we come into the other world? Will all people love to be with the angels? Or will the brightness and beauty which are delightful to some be painful to others? (T. 622; H. 548)

"Into Galilee." The Holy Land represents heaven and a heavenly state of life. Judea represents especially heavenly affection and worship, and Galilee the practical working out of heavenly principles in faithful, useful life. That is why the years of the Lord's labor were largely spent in Galilee. When the Lord told the disciples to go into Galilee and promised to meet them there, it meant that we may know the Lord's presence with us more in doing faithfully our daily work, in our daily cares and pleasures, than in exalted states of worship. In any trial the Lord can bring us comfort as we go about our work and try to be faithful and useful for His sake. Notice the assurances of the Lord's presence and of the power of His presence, given at that meeting in Galilee. (E. 447)

The women held the Lord by the feet. The feet represent the plane of natural life in contact with the world. The Lord's feet represent His Divine Human life, so near to men. In prophecy of His coming it was said, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings." (Isaiah 52:7) The women were afraid that the Lord was going away from them, and would not be near to them as He had been. Holding the Lord's feet represents the desire to keep Him with them in the life of this world. It was to prove His presence with them on this natural plane of life that He showed to the disciples His hands and His feet. (R. 49; E. 513; A. 1729)

The disciples obeyed the Lord's charge (Matthew 28:19), by baptizing in the name of Jesus Christ. (Acts 2:38) Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are elements which must enter into our thought of Him to make it true and complete. We must know that in Him is the infinite source of life and love, the Father; we must remember His Divine Humanity which brings Him so near, the Son; and the Divine influence from Him to us, the Holy Spirit. Our thought of Him is not complete if we omit any one of these. (T. 163)

The great lesson for the disciples to learn on Easter Day, and for us to learn from our study of the story is, that the Lord did not leave the world at His crucifixion and resurrection, but is with us always. "Until the end of the world" means, so long as we keep anything of love and obedience to Him, so long as there is any true church. (R. 750) He did not leave us even in the sense that our friends leave us when they die. They do leave the natural plane of life and are present with us inwardly. The Lord glorified His Human, making it Divine even to His very body, so that He is present with us forever on the plane of natural life. This is meant by His saying to the disciples, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." It was meant also by His showing them His hands and feet. (L. 35; E. 513)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Resurrection of the Lord

We have been learning about the Lord's bitter temptations or trials, when He was attacked by the hells and fought with them single-handed and overcame them all. We read the sad story of His crucifixion and burial. Now we read the joyous story of His resurrection from the grave.

What do we know about man's resurrection?

When man rises again, after death, he rises in his spiritual body, leaving the outside natural body, which in time crumbles to dust. He had this outside body in order to perform uses in the material world. After death he is no longer to perform natural uses, and so he no longer needs this wonderful instrument, the material body. This is the reason why he is drawn out of it at death, and it decays.

With our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, it was different. His soul was "the Father," that is, Infinite Divinity Itself. He had in Him what was higher than anything any angel has. And He also has something lower than any angel has, namely, the outside body, - only that this, like everything else in Him, is Divine. He arose with His whole body, leaving nothing of it in the sepulchre. The cloths which had been used to wrap His body in, and the napkin which had been placed over His face, these He left behind in the sepulchre, for they were not part of Him. But nothing of the body was left in the sepulchre. He kept the whole outside body. Yet when He arose, this body was different from what it had been before, and it was different from the outside body of every other man, for it could not be seen by the natural eyes of men, but only by the eyes of the spirit or men's spiritual eyes. And it could enter the room where the disciples were assembled, and the doors of which were shut. His body was no longer material, but Divine. He did not change the matter into Divine substance, but the matter in the body was displaced by the Divine substance from within, so that His head, His body, His limbs and all organs and parts belonging to them now consisted of Divine substance.

It was necessary for Him still to have the outside body, because of the use that He was still to perform to men in the natural world. In fact, the Lord came into the world, that is, He clothed Himself with a human body, or a human nature, so that He might be real close to people in the world, and save them, - so that no one could come in between Him and men on earth. But he wished to remain in this way forever, not only for the few years that people saw Him, heard Him and touched Him. Therefore He kept the human nature, but made it Divine. The body which was

taken from Mary was material, and like all material things would some day decay. But by making that body Divine, it would never decay, but would forever remain. In this way the Lord God on high, who had been far out of reach of men, came very close to people, and is so now. The Lord is very near you, just as near as father or mother, - and even nearer; and it is for this reason that you are able to live and breathe, and love what is right, and think of the Lord and love Him.

We know that this is so, from the fact that He showed Himself to the faithful women who went early to the tomb, and later to Peter and other disciples, all on that wonderful day. And subsequently He showed Himself to others, even after His ascension to heaven. And when He was about to make His Second Coming, He showed Himself to Swedenborg, who tells us that the Lord also shows Himself to the inhabitants of other earths, which we see in the sky as stars. Everywhere in the universe the Lord is present in His Divine-Human. For He says, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth."

It is true that people generally do not see Him, but He is present with them nevertheless, and when they turn to Him by loving to learn the truth which He has revealed, and by loving to live according to the truth, then they know that He is near, by the fact that they can understand the truth more clearly, and that they feel a great pleasure in doing what He wishes them to do, which is, to love the neighbor as much as themselves.

You will remember what we learned about the people who had been entering the spiritual world for centuries past, who were kept in the lower earth of the world of spirits, and who were taken up into heaven by the Lord after His resurrection.

You need to understand that, before a person can enter heaven, he must first know the law of heaven. He must know who is the King and Lord of heaven, and he must know the law of this King, so that he can live according to it. Now we know that the King and Lord of heaven is the Lord Jesus Christ. We know that the laws of His heavenly kingdom are all in the Word. We also know that before He came into the world, people did not know Him, and that, although they had the Word of the Old Testament, it was just like a book that was shut up and sealed tight; because, though they read it, they did not understand its true meaning, but thought it meant something else. There are great treasures in the Word, but they did not see them. Their false explanations were like a large, heavy stone put over the mouth of a treasure chamber, shutting out the sight and knowledge of the beautiful, precious stones within. The Word is all living within. Indeed it is the Lord within, with His Infinite Love and Eternal Wisdom. But to them the Word was like the tomb, in which lay the Lord, apparently dead; and their false explanations, were like the large stone shutting up the tomb, which stone was sealed by the Roman governor.

In order that people might enter the heavenly kingdom, it was necessary that they should know that the Lord is in His Word. It was necessary that they should understand the Word aright. It was necessary that the false interpretations should be removed, and that the Lord should be seen, not dead but alive. And therefore this was represented by the angel that came down from heaven and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. How bright the angel was! So bright is the help the Lord sends everyone to get rid of false explanations of the Word, and to find that the Lord is a living Lord who grants us to know and understand Him and His great love.

This is what the Lord did for the people in the lower earth! He taught them the truth, and led them, when they received it, into heaven.

By this rolling away of the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and showing Himself to the women and the disciples, the Lord also wished to picture forth what would happen at His Second Coming. Now, as never before, the Lord has rolled away mistaken explanations of His Word, and shows Himself in His Word, as the living, loving, all-wise Savior, the God of heaven and earth. This He has done in the Writings of the New Church. And Easter Day means to us, both the resurrection of the Lord in His glorified body, and also His new resurrection now, to the New Church.

All glory, praise and honor be to Him! Amen.

## **Lesson 1**

### **Mark 1:1-13: Baptism: Temptation**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We are going to study about the life of the Lord, and in the verses we have today we learn also something of John the Baptist who was sent to prepare the way for the Lord. In times long before, the Lord had spoken to His people through the mouth of prophets, and had told them that He would come into the world as the Messiah and Savior. He also told them that someone would come to prepare the way for His coming. (Isaiah 40; Malachi 4)

Luke tells us about the fine old priest Zacharias. He tells how while Zacharias was burning incense in the temple - an office so holy that a priest could do it but once in his whole life - an angel of the Lord came to him and told him that a son would be born to him and his wife Elizabeth, who should go before the face of the Lord, and that his name should be called John. When the tidings seemed too great for Zacharias to believe, the angel gave him a sign: Zacharias was dumb until after the little boy was born in their home among the hills of Judea. (Luke 1) It was a wonderful time; for again the angel came, and now to Mary the cousin of Elisabeth, in Nazareth, and told her that a Child would be born to her, that His name should be called Jesus, and that He would be the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

Jesus grew up in Nazareth, learning to be a carpenter, and later perhaps taking His part as the oldest son in the care of the family. But besides this, He was getting Himself ready to do a greater work than any man had ever done. He was doing this by refusing to think one selfish, impure thought, or to do one unkind thing, thinking and doing only what He knew in His heart the Heavenly Father loved.

John must have been told what the angel had said his work was to be, and felt a wish burning in him to be strong and worthy to be the messenger to prepare the way for the Lord. He gave up all the pleasures of a happy home and went out to live in the wilderness, where his food was locusts and wild honey, and his clothing a garment woven of coarse camel's hair fastened at the waist with a strip of leather. There in the desert he was shown by the Heavenly Father that what he must do, and what all men must do, was to be truly sorry for the wrong they had done and were doing, and to pray the Heavenly Father to help them give it up. Then the word of God came to him

in the wilderness and he went to the Jordan, strong and brave, calling all the people to come to him at the river, to repent of their wickedness, and as a sign that they would try and wash their lives of badness, to be baptized of him in the river Jordan. He told them also that a mightier One than he was coming soon. Great multitudes of people came from far and near to be baptized, and John told them each and all what they must do to make ready for the One that should come. But many of the Pharisees did not feel sorry for their evil lives, and only came to catch him in his speech, or from curiosity to see this strange man of the wilderness; and these never did repent and the Lord could not come near to them.

For some months the crowd kept coming to the beautiful river, and we can imagine them standing and sitting on the banks listening to the searching message of this half-clothed, earnest prophet of the desert; and ever as one was touched by his words he would confess his sins and go down into the water to be baptized. All this time John was eagerly looking for the Mightier than he; when, one day, among all the people whose faces showed the lines made by evil feelings, and in whose eyes burned the light of evil pleasures, came a Man from Nazareth with a face that had never once been moved by an evil feeling, and in whose eyes shone only infinite love and mercy. Then John knew that it was his Lord and Master. Speaking to Jesus he said, "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" But Jesus said, "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." (Matthew 3:14, 15) "And straightway coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon Him: and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased." (Mark 1:10, 11, Revised Version) John also saw the dove and heard the voice and knew surely that this was indeed the Lord.

John's work was nearly done. He had prepared the way, and the Lord had now come to fulfill the prophecy by showing and teaching the way of heavenly life to all who would repent. We must read the story as we find it in the Gospel.

## **Junior**

If we stand here on the cliffs above Jericho we look down on a broad plain far below, and across to the eastern hills some ten miles away. The sunshine streams into this deep valley, and wherever there are brooks it is green. Off in the south shines the Dead Sea. Far out in the plain a line of dark green marks the course of the Jordan. We cross the sunny meadow, turning a little northward. As we come near the river we suddenly go down and are among the thicket of trees which border the stream. We find an open space where a stony beach slopes to the water, and where, perhaps, the stream is shallow enough to make a fording place. It is a little river, swift and muddy, as wide as a wide street, except when the melting snows of Mount Hermon send the water up among the trees. (Joshua 3:15)

In such a place we think of John, standing by the water's edge; a man of the deserts, beaten by the sun and weather, with uncut hair and coarse camel's-hair cloak. Many people came to see and hear him, from "Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan." Could this be the Messiah, whom they were hoping for to save them from their enemies? There were proud Pharisees in showy robes, there were soldiers, and tax-gatherers (publicans), and fishermen. To them all John spoke boldly: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And he told each

one what he must do to be ready for the Lord. Many confessed their sins and were baptized. It was a sign that they resolved that their lives should be made clean. (Luke 3:7-18)

After others had been baptized, the Lord came from His home in Nazareth to John. Read reverently of the baptism, and of the dove and the voice from heaven. The dove was a sign by which John should know the Lord. (John 1:32, 33; Luke 3:21, 22)

When the Lord was on earth He had unhappy days. He never did what was not right and good, and never said what was not true; but there were days when all the unhappy feelings came to Him which come to us. There was such a time of trial soon after the Lord was baptized by John. You remember that was at the Jordan River. Here along the west side of the Jordan valley, behind where the city of Jericho used to stand, there are bare rocky cliffs and desert hills, a part of that same wilderness where John the Baptist lived as a young man. We may well believe that the Lord in His unhappiness turned aside among these bare and lonely hills. For many years people have believed that He did so, and feeling that it was a holy place they have come here to this barren cliff, and have lived alone in its rocky caves.

But where do unhappy times come from? Do angels bring them to us? No; evil spirits make us unhappy and try to make us do wrong. The angels try to help us to do right, and to make us happy. It was so with the Lord; only the evil spirits tried much harder to make Him do wrong. When the evil spirits came near with these wrong and unhappy thoughts, what did the Lord do to drive them away? He said the words of the Bible which tell us that these things are wrong; and there was a power in them which bad thoughts and feelings and bad spirits could not stand; they must go away. The angels love those words; they came near and comforted the Lord.

This is what we must do when we are unhappy and when wrong thoughts and feelings come to us. We must remember the Commandment which says, Thou shalt not do this wrong thing. We must remember and say to ourselves the Lord's Prayer, and other verses that we have learned. We must find our Bible and read. If we do so, the bad feelings and, the bad spirits will leave us, and the angels will come near. Say the Commandments and the Prayer, and ask the Lord to help you; and soon the unhappiness will go away. Remember this and try it the next day that you are unhappy and things go wrong.

1. Who came as a messenger before the Lord? By what prophets had he been promised?
2. What did John preach? What else did he do?
3. When the Lord was baptized what was seen? What words were heard?
4. Where was the Lord tempted? Who ministered unto Him?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Why was baptism the sign to accompany John's preaching of repentance? It was a natural washing, and repentance is a spiritual washing. It pictured the deeper work. (E. 475, 724; T. 690)

Was there a reason for John's baptizing in the Jordan rather than in some other stream? The land of Canaan stands for a heavenly state of life. The Jordan was the gate of entrance to that land, and represents the Divine truth of right and wrong which introduces one into a heavenly life.

(Revelation 22:14) We wash in the Jordan when we make life right not by any worldly standard but by the rule of the Lord's commandments. It was such cleansing of the life that John taught and his baptism represented. (A. 4255) Remember Naaman's washing in this stream.

Why was the Lord baptized? Did He in all His life do any wrong? Had He any need to repent? (John 8: 46; Hebrews 4:15) The Lord did no wrong, but He felt in His human nature all the tendencies to wrong which men feel. He needed to judge all these by the rule of the Commandments and with the most patient effort to put them away. This was His repentance, which His baptism represented. (Luke 12:50; A. 10239)

After we repent of wrong we are more open to heavenly influence, and we receive innocent affections from the Lord. Perfect innocence and love existed all the while in the inmost heart of the Lord, but the bringing out and down into the plane of natural human life was a gradual work. After every repentance something more of perfect innocence came down to earth. This was represented by the opening of the heavens to Him after His baptism and the descent of the Holy Spirit as a dove upon Him. It was the sign by which John knew the Lord, for the Divine innocence in His human life is what distinguishes Him from other men. (T. 144)

"And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Divine love which dwelt inmost in the Lord was forming a Divine Human nature in which to live immediately with men. The voice from heaven expresses the Divine satisfaction in this new means of reaching men as with each step of repentance the perfect love was received and expressed more fully. (L. 19)

Do you remember another story of a wilderness experience with which the number forty is associated? In this story of the Lord's temptation, what does the wilderness represent? The state of inward barrenness, with little fruitfulness or satisfaction. "Satan" is the name which stands for falsity and evil spirits who are especially in falsity, as "devil" stands for evil and spirits who are in evil. In our story "the wild beasts" also represent all evil feelings and the evil spirits of hell which beset the Lord in His times of temptation. The angels who ministered unto Him mean also the Divine truths in which He found strength. (H. 544; E. 650; T. 123)

## **Lesson 2**

### **Mark 1:14-45: Disciples: Miracles of Healing**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Where had the Lord lived till now? Nazareth was in Galilee, the northern of the three sections into which the land of Canaan was divided in Gospel days. The middle division was Samaria, the southern Judea. The pictures you see of Galilee show you a country with few towns and people. But in the Lord's time it was a very busy place, with many cities and large towns. There were

wonderful gardens in the plain of Gennesaret, and the fine fish in the Sea of Galilee, and caravans going between Damascus and the Mediterranean Sea passed right through this part of the land. It was a beautiful place, with the snow-covered mountains at the north, its lovely, almost tropical gardens and beautiful blue lake; for the Sea of Galilee is really only a large lake on which were many fishing-boats. It was in the city of Capernaum that the Lord chose to live now that His preaching and teaching had begun, and Capernaum was a town near the northern end of the Sea of Galilee. One day as He was walking by the sea He saw one of the fishing-boats with two fishermen in it. They were brothers, Simon and Andrew, and they were casting their net in the sea. He spoke to them, and bade them follow Him, and He would make them fishers of men; and they left their nets and followed Him. They went on a little farther, and they saw another boat with more people in it, a father whose name was Zebedee and his two sons James and John and some hired men, and they were putting their nets in order. Jesus called James and John and they left their father and followed Him.

The Sabbath came and they went into the church or synagogue, and the Lord taught the people: and they were greatly astonished, for He taught them as if He knew from Himself that what He said was true and did not depend upon what others had said. There were people in those days who had unclean spirits. That is, evil spirits had power over them to make them do and say anything they chose, and the poor people could not help themselves. There was such a man in the synagogue on this Sabbath day, and the evil spirit knew who the Lord was and cried out, "What have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him." (Mark 1:24, 25) And the spirit obeyed.

Then they left the synagogue and went into the house of Simon and Andrew. (Where have we heard of these men?) Now Simon's wife's mother was very sick, and they told the Lord, and He went into the room and took her by the hand and raised her up, and she was well, and she went about the house and served them. Such wonderful things were soon heard of by people all about. So when the sun had set (for as it was the Sabbath they could do nothing until the day was done), in the twilight all the people of the city came eagerly bringing their dear sick children and friends to the door of Simon's house to be healed, and the Lord cured them all and cast out many evil spirits. A wonderful evening in that little city. Let us read about the calling of the fishermen from their nets and about the Sabbath in Capernaum. (Mark 1:16-34)

The Lord went now to other places throughout all Galilee. We are told only a few things that happened on this journey. Once a leper came to Him asking to be healed. The lepers were people who had a most terrible sickness, and almost too sad to tell about. Their skin became dead, all white and sore, and their joints so diseased that their fingers sometimes fell off. The lepers were kept away from other people. They were not allowed in the towns, and if they saw anyone coming they were obliged to call out, "Unclean, unclean," so no one would come near them. (Leviticus 13:45) So the courage and faith of this poor leper must have been great as he came in his desperate eagerness to be made well, and knelt before the Lord; but instead of turning away, as the leper must have feared He would, He "put forth his hand and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean." And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. (Mark 1:41, 42) The Lord told him to tell no man what had been done to him, for the Lord wanted most of all to teach men to be good and to heal their souls, and did not

want men to look to Him only to heal their bodies. But this poor leper told everyone how the Lord had healed him.

## **Junior**

What is this river which runs down from the springs under Mount Hermon? And what is this sea? Take a good look at its shape. Now we will put the map away and draw it for ourselves. The Jordan runs down hill very fast - that is what its name means, "the descender" - and when it reaches the Sea of Galilee it is six hundred and fifty feet below the Mediterranean. It is a beautiful lake of blue water. It is about twelve miles long and half as wide; so that you plainly see the hills across the water, and at night you can see the lights twinkling on the opposite shore. The hills rise steeply all about, except at the northwest corner of the sea. Here they stand back about a mile, leaving a crescent-shaped meadow between them and the water. This is the plain of Gennesaret. The soil is rich and though today the plain is neglected and grown up with giant thistles, in the old time it was all a garden. It was warm in the shelter of the hills and was watered by fine springs.

From Capernaum at the northern end of the plain we skirt along the shore to Magdala; then southward to Tiberias, in the Gospel time a fine city just being built by Herod. The shore is almost deserted, but in the old time many little towns of white houses nestled among their orchards. Farmers were busy in the fields; traders passed upon the beaten paths; fishing boats were drawn up along the shore or dotted the blue water with their sails. Sometimes they fished in deep water, and sometimes they threw nets or hooks from the shore.

The Lord had come to the Sea of Galilee, to Capernaum to make His home. He walked along this very shore; on the one hand the gardens and grain fields stretching back to the rough pasture hills, on the other hand the pebbly beach, the lapping waves, and the water stretching off to the purple eastern shore. He saw two fishermen casting their nets, and two others in a boat with their father mending their nets. Read Mark 1:16-20. Why were these men so ready to leave their nets and follow the Lord? They knew the voice that called them. They had seen the Lord at the Jordan, and heard John the Baptist say, "Behold the Lamb of God." They were now to be fishers of men. Instead of drawing fish out of the cold water into the sunshine, they would lift men up from their thoughts of food and drink and worldly greatness, into heavenly uses and happiness.

Read what I have said to the little children about the Lord's miracles of healing in the synagogue, and at Peter's house, and by the way as the Lord journeyed through the towns of Galilee.

1. What disciples of the Lord were fishermen? On what water had they sailed and fished?
2. What sign of the Lord's power was seen in the synagogue? in Peter's house? at the door?
3. What sickness did the Lord heal, laying His hand on the poor man and saying, "I will; be thou clean"?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

How was the work of the Lord's disciples still that of fishermen?

The sea is like a little world in itself, but with the heavy, cold water for atmosphere. It is like a mind which cares only for natural knowledge and worldly things, and finds no delight and happiness in what is spiritual. The fishes of the sea, which enjoy that dull atmosphere, are like our affections for gathering natural knowledge, of science, of worldly things, of the letter of the Word. A natural fisherman catches fish to be food for men; a spiritual fisherman teaches natural truth of science or of the letter of the Word, with the purpose of strengthening the spiritual life. The disciples should become such spiritual fishermen. They would be fishers of men, for it would be their duty and privilege to lift men up from the atmosphere of natural, worldly life into the air and sunshine of spiritual life. (A. 3309, 10582; E. 513, 600; R. 405)

What things had Moses commanded that a leper who was cleansed should bring to the priest? (Leviticus 14:1-32)

"Not as the scribes." The scribes, or writers, copied and read the Scriptures, and explained the letter with many quotations from the opinions of noted teachers. The Lord spoke from His own great love and from the experience of His own life. He spoke with authority.

We see what a terrible thing possession by evil spirits was. (Mark 5:1-13; 9:14-27) And see how helpless all the people were to cast them out, except the Lord. This shows us what power evil spirits had gained over men. If the Lord had not come, they would have destroyed the race. Why did the evil spirits cry out at His presence? How did they know Him? The Lord had met and overcome them in His own temptations. They knew His power, and that at His word they must go away from men. So the Lord set men free from slavery to evil spirits, to live well if they would. Such possession as there was when the Lord came into the world, does not exist today, and never will again, for the evil spirits which the Lord overcame He holds in restraint and keeps us free. (H. 257)

What still more grievous diseases do the disorders of the body picture? Do you remember a verse which shows that the Lord healed men's bodies as a sign of His desire and power to give spiritual strength? (Luke 5:24) Do we sometimes speak of being in a "fever," not meaning a state of body, but of mind? A feverish state of mind is one disturbed or prostrated by some disquiet feeling. In such a state we need the Lord's help to quiet our excitement and send us usefully about our work. (A. 8364)

Tell me of a leper whose healing is described in the Old Testament. The skin was chiefly affected in leprosy. This does not represent the deep motives of the heart, but the external words and acts which clothe the inner life, or religious forms and ceremonies which clothe spiritual worship. These should be a true, living expression of the spirit within. If they are dead, we are spiritual lepers. A state of mind in which forms of worship and religious life are angrily rejected and one is sensitive and angry at the mere mention of them, is represented by the more grievous forms of leprosy which broke out in open sores. What a terrible state this is! How unclean! We need the Lord's help to make our outward life and worship good and thoroughly alive. When it is so our flesh comes again as the flesh of a little child, and we are clean. (A. 6963; P. 231; E.475)

## Lesson 3

### Mark 1:1-12: Healing the Palsied Man

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

The Lord came back to Capernaum by the beautiful Sea of Galilee, for Capernaum was now His home. You remember that the people of Capernaum were very anxious to have the Lord stay with them, and now they soon learned that He had come back, and a great crowd gathered in the house, and about the door and porch.

If you had been looking out beyond the crowd you could have seen the people still coming, and among them a group of four men who seemed to be carrying something. And as they neared the house you would have seen that each of the four men had a corner of a sort of mat, and on the mat lay a poor sick man. His sickness was of such a kind that he could not move himself. But he and his four friends felt sure that if they could only bring him to the Lord He would heal him. When they came near the house they found the crowd so great about the door that they could not bring the sick man near the Lord. Still they were so anxious for the poor man to be made well, and so sure that the Lord could do it, that they would not give it up.

While you were still watching and wondering what they would do, you could have seen them go up the stairway, which was built on the outside of the house, and tear off the covering and make a hole down through the roof of the house right over where the Lord was, and then let down the sick man on his bed before the Lord and before all the people who were listening to Him. Can you think how surprised all the people must have been, and interested to see what would happen! And how eager and anxious the sick man and his friends must have been! And what the Lord said was, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."

Now, there are three things that we have learned about the man who was sick of the palsy: his sickness, his desire to be made whole, and his faith that the Lord could heal him. We learn still another thing by the Lord's first words to him, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." We know from this that the poor man had done things that were wrong and that he was sorry; for the Lord can only forgive those who are sorry. And another thing we learn from the Lord's words: that the Lord knows the lives of all. "He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man." (John 2:24, 25)

But there were scribes sitting near the Lord who had not come because they loved Him or because they wanted to be helped or taught, but because they hoped to find some fault in what He said; and when He said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," they thought to themselves, "Who is this that forgives sins? Only God can do that." The Lord knew what they were thinking. He showed them His power by healing the palsied man; and it was also a sign to those who could understand it, that He had power to forgive sins. "They were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion."

## **Junior**

Again the Lord was in Capernaum, and teaching in the house. We think of a flat-roofed building of perhaps two stories, built about a courtyard. The doors and windows of the house opened upon this court, and a gateway led to it from the street. Perhaps around the court there ran a porch or balcony shaded by a light roof under which the Lord was standing. Near Him "were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting," who had come from distant places, listening and watching sharply, ready to find fault and to blame the Lord. The court was full of eager people, and the gate-way which opened from the street; for "straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no not so much as about the door; and he preached the word unto them."

Word that the Lord was there reached the friends of a man sick of the palsy; and they came, four of them carrying the light couch or mat on which he lay. The palsy is paralysis, which means sometimes, and apparently in this case, entire helplessness, so that one cannot move hand or foot, and perhaps not even speak. They came near the house, but the crowd of people filled the court and the gate-way. Read what they did. (Verses 1-5) There were usually stairs on the outside of the house leading to the flat roof. And often the houses were so built that one could walk from roof to roof. The usual earthen roof is made by laying long level rafters; across these short, light sticks; on these brush; and on this a layer of mud rolled hard. On the roof lies a roller to repair it when it softens with rain or cracks in the sun. See Psalm 129:6. From the roof they could reach the lighter "tiling" or thatch over the balcony where we think of the Lord as standing. They uncovered it and let the sick man down before the Lord.

See them letting down the palsied man, the Pharisees sitting by, the crowd in the court below eagerly watching. The Lord spoke to the sick man, "and immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all." What had the Lord said to the sick man? They who sat near heard Him. Read verses 5-12. The poor man's body was helpless, and the Lord pitied its suffering; but this helplessness was the more sad to the Lord because it pictured a helpless state of mind, when one is utterly discouraged by the sense that he is evil, and feels as if there were no help for him. The Lord pities still more this discouraged state of mind, and the first words He spoke when the sick man was let down before Him were, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." (Matthew 9:2) No doubt the sick man needed this encouragement; but the Lord said it for all discouraged people, and because those about Him knew so little of their spiritual troubles and the great spiritual blessings which the Lord would give, He showed them His kindness and power in a way they could understand. "Arise," He said, "and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house."

1. "Again he entered into Capernaum": where had the Lord been?
2. What is palsy? How was one sick of the palsy brought to the Lord?
3. What did the Lord say to him?
4. What does it mean, that a sin is forgiven?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

What does it mean, to have a sin forgiven? To be allowed to go without punishment is not forgiveness. But if I am really sorry for what I have done, and want to do better, and my father sees that I do, and gives me a kiss which shows that he loves me and will help me, and gives me courage to try again - this is being forgiven. The Lord is really the Father against whom we sin when we do wrong. When we are really sorry and anxious to do better, the Lord helps us to begin again, and gives us His protection from the wrong. This is real forgiveness - strength to leave the past and to do better, which the Lord alone can give.

Suppose as long as we live on earth we cling to some evil thing, are not sorry for it, at least not enough so to let the Lord help us to do better, shall we wish to let Him help us in the other world? Notice that it says, "hath power on earth to forgive sins." (P. 277 end) But here and now the Lord can forgive - can protect us from wrong that we are sorry for, and give us strength to do better. We must never throw ourselves down discouraged and think there is no help for us. The Lord hath power to forgive. But the Lord knew that we should sometimes be discouraged and think we could not do better. He thought of all of us and our despair when the man sick of the palsy lay helpless before Him. He spoke to us as well as to him: "Son, be of good cheer." It was for a sign to give us courage to ask and receive His help, when He showed His love and power by giving the sick man strength to rise and go to his house.

Taking the sick man to the housetop to reach the Lord shows the earnestness of the desire for help; but more. Our house spiritually is the state of mind in which we habitually are; or the states of mind, for we have several when variously employed, which are like the rooms of our house. There are more worldly, external states, the lower rooms; and interior states, near to the Lord. Such are represented by the "large upper room" of the Passover (Luke 22:8-12); the "housetop" where we find safety in troubled times (Matthew 24:17); the closet with closed doors where we find the Lord in prayer. (Matthew 6:6) The housetop is the state of inmost affection, of most earnest desire. They reached the Lord from the housetop when there was no other way: "Ye shall find Me when ye shall seek for Me with all your heart." (A. 3142, 5694, 7353)

## **Lesson 4**

### **Mark 2:13-28; 3:1-12: Keeping the Sabbath**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

What four men had the Lord called from their fishing nets to be His disciples? We learn today of the Lord's calling another disciple to follow Him. This time it is not a fisherman, but a publican, one of the men who collected toll or taxes from the people, and were despised by the Pharisees and their followers. This publican's name was Levi, and he had also the name Matthew. It was this disciple who afterwards wrote the Gospel that bears his name.

After Levi was called he made a great feast to the Lord and a great many publicans were there, and the Pharisees were much displeased. "When Jesus heard it He saith unto them, they that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Meaning that these more humble people who knew that they needed forgiveness and wanted to be taught, He could help; but the Pharisees who thought themselves perfect, and felt that they had no need of forgiveness He could not help. Read verses 13-22.

After this the Lord and His disciples went through the cornfields, or grain fields, on the Sabbath day, the Lord teaching and the disciples listening as they walked. And as the disciples were hungry they picked some of the heads of grain, and rubbing them in their hands to get off the hulls they ate the kernels. In Palestine in those days they were allowed in walking through a grain field to take any that they could reach without stepping out of the path. But the Pharisees again found fault, and said unto Him, "Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?" The Pharisees made it unlawful to do any useful thing on the Sabbath day, and this picking the grain they called harvesting, and rubbing off the hulls they called threshing, which were both especially forbidden on the Sabbath. But the Lord asked them if they had never read "what David did when he was an hungered, he, and they that were with him." Does anyone remember the story? You find it in 1 Samuel 21:1-9.

The Jews had books full of things they must and must not do on the Sabbath. They must only walk a certain number of feet; they could only carry the least little thing, could not even set a broken bone; and they entirely forgot that the Lord's day should be a heavenly day, full of kindly uses to one another, and thoughts of the Lord and heaven. In putting aside the work and work-a-day thoughts of the week, we should look out that their place is filled full of heavenly thoughts and uses. The Jews' Sabbath was a most unlovely day, and one of the lessons the Lord came to teach was that it should be a lovely day - that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day.

Reading on, we learn of the Lord's going again into the synagogue in Capernaum on the Sabbath day and teaching. The synagogues were the Jews' churches, you know; they had at one end a platform on which was the reading-desk and a place on the floor for the teacher to sit when he taught the people. The hearers sat on the floor below, the women apart by themselves, and those who loved the chief seats sat on rugs about the platform. The Pharisees were among those who sat about the platform, watching the Lord as He taught. Among those who sat in the synagogue was a man who had his right hand withered; that is, it had been paralyzed and helpless so long that it had shriveled up. It was a trouble that no physician could help. The Lord saw the man, and the Pharisees saw him, and were watching to see if the Lord would heal him on the Sabbath day. The Lord said to the man, "Stand forth." Then He turned to the Pharisees and asked them if it is right to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath day, but they did not know what to say, so they did not answer. He looked at them "with anger," that is, sorrowfully, because of the hardness of their hearts, and turning to the man who was still standing before them all, He said, "Stretch forth thine hand." He had not been able to move it before. "And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other."

## **Junior**

Let us say the Commandment that begins, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." The Lord gave this Commandment to help people to prepare for heaven. One day in which they shall lay

aside their worldly cares which keep their hands and thoughts busy through the week, and shall think about heavenly things, helps to prepare them for heaven. And a day of rest, peaceful and quiet, is a picture of heaven, where there is no more fighting with evil thoughts and feelings and no more wearisome effort in doing right. The Jews forgot that the Sabbath ought to be a heavenly day, that they ought to think about the Lord and heavenly things; and that they ought to do good, kind things which would make the day like heaven. They said that people must keep the day by not doing the least thing that was useful. There were large books full of the rules about what could be and could not be done. Find a summary of these rules in Edersheim's "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," Appendix 17. If one kept these rules he would surely not make the day at all like heaven. Did the Lord keep the Sabbath so? How was it on a Sabbath when He walked with the disciples in the grain fields? How was it on a Sabbath in the synagogue?

How shall we keep the Sabbath? We must keep it holy by laying aside our usual work and play, by learning about the Lord and heaven, and by making the day like heaven by saying kind words and doing kind things which will make other people happy. When we are in church, think that the Lord is there to make us strong. When we walk in the fields, He is with us teaching us heavenly lessons in all we see.

1. Which of the Lord's disciples was a publican? What did a publican do?
2. How did the Pharisees treat the publicans? How did the Lord treat them?
3. How did the Pharisees keep the Sabbath? How did the Lord keep it?
4. How was the withered hand healed?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

"Lord of the Sabbath." The word "Sabbath" means rest. One kind of rest is found by laying aside our weekday labors. What harder labor and what more blessed rest did the Lord speak of when He said, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"? These labors are conflicts with evil desires, and efforts to do right. And is the rest that is promised, idleness? Nothing is more tiresome than idleness. Rest comes in heavenly usefulness, which is delightful when evil desires are overcome. The Lord is the Lord of the Sabbath because He has overcome all our enemies and can give this rest of heavenly usefulness and peace to our souls. (T. 301-304)

What David did is a picture of the Sabbath. David represented the Lord, and they that were with him were like the Lord's disciples. David took the holy bread of the tabernacle and gave to those with him; the Lord gives of His own love of heavenly usefulness, which is the Sabbath. The same was pictured in the disciples' eating as they walked with the Lord. The Pharisees condemned the disciples' act, but the Lord loves "mercy and not sacrifice," heavenly usefulness and not idleness and empty forms.

What finds expression through our hands? Our love of doing, of being useful; and our knowledge of how to be useful guides the hands in their work. When we are anxious to be doing, our hands

move eagerly. Such eagerness to put in practice the Lord's teaching in heavenly usefulness is suggested by the disciples rubbing the grain in their hands. This is the right way to listen on the Sabbath day. The Pharisees called this unlawful; they had separated from the Sabbath and from religion all care for useful life. They were therefore like a man with his hand withered. The man in their synagogue was a picture of them, and of many of us in church. He was cured as he stretched forth his hand. If we begin obediently to be useful, the love of being useful will grow strong. (A. 10061; E. 600)

Do you see in the Lord's teaching of new and truer ways of keeping the Sabbath, an example of new garments, and new skins to hold new wine? (E. 195, 376)

## Lesson 5

### Mark 3:13-35: Twelve Apostles Chosen

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Afterwards the Lord went up into a mountain and stayed there all night praying, and when the morning came He called His disciples to Him. Many people had learned to love the Lord and they followed Him about from place to place listening to His teaching and seeing the many wonderful things that He did. All these loving followers are called disciples. From these He chose twelve who should be especially His, who should in a way share His work. He could send them to preach. He could give them power to cast out evil spirits. These twelve He called apostles, and among them were the five about whom we have already learned. (It would be well to learn the names of the other seven.) It must have been a great honor to be one of the chosen twelve! But really each one of us is called by the Lord, and is sent out to do some work for Him. Disciple means "learner," and apostle means "one sent forth."

At this time the crowd that followed the Lord was very great, but the scribes and Pharisees were more bitter against Him than ever. They even said that the power the Lord had to cast out devils was from the prince of evil. This the Lord said could not be forgiven; for they did not say it because they knew no better, but because they knew and hated the Divine Spirit which did the mighty works.

Then His mother and brothers came calling Him, not understanding the great work that the Lord had come into the world to do. They were related to the earthly part of the Lord; but He told the people about Him that, "whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and mother." These were related to what was Divine in Him.

##### Junior

Climb with me to the top of the mountain which looks down on the plain of Gennesaret. What a charming, beautiful place! Look off over the meadows, and the green hills, one here and there crowned by a little town. Far in the north, overlooking all the rest, is the snowy Hermon. And here

at our feet is the rugged gorge by which we came; the lovely plain lies along the shore, in the old time so green and so full of busy life. And the deep blue water stretches away to the purple eastern shore, with two or three white sails to remind us of the many fishing-boats of long ago. It is a peaceful, sunny place up above the busy world. We can think of the Lord coming alone into this mountain to pray. We can think of His leading the people up into this quiet place to teach them about heavenly things.

Here also He called about Him His disciples and chose twelve to be His special messengers and helpers. Have we heard of some of these men before? Simon, named Peter, and Andrew his brother. Remember how the Lord called them from their nets. James and John; both were in the ship with their father when the Lord called them. Some of these had seen the Lord earlier, at the Jordan, at the time of the baptism. Philip had joined them as they turned from the Jordan into Galilee; and what was his home? (John 1:43, 44) Bartholomew was probably the same as Nathaniel; where was he when Philip called him? What town was his home? (John 1:45; 21:2) Matthew: who was he? Besides these whom we already know, there were Thomas, another James, Simon called the Zealot or the Cananaean (both names meaning that he was of the party of Israelites who were eager to throw off the Roman power), Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot (which means that he was from Kerioth, a town of Judaea). These twelve the Lord chose "that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils."

1. What does "disciple" mean? What does "apostle" mean?
2. How many apostles did the Lord appoint? What ones do you remember?
3. What was to be the apostles' work?
4. Who did the Lord say are His brother and sister and mother?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Let us write down in a column the names of the twelve apostles and in another column let us write so far as we can the apostles' homes. In still another column note what writings the different apostles have left us. Matthew and John, the Gospels which bear their names. (John 21:24) By whom was the Revelation written? (Revelation 1:9) You find epistles by John, James (which James is perhaps doubtful), Peter and Jude (Judas the brother of James; see Jude 1).

How many apostles were chosen? Does it mean that there is need of only twelve men to go on the Lord's work? No, but the twelve stand for all, and the Lord chose men of such characters that they might represent all people who will serve Him, or all the heavenly elements in any heart. Do you remember in the Old Testament a case where twelve stand for all the Lord's people? The twelve tribes. And in Revelation 7:4 is it meant that only a certain number can be saved? (A. 3858; E. 430) As we go on in our study we shall learn what particular elements of a heavenly character some of the apostles represent.

The disciples came to the Lord in the mountain, in this peaceful place above the noise and confusion of daily affairs; He was at the same time lifting up their minds to higher things; to think of heaven and of the motives which are within and above everyday life. He was leading them into a mountain naturally and spiritually also. Do you think of other places where a purer, more heavenly state of nearness to the Lord is spoken of as a mountain? (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Psalm 24:3, 4) It means especially a state in which love for the Lord lifts us above worldly distractions and opens our hearts to perceive the interior blessedness of the ways of heavenly life. (E. 405)

There are spiritual relationships of common interest and purpose, which are stronger and more enduring than natural ties. The Lord tells us that we may have such spiritual relationship to Him as we do the will of God. It is a wonderful thought, and brings us very near to Him. (A. 2159; E. 46)

## Lesson 6

### Mark 4:1-34: Parables by the Seaside

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

The Lord was sitting in a boat, teaching the people who sat and stood upon the shore. He spoke to the people in a parable. That is, He told them a sort of story which had in it many lessons. As they looked from the seashore over the grain fields, He told them how a sower, or farmer, went out to sow. The seed that he sowed was all good seed, the sun and showers came to it all alike, but the seed did not grow all alike. Some of the seeds fell upon the paths where the ground was trodden hard, and it could not cover itself with soft earth, so the birds, saw it and ate it up. Some of the seeds fell upon places where there was only a little earth covering the big rocks, and when the sun shone it soon got warm and came up quickly, but because the rock was there it could not put its roots down deep into the ground to get moisture, and so it soon dried up. Some of the seeds fell where there were thorny weeds already started, and when the seeds began to grow the stronger thorns took the food from their roots and crowded the little plants so that they could not bring forth any fruit. But some of the seeds fell upon the good, soft, deep ground where there were no weeds, and they grew fine and strong, and some of the plants had thirty kernels, some of them had sixty kernels, and some had a hundred.

After He had told this story He said, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." Read verses 1-9.

By this last verse the disciples knew that it was an important story, but still they did not understand it, and it must have troubled them; for when they were alone, that is, when the multitude had gone, they asked the Lord about the parable. The Lord was pleased to have them ask, and said, "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of heaven," which meant that to all who ask the Lord's help He can make things plain. But from those who do not go to Him for help the precious things of the kingdom of heaven are covered up by the parables or stories, lest they should despise them.

The Lord told His disciples the meaning of this parable. The seed was the word of God which He was teaching them, and which He teaches us in the Bible, telling us how to feel and think and do what is right, and also about Himself and the heavenly home. He told them that different people hear these words in different ways. Some bear fruit and some do not.

Read another parable in verses 26-29. We can plant seed in the garden, and we can gather the fruit, but who makes the seed grow? Only the Lord can do that, and He works night and day while we sleep and wake. We cannot see or know how He does it. It is the same with ourselves. There is a little for us to do, obeying what the Lord tells us is right, and night and day while we sleep and while we are busy with work and play the Lord is making our spirits strong and beautiful and ready for heaven.

One other parable, about the little mustard seed which grows to be a great tree. In Palestine the mustard grows very large, above your head as you ride on horseback. The Lord told the parable to remind us what great things will grow from little beginnings, from little things that we learn out of the Bible, and from little beginnings that we make in doing right. All that one learns, and all the beginning that anyone makes in this world is like a little tiny seed in the ground, but it will grow, and great strength and beauty and happiness will come from it in heaven. The Lord told the disciples the meaning of the parable of the sower and of the other parables, and He helps us to see, if we really want to see, their meaning. Read verses 30-34.

### **Junior**

We are standing on the shore, where the Sea of Galilee meets the plain of Gennesaret. We see the farmers at their work, loosening the ground, or scattering the seed, or gathering the harvest. But listen; the Lord is speaking of these very things. "Behold, there went out a sower to sow"; and He tells of some seed by the wayside, some in stony ground, some among thorns, and some in good ground. When the Lord spoke of these common things they had a deeper meaning.

Who were like the beaten paths where the seed did not sink in at all? Those who did not attend to what the Lord was saying; their minds were busy and satisfied with other things; His words could take no root at all in such minds, and bad thoughts snatched them away, as the birds picked up the grain. Who were like the shallow, stony ground? Those who were interested in what they heard, but only as something to think about. They had no patience to do what the Lord said, when it was a little hard to do it. And the thorny ground? This was like those who listened and resolved to obey the Lord's words, but selfish and evil plans took up their minds and the good things were crowded out. The good ground was like those who "in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." But it is time to read the parable, and its meaning, as the Lord told it to the disciples. Read verses 1-20.

Who makes the seeds grow that we plant in our gardens? The Lord makes them grow; we cannot do it. And so the Lord makes the seeds of heavenly life grow in us. There are some things that we must do in the garden; we must plant the seeds and water them, and pull up the weeds; but does it help the seeds any for us to dig them up to see how they get along? Do we have to sit and watch them all the time? Would it do any good for us to keep awake at night to watch them? When we have done our part, we must leave the rest for the Lord to do, and we must be trustful while He does it silently and often in ways that we cannot see. It is the same with the heavenly life in ourselves. We need not be anxious nor think that we have to do it all. The Lord makes the angel in

us grow silently as we sleep and rise, and try to do right in working and playing. Read verses 26-29.

The Lord compared the kingdom of God to a little mustard seed to show how great the increase in heavenly life will be. This world is like the ground; heaven is like the air and sunshine. If we learn and try to do here even a little of what is right, it will grow into a great deal of usefulness and happiness there. Read verses 30-34.

1. Will you please show me, with a map or pictures, where the Lord spoke the parables by the seaside?
2. Tell me one of the parables that the Lord spoke to the people on the shore. Who was the sower? What was the seed? Where were the different kinds of ground?
3. What did the Lord say about a candle or lamp? What did He say about mustard seed?
4. Why did the Lord speak in parables?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Read verses 11, 12. The meaning is, "lest they should be converted, and should then turn back to their evil ways." For the Lord guards against our learning more of heavenly things than we are able to keep faithfully, for if we know them and still do wrong, the wrong is more serious. One excellence of a parable is that everyone sees only so much as he is prepared to see. (P. 260; A. 301, 302)

Thirty-fold, sixty-fold, and a hundred-fold mean different degrees of fruitfulness. A hundred-fold describes the most full and perfect heavenly character. Sixty, like six, suggests a week of labor, and means the heavenly character which results from faithfulness in temptation. Thirty, which is half of sixty, means faithfulness in some temptations. (A. 2276, 2636, 3306)

"Candle" (verse 21) means "lamp," and we think of one of the little shallow cuplike lamps, filled with olive oil, with a hole for the wick at the pointed end opposite to the handle. The Lord's teaching is like a lighted lamp to make dark and doubtful things plain. But the light is given to us to use - to do what it shows is right, and to share it with others. This is putting the light on a stand. If we make no use of knowledge, or use it selfishly, we soon forget it. No matter how learned we are, if we do not practice what we know, we shall forget it all in the other world and be densely stupid. Does this help you to understand verses 21-25? (H. 349)

The parable of the seed growing silently is a beautiful lesson not to be anxious and self-trustful in regard to our spiritual progress, but to remember that if we do our part the rest is cared for by the Lord, in rest and in activity, in dark times and bright. (A. 9587, 5212)

The sharp taste of the mustard seed seems to suggest the selfishness that is in our first little efforts for heavenly life; but the Lord can bring great things from beginnings so small and imperfect. The birds of the air are here the free, happy developments of heavenly affection and

thought which will come by and by. Notice the different meaning of the birds in the parable of the sower. (A. 55, 1940)

## Lesson 7

### Mark 4:5-41: Calming Winds and Waves

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

As the Lord taught the people in parables, He sat in a boat near the shore. What shore? What sea?

The Sea of Galilee is a beautiful blue lake shaped something like a pear with the small end toward the south. The Jordan River, you remember, runs into it at the north and out again at the south, keeping the water sweet and fresh. There are hills and mountains around it except where the plain of Gennesaret comes to the water's edge. In the Gospel days there were many boats on the sea, some of them bringing merchandise from the East; and there were many fishing boats, for we learn that the fishermen toiled day and night. On a quiet summer's day this little sea is blue and dancing in the sunshine, a happy, friendly sight to see; but sometimes, suddenly, without notice the wind sweeps down between the mountains, and in a few moments the quiet sea is a raging enemy, seeming ready to destroy every boat, upon it.

It was at a time when the sea was quiet that the Lord sat and taught the people; but as the evening drew near He turned to His apostles who were near Him, and said, "Let us pass over unto the other side." And when they had sent away the multitude, they took Him even as He was in the ship. And there were also with Him other little ships. As they sailed, the Lord lay down in the hinder part or stern of the boat, and slept on a pillow. And as the darkness deepened, the wind came sweeping over the sea; the waves rose high and began to break over the sides of the boat, and it was fast filling with water and the apostles were afraid. Still the Lord slept on the pillow. Should they disturb Him? They were not yet wholly trustful, though they had seen so many wonderful things that He had done. So they came to Him in their terror, "and they awake Him, and say unto Him," etc. Tell the rest in the Bible words: verses 38-41.

##### Junior

How many of you can draw from memory a map of the Sea of Galilee? First think of its shape, twice as long as it is wide. Make it narrower at the southern part on the western side. Remember where the Jordan runs in and runs out. Next show how the hills come down to the shore on every side except at the northwest where they stand back leaving the plain of Gennesaret. Don't forget the Mountain of the Blessings and the valley leading up to it from the plain. Now put down the towns that you know; Tiberias, Capernaum, Magdala. Show me the town where the Lord made His home; the shore where He called His disciples, and where He taught the people from the boat.

There are often hard storms upon this little sea. It lies deeply sunk below the country around it, six hundred and twenty-seven feet lower than the Mediterranean. The winds which sweep over

the country puff down through the narrow valleys on the water, quickly raising it into white-capped waves. You remember the fishing-boats. We have seen pictures of the boats that are used on the Sea of Galilee today, and I have told you about them: stout boats some twenty-five feet long, pointed at both ends, with a little deck in bow and stern, a three-cornered sail, and oars, and, a rope to tow the boat along.

It drew toward evening as the Lord was teaching, and they turned the boat to cross to the other side. Do you know any towns on the other side? There were some but not many. It was mostly open pasture country where the Lord sometimes took the disciples for rest. (Mark 6:31) Read what happened as they sailed.

Were you ever frightened in a storm? When we are, it is because we forget that the Lord is taking care of us. Is He with us on the water, and in the dark? If we trust the Lord to take care of us, whether He at once stops the natural storm or not, He quiets our fears and anxious feelings, and there is in our own minds a great calm. Why should we ever be afraid of a storm or anything if we remember that the Lord is with us taking care of us? There is nothing in this world to be afraid of but doing wrong which takes us away from the Lord.

1. "The same day." What day?
2. "To the other side." Of what?
3. What happened as they sailed?
4. Where was the Lord?
5. What did He say? What did He do?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The sea with its atmosphere of cold, heavy water, is like a natural, worldly state of mind. Sometimes it pictures a state quite evil and unheavenly. The calling of the disciples from their nets pictured to us the Lord's call from a natural, worldly life to a spiritual life. The drawing of the net full of fishes to the shore pictures our passing from this natural world into the spiritual, world. The Lord's teaching the people by the sea and from the boat represents the fact that He was teaching in simple, natural forms of thought. Now the Lord's going out upon the sea with the disciples tells us of His full presence and sympathy with us in all our most natural affairs, and especially of His help in overcoming what is evil. (E. 342)

The storm. Are our minds sometimes calm and peaceful and sometimes tempestuous? The sea is the worldly thought, in this place especially false and evil thought. At times this is excited and threatens to swallow us up from the light of heaven. Winds represent the silent, unseen influences of the spiritual world. Sometimes good, heavenly influences (John 3:8), but here evil influences which arouse the evil in ourselves. The Lord's calming the winds and waves shows us His power over nature. It is the same power which always stills the storm, dissolves the clouds, and brings the sunshine. But all the Lord's works were signs of spiritual works which He was doing and always desires to do for us. When the Lord rebuked the winds and waves and there was

a great calm, it was a sign that He had conquered the worldly nature in Himself, and the influences from hell which aroused that nature. He had conquered them in Himself, and gained the power to still the winds and waves for us. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33; T. 123; E. 419, 514)

Read of another time when the Lord calmed the winds and the waves, and in still another way showed His power over the sea and what the sea represents. (Matthew 14:22-33) Read the description of a state of temptation in Psalm 107:23-31; and how beautifully the promise of the Lord's help is given to calm the waves!

In times of excitement and temptation the Lord seems far away, and to have forgotten us. This was represented by His being asleep and seeming not to care if the disciples perished. But really, the Lord never forgets us. He is always near. In temptations He is nearer than at other times, more near than we can know or believe. When any evil is roused with its storm of winds and waves, if we ask the Lord's help He will give it, and say to the storm, "Peace be still." (E. 514; A. 840)

## Lesson 8

### Mark 5:1-20: The Devils and the Swine

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

In our last lesson we learned of the Lord's quieting the great storm on the sea. They crossed to the pasture country on the eastern side. It is called by Mark "the country of the Gadarenes" or "the Gerasenes" (Revised Version). They seem to have landed near a town at the mouth of one of the little valleys that lead up from the shore to the upland pastures. There are many caves in the hillsides, and some of them were used as tombs, and were considered unclean by the Jews. As soon as the Lord and His disciples had landed a man with an unclean spirit saw Him from afar and ran to Him and worshiped Him. Matthew speaks of two such men.

You know there are times when the evil spirits try very hard to make us do as they wish, but with the Lord's help we can send them away. Before the Lord came, however, it was different; the evil spirits had complete power over the poor people they possessed, and drove them as they would. There were no kind ways of caring for such people in those days, and the only way they knew was to shut them up or bind them so that they would not hurt others. But this man was so strong that he broke the chains they bound him with, and he lived among the tombs naked, and cutting himself with stones, and crying night and day, making it dangerous for any one to pass by that way. A sadder condition for a poor man to be in, it would be hard to imagine.

But when he saw the Lord from a long way off, he came running toward Him, and instead of attacking Him fell down at His feet and worshiped Him, and cried out with a loud voice. It was the evil spirit that spoke through the man, and also answered when the Lord asked his name, "My name is Legion: for we are many." And they all begged the Lord, if they must leave the man to let them go into a herd of many swine, which was feeding near by. The swine, or pigs, were unclean according to the Jewish law and the Jews were forbidden to keep them. The unclean, greedy

beasts seemed attractive to the evil spirits, and the Lord permitted them to go. It showed of what kind the evil spirits were. And when they had "entered into the swine, the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea (they were about two thousand); and were choked in the sea." You can imagine how excited the people were, those that kept the swine and those who came from the city to see; but they cared more for the loss of their pigs than for the blessings which had come to the poor man, and they begged the Lord to leave their country.

### **Junior**

As we look across the sea of Galilee from the plain of Gennesaret we see its eastern shore rising like a purple wall. It is not far away - six miles straight across, and we can see twinkling lights at night. The shore is a steep slope, sometimes almost a precipice, rising to a great upland pasture country. This is the old land of Bashan, famous for its herds and great oaks, the land chosen by half the tribe of Manasseh, because it was so good a pasture for their flocks and herds. At the northern end near the Jordan the slopes are more gentle, and here and there along the eastern shore a valley breaks down to the sea with its brook in the rainy season, and makes a way to climb up to the pastures above. We read several times of the Lord's crossing to the eastern shore. It was an open country with few towns, a peaceful pasture land, with much good grass.

It probably was early morning, after the night when the Lord quieted the storm, as they drew near to the eastern shore, where one of the largest valleys comes down to the water nearly opposite Magdala. Here by the shore are the ruins of Kersa, probably the scene of our story. A path led by the town through the valley up to the pasture country. The valley bottom was green, its sides were rough cliffs in which were caves, many of them used as tombs.

Now you will understand the story as we read it. You have learned before of people who were possessed by devils.

We wonder that the people asked the Lord to leave them, caring more for their swine than for the Lord. But we sometimes love evil things so much that we will not let the Lord protect us from them. Then we care more for the swine than for the Lord.

1. What kind of country is it on the east side of the Sea of Galilee?
2. Who met the Lord as He landed there?
3. What had made the change, when they saw the man sitting at the Lord's feet?
4. Why did they ask the Lord to go away?

### **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

#### **Intermediate**

Beyond Jordan. The Holy Land itself represents a spiritual state of life. We speak of journeying to the heavenly Canaan. Lands beyond the border of Canaan represent states which are good and useful if they are helpful to the spiritual life. Bashan, a great pasture land, famous for herds and oaks, represents a natural state where strong affections for natural usefulness and for natural

good things increase and multiply, and where is developed a vigorous natural understanding of right. (See the correspondence of cattle and of the oak tree.) This natural goodness is pleasing to, the Lord when it is the companion and helper of real spiritual goodness. Therefore half the tribe of Manasseh was allowed to occupy this land if they would first cross over Jordan and help their brethren. (E. 440)

The Lord crossed the Sea of Galilee to this pasture land as a sign of His presence with us in natural states, as of rest and recreation, the enjoyment of natural ease and beauty. We need the Lord's presence in this more natural state, that we may not abuse these enjoyments. Does the Lord find us in our states of natural enjoyment and rest moderate, with our appetites under strict control, always serviceable to our higher life? Or does He find us as men possessed, in the power of self-indulgent spirits? There are swine-like spirits which make us indolent and greedy, which drive to what is impure, and to indulgence in eating and drinking. When in their power we live in the tombs, in ways in which there is nothing of spiritual life. Of our own strength we cannot tame or bind them. Only the Lord can. He has overcome such evil spirits, and has power to cast them out from us. He will, if we ask Him, help us to see these enemies as they are - swine, and will cast them out. (A. 1742; E. 659) Then we shall sit at His feet, clothed and in our right mind. We shall be safe and free to do well if we will.

This miracle is a wonderful picture of the whole work of redemption; which means a buying back from bondage. The Lord overcame hell; He delivered men from its power, and restored them to spiritual freedom - their right mind, and keeps us free. (H.257)

Compare the Lord's charge to the man who was healed (Mark 5:18-20) with His charge to some whom He healed in Galilee. (Matthew 8:4; Mark 8:26; Luke 8:56) In such cases we learn the lesson that the Lord does not wish men to be attracted to Him merely for external benefits, but for heavenly blessings. The charge to the man on the eastern shore seems to teach that outward signs of power have a use for those in natural, external states of mind. It teaches also that natural good things and pleasures need not be abandoned to serve the Lord, but that we may continue to enjoy them, having learned His power to control them and make them good.

## **Lesson 9**

### **Mark 5:21-43: Jairus' Daughter**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

You remember that before the Lord and the disciples went across the sea the Lord had been teaching the multitude, and that He sat in a boat a little way from the shore because the crowd was so great. When He came back from the country of the Gadarenes the multitude was waiting to receive Him. And Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue, one of those who had charge of the services of the synagogue, came to Him in great trouble. His little daughter was dying, but if the Lord would only come and lay His hands on her she would surely live.

I should like to tell you the whole story, but it is better still to read it. It is really two stories: one of what happened on the way to the house of Jairus, and the other of what happened at his home.

At the house they found it all sadness; besides the sorrowing family there were women who were hired to weep and lament, and there was sad music and a great noise of grief. "He saith unto them, why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed Him to scorn," for what they all knew as death had certainly come to the little girl. But the Lord who knew all about it, knew that death itself is but a sleep. Usually He awakens one from this sleep in the heavenly world, but this time He would show His power by awakening the child in this world. "Talitha cumi," He said; "Little maid, arise." And as they watched, the child arose and walked, for she was twelve years old. "And they were astonished with a great astonishment."

It was the Lord's own beautiful way of showing all His children that every one in death is but asleep. The little girl had not gone far away; she was still herself and would have been just the same little girl if the Lord had seen best to awaken her in heaven.

## Junior

"Talitha cumi." Do you seem to see any place when you hear these words? And any people? Do you see the One who spoke them, and what He is doing? I wonder if you see the same things that I do. The Lord is speaking. He is standing by a low bed or couch where a little girl is lying, and He is holding her hand in His. She was very still, but as the Lord took her hand and spoke these words, "Talitha cumi," she sat up and began to speak and got up from the bed.

There were other people in the room with the Lord and the little girl. There were three men who were known as fishermen from the lake. But they had left their nets and boats to follow the Lord and were His faithful disciples. This older man is Peter, and it was probably he who told what the Lord did and said, to Mark who wrote the story that we shall read together. This young man is John, and the other is his brother James. They had been with the Lord some time, and seen Him do other wonderful things, but they wondered very much when they saw the little girl get up, for she was dead.

And there were two others in the room, a woman, and a man whose robes showed that he was a chief man among the Jews, and one of those who had charge of the synagogue and the services that were held there on Sabbath days. They were the mother and father of the little girl. We can think how glad they were when they saw their child alive and well. All this comes to mind as we hear the words, "Talitha cumi," "Little maid, arise." They do not sound strange, but very sweet, and they mean so much.

Can you go on and tell me other thoughts that these words bring to mind? Look a little further away. Who else were in the house? and what were they doing? Many mourners were there, some of them women, who were hired to come and make sad wailing sounds. And look outside the door. The blue sky was overhead, and trees and flowers and other houses were around, for the house was in Capernaum. And over yonder was the blue water of the Sea of Galilee with the sails of fishing-boats. One of these boats had just brought the Lord from the other side of the sea. The father of the little girl had met Him on the shore and had brought Him up this path to the house. Many people followed the Lord as they came, and do you remember something that happened, on

the way? Something that was done for a poor woman who came in the crowd behind and touched the Lord's clothes? All these things make a part of the picture which the two words bring to mind.

And my thoughts reach out in another way from the house of Jairus and the bedside of the little girl. The Lord meant that the words He spoke there should be remembered and should be a comfort to people always, the world over, when any little maid or little boy, or when anyone has died. "She is not dead, but sleepeth. Little maid, arise." When a person dies, the Lord tells us that he goes to sleep, and He will awaken him again into the heavenly world. It is a very peaceful sleep, for good angels are near; and it does not last long, for usually on the third day, and sometimes sooner, the Lord awakens us into the other world. Then we open our eyes and see the good angel friends and the beautiful homes that they are ready to share with us - if we are willing; for no one can enjoy those homes unless he is good and kind and useful and ready to do his part to make home pleasant. This is the change that came to my dear little friend who died a few weeks ago, and some day it will come to me. Now let us keep very quiet and think that we are going to the house of Jairus with the Lord, as we read the story.

1. What do the words Talitha cumi mean? Where were they spoken? Who spoke them? To whom? Who heard them?
2. Who touched the Lord's clothes as He was going to the house? Why did she do it? Did the Lord know it?
3. A little friend of mine has died. What does it mean? What is the change that has come to the child? Is she still alive? Where is she? Who are with her there? Can I ever see her again?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

I want the older children to learn definitely about the going to the other world; the peaceful sleep, the protecting angels, the very gentle awakening, the homes in heaven to which little children go. (R. 153; T. 281; H. 329-345)

If all this is true about the going to the other world, why is death often spoken of in the Bible, as something to be feared? In some places it is plain that it is speaking of another kind of death. (Psalm 115:17, 18; Revelation 2:11; 20:14; 21:8) The death of the natural body is one death; that is not to be feared; what other death can there be? What else is there in us that can die? The heavenly life of good feelings and thoughts. Ought we to fear the death of these? (Luke 12:4, 5)

When the Lord blessed the little children, He showed His love also for what is gentle and innocent and childlike in us all. In the same way, what did it mean when He raised this child to life? It showed how He always uses His power to protect the beginnings of heaven in us, and when they grow weak and discouraged, to give them new life, if we will ask His help and try again. A little girl represents especially the beginning of heavenly affection, and a little boy the beginning of heavenly understanding. How can we obey the Lord's charge to give the little girl something to eat, when He raised her to life? (E. 863; A. 2348)

Do you remember other times when the Lord told those whom He healed to arise? (Mark 10:49; Luke 5:18-24; 7:14; John 5:8) In what way must we arise if we wish the Lord to heal and strengthen our souls? We must lift our thoughts to better things, and set our hearts on what is pure and good and heavenly, and begin with the Lord's help to live in higher ways. See Luke 15:18. (A. 2401, 4881)

The story tells of what happened as they were going to the house of Jairus - the healing of the woman by the way, who touched the Lord's clothes. This pictures some more outside work that helps to prepare the way for the Lord to do the deeper work in the inner chamber of our souls.. We can ask the Lord's help to make our life right as far as we can. We can read the Bible and learn the Commandments and keep them in ways that are plain to us. This is like touching the Lord's clothes, for His Word clothes Him to us, and its literal meaning and the plain commandments are the garment's hem. We touch them in the crowd when we remember them in the midst of our everyday work and pleasure; and we may feel the Lord's power helping us as the woman did. And He feels it too, as He felt that His power went out to help the poor woman. If in this way we touch the Lord's garments by the wayside, then He can go further with us, into the inner chamber and make our heavenly affection strong. (E. 195; A. 10023)

## **Lesson 10**

### **Mark 6:1-13: The Return to Nazareth**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

What city was now the Lord's home? In what place had He lived before for many years?

In our lesson today we learn that He left Capernaum and the sea and went back to Nazareth, and His disciples went with Him. There He preached in the synagogue on the Sabbath day. But the people in Nazareth found it hard to believe in Him: they had known Him as a boy and young man; they knew His mother and brothers and sisters who were people like themselves, and it made them angry that He should have all this wisdom and power. So because they did not believe in Him He could do little to help them. "And He went round about the villages teaching." Read verses 1-6.

Do you remember how many disciples the Lord chose to be with Him as His special friends and helpers? These twelve He called together now. They had been with Him hearing His words and seeing all the wonderful works He was doing. Now they were to go out without Him. He sent them forth by two and two and gave them power to cast out devils, and to heal diseases, and to teach to the world what the Lord had taught them. He told them to "take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no script, no bread, no money in their purses; but be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats." They were to go as simply as was possible, trusting His word that they would be cared for. When they came to a town they were not to go visiting about from house to house, but were to choose a suitable place and stay there till their work in that town should be finished. If they should go to a town where the people would not listen to their words, when they left that place

they were to shake off the dust of the town from their feet, which would show that nothing of these people's evil ways should cling to the Lord's disciples. "And they went out, and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them."

### **Junior**

The Lord went again "into His own country," to Nazareth which had been His home for nearly thirty years. You can find Nazareth on the map, and you remember the little mountain village with its little meadow and the circle of hills all about, shutting it in from the rest of the world. You remember the spring in the upper end of the valley, where the women fill their jars, and the little flat-roofed houses on the hillside; and the narrow streets of shops where carpenters and other mechanics work at their trades with boys to help them; and the synagogue which was there in the old days, where the Jews met on the Sabbath to hear the Scriptures read from the sacred rolls and explained by a teacher; and the hill above the town with some steep cliffs on its sides and the wide view from the top. We think so often of Nazareth while the Lord lived there as a child and while He was known to the neighbors as "the carpenter" and "the carpenter's son," that it is like going again to a place that we know well, when we read that the Lord "came into His own country" with His disciples. It may be the very same visit to Nazareth, that is described in Luke 4:16-30. Read those verses with Mark 6:1-6.

But there were people in other villages who were more willing than the people of Nazareth to listen to the Lord. He went Himself to many of them, and He sent His disciples out into the towns of Galilee to teach others about Him and to heal the sick by His power. They went two and two; no script or bag such as travelers usually carried; no bread, no money. They went to do the Lord's work, trusting in His power. Do you understand what is said of Sodom and Gomorrah? At the end of our lesson we learn how the disciples came back to the Lord, near Capernaum to tell Him what they had done and taught.

1. Where was the Lord born? Where did He live for nearly thirty years? Where was His home after He began to go about to teach and heal?
2. Did He ever go again to Nazareth? How was He received?
3. How many of His followers did the Lord especially choose to be with Him and to help in His work? What were these called? How many of their homes do you remember? What did the Lord send them out to do? Why were they to take so little for the journey?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

What was the reason that some people were willing to believe in the Lord and some were not? One cannot be wise in heavenly things, except by repenting of evil with the Lord's help. Otherwise the light of heaven does not shine in the mind. (Psalm 111:10; John 7:17)

Why could the Lord do few mighty works in Nazareth? (Matthew 13:58) But why was not that just the place and time to do miracles and compel them to believe? It would not be useful to

compel belief. The miracles were useful in confirming belief with those who were touched by the Lord's truth and goodness. (P. 130-133)

Does the going of the disciples two and two suggest anything about the way in which we should do the Lord's work? With sympathy and companionship, encouraging and helping one another. The two disciples also suggest the two faculties of love and understanding, which should be united in every good work. (A. 4677, 9942)

Going without provision for the way is like being poor in spirit, that is conscious of our need of the Lord's help; but to take everything for the journey would be being rich, that is self-trustful, thinking ourselves very strong and good. Which is the spirit in which the Lord's disciples ought to work. (Matthew 5:3; 6:11; Mark 10:17-27)

## **Lesson 11**

### **Mark 6:14-29: Death of John the Baptist**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

You remember John the Baptist who preached repentance and baptized, preparing the people for the Lord. He was strong and brave, and said what he knew to be right and true whether it pleased people or not. In this way he had displeased Herod, and especially Herodias, Herod's wife; for they had done evil and John told them so. This Herod was the son of Herod the Great who was the king at Jerusalem when the Lord was born. After his father's death this Herod ruled over Galilee and a district east of Jordan. Herod was afraid of John, for so many of the people believed in him and followed him. So he took him and shut him up in prison at Machaerus.

Machaerus was a great fortress on a very steep hill east of the Dead Sea. The hill was so steep that no one could climb it except on one side, and there only by a bridle path, so it was a fine place for a fort. From the top was a grand view of the country on both sides of the Jordan River. It is believed that there was not only the fort on top with its many dungeons, but at the western end of the ridge a magnificent palace where Herod spent much of his time.

Herod had protected John from the hatred of his wife Herodias who would have had him killed long ago if she could. But one day King Herod made a great feast in his palace, and the daughter of Herodias (her name was Salome) came in while they were sitting at the table, and danced before them, and Herod and his friends were greatly pleased; and Herod made her a grand promise before them all, that he would give her anything she would ask, even if it were half his kingdom. Salome well knew that Herod could not give away even the smallest village; all his "kingdom" belonged to the great Roman Emperor. So she went to her mother Herodias to ask what she should say, and she told her to ask that the head of John the Baptist be brought to her on a charger or large dish. Herod was very sorry when he heard this; for there were many reasons why he did not want to kill John. But he was a coward, and because he had made the promise before all the people he was ashamed to refuse, so he sent an executioner and had the head of John brought to Salome and she took it to her mother.

The disciples of John came and buried his body in a tomb, and very sorrowful they must have been at this sad ending of the life on earth of their great master. Herod knew that it was a wicked thing to do, and besides that he was afraid of John whom he knew to be a great and brave man; so when after a time he heard of all the wonderful things that the Lord was doing and had sent out His disciples to do, Herod was greatly afraid, and thought it was John who had risen and had this great power.

### **Junior**

The Lord had been going round about the villages, teaching; and the apostles had been sent two and two through the towns of Galilee.

"And king Herod heard of Him." This was not the Herod who was king of Jerusalem when the Lord was born, for you know he died soon afterwards. This was a son of the old Herod, called Herod Antipas. He was ruler of Galilee, which was the northern part of the land of Canaan, and of the Peraea, which was the country east of the Jordan and south of the Sea of Galilee. (Luke 3:1) Herod was building the city of Tiberias (can you think why he called it Tiberias?) in a pleasant place by the shore of the Sea of Galilee, near to the hot springs. It was not far from the plain of Gennesaret and Capernaum.

News of the Lord and of what He was doing and teaching would be sure to reach Tiberias. Would Herod be ready to believe in the Lord, and repent? How was it with the old Herod in Jerusalem? And how was it with this Herod when he heard John the Baptist's teaching? At first, we are told, he was glad to hear John, but when John plainly pointed out Herod's sins, he shut him up in prison; and by and by on his birthday, to please his wicked wife, he caused John to be killed. We do not think of this at Tiberias, but at Machaerus, a fortress city of Herod's on the mountains east of the northern part of the Dead Sea, where the ruins of an old palace and prison cells can still be seen. Herod had done this to John the Baptist. Would he believe in the Lord and obey Him, if he should see Him? When by and by he did see Him, the Lord did not speak, nor show Him any sign of power. (Luke 23:6-12)

1. Who was king in Jerusalem when the Lord was born? Who was ruler in Galilee when the Lord's home was there?
2. What did John the Baptist teach? What did Herod do to John?
3. Did Herod ever hear of the Lord? Did he ever see Him?
4. What did the Lord call Herod?

### **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

#### **Intermediate**

What did the Lord once call Herod? And what does it tell us of his character? (Luke 13:32) A good king is a type of truth ruling in the life. Herod is a type of falsity and deceit seeking to justify an evil life. What is the relation of such falsity to the Divine truth of right and wrong for which John the Baptist stands? If it cares for it at all, it is only for appearance' sake. It was Herod's wicked

wife who urged him to do violence to John. She stands for the evil which the falsity seeks to justify. The daughter of Herodias who charmed the king by her dancing represents the abandonment to evil pleasure which leads to disregard for even the appearance of regard for truth. Evil pleasure and its excuses reject the Lord's truth. John is killed on Herod's birthday. This false deceit which rejects the Lord's law can have no understanding of the Lord Himself. Herod was perplexed at hearing of the Lord. (P. 114)

## Lesson 12

### Mark 6:30-44: Feeding the Five Thousand

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Whose sad imprisonment and death did we learn about? By whose order had John been put to death? By whose wish was it done? Who took up the body of John and buried it in a tomb? When they had done this they came to the Lord to tell Him what had happened.

At just about this time the twelve apostles came back from the mission which the Lord had sent them upon, eager to tell Him of their success; and they entered into a ship together to go to the other side of the sea, to the sunny slopes near where the Jordan enters, to rest awhile. Here also they were outside of Herod's rule. But many people at Capernaum and along the shore saw Him go, and saw how the boat was headed; so they ran along the shore, and some of them came to Bethsaida before Him, and were waiting for Him when He landed, and others came only a little later. There may have been more people than usual in the neighborhood, for the time of the Passover at Jerusalem was near, and many people were on their way to the feast. These had heard of the wonderful things the Lord had done, and eagerly joined the multitude to listen.

The Lord had compassion upon them and taught them, and they were so interested that they still stayed and listened though they had no midday meal, and it was growing late in the afternoon. The disciples began to be anxious, and came to the Lord and begged Him to send the multitude away that they might go into the villages and buy themselves bread, for there was no chance to get anything to eat on the hillsides where they were. But the Lord said, "Give ye them to eat." The disciples did not know what He meant or what to think. The lad who had brought their provisions for them had only five barley loaves and two little fishes, a very small lunch even for them, and here was a company of five thousand men besides the women and children. The disciples said, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread that each one may have a little? (The penny was worth fifteen cents.)

But the Lord commanded them to make the people sit down in companies upon the green grass. So after they were seated in companies of a hundred and fifty, the Lord told the disciples to bring Him the five loaves and two fishes. We can think of the people spread out upon the hillside, sitting among the grass and flowers, for all the hillsides are bright with flowers in the spring time, and the companies of people themselves must have looked like great flower beds in their bright Eastern dresses. Before them stood the Lord and His anxious disciples, the whole company

wondering; and beyond them all spread the beautiful blue sea reflecting the light of the late afternoon sun. The Lord took the bread and fishes and blessing them handed them to the disciples to give to the people. And always as they came back for a fresh supply the Lord had more to give them, and this until all had had all they wanted; and even then as the Lord told His disciples to gather up what remained they filled twelve baskets. There was very much more left than the five loaves and the two fishes which they had in the first place. You can imagine how astonished all the people must have been, the disciples most of all.

## **Junior**

Tell me about the Lord's sending out the twelve apostles. Now they came together again to the Lord by the Gennesaret shore. (Mark 6:30; Luke 9:10) The multitudes were coming and going, and the Lord took the twelve apart to a quiet place for rest.

Here is the place, the green slopes at the northeast corner of the lake, pasture land belonging to Bethsaida Julias, a little town east of the Jordan where it comes near the lake. (John 6: 1; Luke 9:10) It is called a desert place, but that does not mean barren, for there was much grass in the place. It is a part of the fine pasture land of Bashan. A desert place means quiet, open country with few towns. See on the map, as they sailed across they were not far from the northern shore of the lake. The people saw them setting sail and ran along the shore, others joining them from each town they passed, so that when the boat came to land a great multitude were already there - five thousand men besides women and children. The Lord pitied them. They seemed as sheep not having a shepherd. He healed those that were sick, and spent the day teaching them heavenly things.

The Lord led the people up on the sunny slopes above the lake, and sat teaching them as they gathered about Him. So the day passed, and it drew toward evening. The people were far from home. The Lord asked Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (You will like to turn to the story in all the Gospels. (Matthew 14:13-21; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15) Let us note a few things before we read the story. The penny was a coin worth fifteen cents, but a day's wages in those days. (Matthew 20:2) The loaves were thin round cakes of bread made of barley, a cheap coarse grain. The fishes were little dried ones, eaten as relishes with bread. "In ranks"; the words mean rather, "flower beds, flower beds," for so they looked in their bright dresses on the green. The twelve baskets were wicker baskets, such as they used on a journey to carry, provisions in.

The Lord made the food for them. The same Lord makes all our food. Usually He does it by sending sunshine and rain, and making the grain grow in the fields. Then He did it right from His own hand.. What He gives us is just as much His gift. We must thank Him for our daily bread.

1. Where did the Lord feed the five thousand? With what did He feed them?
2. Note the numbers: the multitude, the loaves, the fishes, the baskets filled with fragments.
3. Does the Lord do any such miracle nowadays?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

There were two miracles of feeding the multitude. We shall compare them when we learn of the second miracle in Mark 8:1-10.

We have learned that the Lord's miracles were all outward expressions of His spiritual works. What spiritual work does the feeding of the people picture? Do we need spiritual food? Suppose we had plenty of natural food, would that make our spirits grow strong? Our minds need food: interesting subjects of thought, and good things to love. Instruction in these heavenly things is spiritual food. Read of such food in Isaiah 55:1, 2; Amos 8:11; Matthew 16:6, 12. (A. 680; E. 750.) The Lord on this day by the Sea of Galilee had been giving spiritual bread as He taught the people; and now to show His desire to feed them and make them strong, He gave them also food for their bodies. Remember the spiritual help we need when we say, "Give us this day our daily bread."

The poor barley bread and little fishes have a special meaning. A fruit tree represents growing knowledge about some good use, and the nourishing fruit is the use with the satisfaction we feel in it. Grains represent little plans for daily use; small, in great numbers, comparatively dry and unattractive; but after all they give life its chief satisfaction. The noblest grain, wheat, represents knowledge of duties done in the highest motive of serving the Lord. Barley represents knowledge of duties done in the more natural motive of neighborly kindness. The Lord blesses duties done in this more common motive and makes them strengthening to the soul. And the little fishes. We have thought of the sea as representing an atmosphere of natural thought. The fishes are the affections for learning natural knowledge and thinking in a natural way. The barley loaves represented the natural satisfaction in good uses, and the fishes the natural understanding in regard to them, which the people were receiving from the Lord. Why did the Lord feed the people with barley loaves and not with "the finest of the wheat"? (Psalm 81:13, 16) He gave them as they were able to receive. Even today Christian people know little of the blessedness of the doing duties for the Lord, though many are sustained by the satisfaction of helping one another. (E. 430, 617.)

Learn also the lesson that we must not be afraid to share what we have of love and knowledge of heavenly things. It is little and poor, but with the Lord's blessing it will give strength to others, and we have the more ourselves for sharing the little we have. Is it not so when we try to encourage others, or to teach them?

## **Lesson 13**

### **Mark 6:45-56: Walking on the Sea**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

After the feeding of the multitude the Lord sent His disciples by boat across the sea to Bethsaida, while He sent away the people. This was not the Bethsaida, where the multitude were fed, but another town near Capernaum. (Verse 53) The name means "Fishertown," and it is not surprising that there were more than one Bethsaida by the Sea of Galilee. We see a reason for this, for we are told in John that the people were so excited by the miracle of the loaves that they wanted to take Him by force and make Him a king. Then He sent the disciples and the multitude away, and went up into a mountain alone to pray.

When evening was come, He saw His disciples still toiling and rowing upon the sea, "for the wind was contrary"; and at about the fourth watch (between three and six o'clock) He went to them walking on the sea. The disciples were frightened, but He said, "Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid." And He went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased. And they were very amazed. The Lord is always near to help us in trouble wherever we may be.

Do you remember another miracle something like this?

##### **Junior**

The Lord had fed the multitude. Show me where it was. The people were excited when they saw this sign of power. They had always heard from their parents and from teachers, of the great Prophet the Messiah, who some day would come. They thought he would be a great earthly king, and would make them the strongest and richest people in the world. These hopes came to their minds when they saw the Lord's power. They thought the time had come. They would take the Lord by force and make Him king. They thought He would lead them to Jerusalem, and drive out the Romans, and make them rich and great. Even the disciples expected a great earthly kingdom, and that the Lord would make them rulers in it. (Matthew 20:21; Acts 1:6)

The Lord was truly the great Prophet and the Messiah who had been predicted, but He had not come to be such a king as the people expected. He said by and by to Pilate, "Thou sayest that I am a king." "My kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36, 37) The Lord did not wish the people to love riches and to rule over others. He bade His disciples first to get into a boat and to go before Him back to Gennesaret while He sent the people away. When He had sent away the multitude He went up into a mountain to pray, and as the evening came and it grew dark He was there alone.

We can think in part what His prayer must have been. Remember how after His baptism the tempter showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and said that they might be His. This temptation must have come again when the excited people came about Him to make Him king. He must overcome in Himself all thoughts of worldly power, that He might help His disciples and all people to put away such thoughts, and to be humble, and to think only of

being useful, for they must learn like Him to love not to be ministered unto but to minister.  
(Matthew 20:20-28)

So the night was passing while the Lord was alone in the mountain in prayer, and the disciples were on the sea going toward home. But a storm of wind was against them. They rowed but they could not go forward against the storm. The Lord "saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them." They were half way across the water, or a little more. It was now the fourth watch of the night, which means very early in the morning, soon after three o'clock. The Lord came to them walking on the sea. But read the story. If we trust in the Lord He comes to us when we need His help, and brings the morning light, and takes us safely to the heavenly land whither we are going.

1. After the feeding of the five thousand where do we find the disciples? The Lord?
2. What thoughts excited the multitude?
3. What did the Lord do in the mountain?
4. How did He show His power as He came to the disciples?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Have you clearly in mind the two times when the Lord saved the disciples on the water? When they awoke Him from sleep and He calmed the winds and waves which way were they crossing? What had taken place at the shore which they were leaving? What took place when they came to land? When the Lord came to them walking on the water which way were they crossing?

Let us think what spiritual work this miracle represents. What does the sea represent? Remember the calling of the disciples, and the promise that they should become fishers of men. They should lift men up from a natural worldly state of life to a spiritual state; they should also teach natural truths in a way to serve spiritual life. The sea is like an atmosphere of thought that is natural and worldly, and sometimes evil. And a storm on the sea? It represents a state of temptation when worldly thoughts and ambitions are aroused and threaten to swallow us up from the light of heaven. The winds are like the unseen influences from hell which arouse the evil in us. Had there been any such excitement of worldly thoughts and feelings at the time which we read of in this lesson? What had just taken place on the eastern shore? Excited thoughts of worldly power and greatness were aroused in the disciples' minds, which they had not power to resist. Their helpless state is pictured in their toiling against the storm. The same temptation, with greater force, came to our Lord Himself, and in the mountain He quieted such worldly thoughts, and put them in their right place under His feet. So He gained power to help the disciples and all men. Then He showed His power by coming to the disciples walking on the sea, and He stilled the storm for them. "Be of good cheer," He said at another time, "I have overcome the world." (E. 514)

Both the storms on the sea were in the night. Does this tell anything of our state of mind in temptation? Are our minds sometimes dark and sometimes light? They are light when we see

clearly, and dark when we do not see. There was spiritual darkness over all the earth at the time of the Lord's coming, and He brought light. (Isaiah 60:1, 2; John 1:5, 9) Remember other times when darkness is mentioned in the Gospel, where it plainly tells also of spiritual darkness. (Luke 6:12; 22:53; 23:44; John 13:30) It is always dark when we are in a state of temptation and seem far from the Lord. When we let Him come near by listening to His words and accepting His help, the night passes by and our minds grow bright. We see new meaning in the words: "It was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them," and in His coming in the early dawn. (Psalm 30:5; A. 6000, 10134)

What fact in this lesson, like the Lord's sleeping during the first storm upon the sea, shows how the Lord seems indifferent until we desire His help? (Verse 48. Compare Luke 24:28.)

Tell me of other times when we read of the Lord's praying. (Luke 6:12; Mark 14:32-42) The appearance is that the Lord in prayer looked up to someone else for help, but as we learn more about Him we see that it was not exactly so. There was no one else to whom He could look for help; but His weak, human nature which was like ours, looked up and within to the Divine love which was in His inmost heart, and labored to bring that down into the human life. The Lord wishes us to learn from this seeming separateness from the Father in His times of prayer, that at those times His strength seemed far away; He felt forsaken. He feared that He might not conquer in temptation. So completely did the Lord come down into the darkness and helplessness where we are, or He could not help and comfort us when we feel forsaken and alone. (A. 1787, 2535, 2580; T. 126)

## **Lesson 14**

### **Mark 7:1-23: Washing of Hands**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The interest of the multitude in the Lord, and their desire to make Him a king, was very disturbing to the Pharisees. They did not at all want that kind of a king, and were very jealous of the Lord who taught with more authority than they, and who cared more that the people were really good and kind and obeyed the Ten Commandments, than that they remembered all the many rules that men had written down and that the Pharisees thought more important than the laws of God. So now the Pharisees of Galilee and those of Judea joined together and came to watch the Lord and try to find some fault in Him and His teaching.

And first they saw the disciples eating with unwashed hands. Now this tradition of washing before eating was one of their most important teachings, and their books told just how it should be done, how one hand should be washed with the other fist, and that the hands should then be raised so that the water might run off just at the wrists. This should be done always before eating, and some considered it necessary after eating and even between the courses. And when coming home from the market they must wash all over before eating. Very particular rules were given also for the care of dishes and things used in eating. The scribes and Pharisees asked the Lord

why His disciples did not keep these laws, and He answered them by first telling them what one of their prophets had said: "This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." The Lord only cares for those outside things of worship that help people to be good and love Him, and these rules of the scribes and Pharisees did not do this, but only helped the people to forget His Commandments.

Then the Lord said, "There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things that come out of him, those are they that defile the man." When the disciples were alone with Him they asked Him what that meant, and He explained, that it is not the things we eat, clean or unclean, that can do us real harm, but it is evil in our hearts which makes us do wicked things that really does us harm. It matters not so much whether the outside of the cup and platter is clean if the inside which comes next the food is only clean. But the Pharisees were always cleaning the outside which showed most, and letting the inside go. They had many tiresome laws for outside ways and manners, and did not care if their thoughts and feelings were wicked and impure, dishonest and murderous. Here the Lord showed how different His teaching was from that of the scribes and Pharisees, and how worthless all the outside show of goodness is if there is no love for the Lord and one another in our hearts.

## **Junior**

Who can tell me who the Pharisees were? They were those among the Jews who were most learned in the law of Moses, and still more learned in the countless rules made by old Jewish teachers. They thought that by keeping these rules they were better than other people.

Remember how they kept the Sabbath, not doing the least kind or useful thing. What did they say when the Lord healed on the Sabbath day? When the disciples plucked the ears of corn on the Sabbath day? The Lord said many things about the Pharisees which show us how proud they were, and how they made a show of holiness in their dress, their fasting, their prayers, and giving to the poor, but they were wicked in their hearts. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: for ye are like whited sepulchres which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." "All their works they do to be seen of men." (Matthew 23) They were the hypocrites who sounded trumpets in giving alms, and made long prayers in public places to be seen of men. (Matthew 6) Remember the prayer of the Pharisee in the parable: "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men." (Luke 18:11) The Lord said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:20)

Among the rules which the Pharisees kept most strictly were those about washing their hands and dishes and tables before and after eating. (See quite a full account of these rules in Edersheim's "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," Vol. 2, pages 9-15.) The Pharisees claimed that no one could be fit for heaven who did not keep these rules about washing his hands.

Some of the Pharisees from Jerusalem came to the Lord in Capernaum, and complained that the disciples were not keeping the rules handed down from the old teachers, but ate without washing their hands. How foolish to think that this could make them unfit for heaven! Some of the rules were worse than foolish, for they were made an excuse for breaking the Commandments. What does the Commandment say that we should do to our father and mother? It meant that they should obey their parents, and be respectful to them, and do all that they could for them, and

support them when they were old. But one of the traditions said that if parents asked a child for something he could say, "I give to the Lord the thing you want," and then he need not give it to his father or mother; and sometimes he would not give it to the Lord either; but would keep it for himself. So the rules of the Pharisees were not only foolish but they led people to do wrong, and to break the Commandments.

Can anything I have eaten make my soul unclean and unfit for heaven? Is there anything in me which does make me unclean in the eyes of angels and the Lord? Bad feelings and bad thoughts if I do not try to put them away, and these lead to bad words and acts. It says in the Psalm, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD, or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart." Does it mean that we shall wash our hands as the Pharisees taught? Or what does it mean?

1. Who were the Pharisees? Who were the scribes?
2. What washings did the Pharisees observe? What washing does the Lord really require?
3. How had the Pharisees made a Commandment of God of no effect by their tradition?
4. What really defiles?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Were there any of the Pharisees who loved the Lord and listened to His teaching? (John 3:2; 19:39)

I have asked above what is meant in Psalm 24:4 by "clean hands." First, what is meant by hands? Remember the charge to bind the law upon the hands. (Deuteronomy 6: 8) Plainly, the charge meant that the Commandments should be the rule of all our actions. (E. 395; A. 9825, 9936) What is meant by the words: "Your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity"? (Isaiah 59:3; E. 329) What do these words mean: "Wash you and make you clean"? (Isaiah 1:16) Read the rest of the verse if you do not know. (T. 670-673)

What is the water which makes us spiritually clean? Divine teaching of right and wrong, especially the Ten Commandments, which show us what is wrong, and give strength to put it away. Remember how John the Baptist boldly taught the people to repent, and baptized them in the river to represent the spiritual cleansing. (E. 476, 724)

We have learned that the spirit as well as the body needs food. It needs instruction in what is good that will satisfy the affections, and in what is true to satisfy the thought. This instruction we receive from teachers and from reading, and from all we see and hear. We receive much which is not good and true. Does this necessarily defile us, and make us unfit for heaven? Natural food is received into the stomach and intestines, and what the body needs is drawn up into the circulation. The rest is rejected. So with spiritual food. It is received into the memory; from this we draw up what we wish to make a part of ourselves, and reject the rest. Remember this: bad things around us need not defile us, not even if we must see and hear them; but when we love them, draw them in and make them a part of ourselves, and think and intend them, and perhaps

do them, then we make them of our heart and they defile us. (E. 580, 622) No more do good and true things become a part of us just from hearing them. We must assimilate them, draw them into our life, and make them of our heart.

## Lesson 15

### Mark 7:24-37: The Gentile's Daughter

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

We have been with the Lord in Capernaum. He went now with His disciples to the borders of Phoenicia the land of Tyre and Sidon. The people of this land were not Jews, and did not believe in the God of Israel, they were much despised by the Jews who often called them "heathen dogs." The people had heard of the wonderful works that the Lord had done and a woman of that country came to Him and begged Him to cast the evil spirit out of her daughter.

At first the Lord seemed not to hear her. She did not come to Him at first as to her God, but only as to someone who had power to heal, and by His answer the Lord showed that in that way she could not be helped. How different it was, and how quickly the Lord helped her, when she was really humble and spoke of herself as a dog under the table waiting to be fed with the children's crumbs.

The Lord and His disciples left Phoenicia and going southeast crossed the Jordan, and came to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. While in the country east of the Jordan He did many wonderful works of healing; one of which is told us. A man, deaf and with an impediment in his speech, was brought to Him. This time the Lord did not "say the word only," but took the man aside from the multitude and when they were alone He put His fingers into the deaf man's ears, and touching his tongue with water from His lips, and then looking up to heaven, He cried, "Be opened," and his ears were opened and his tongue loosed and he both heard and spoke.

We read of so many miracles of healing which the Lord did that it is hard for us to realize what each one must have meant to the person healed. How eagerly the Phoenician woman must have hastened home to see if it could indeed be true that her daughter was well. How earnestly this poor man must have watched every motion of the Lord's, his eyes following His as He looked up to heaven; and as he watched the blessing came, and instead of his being alone in his silent world of deafness, and unable to make the people understand his needs, he was like other men and could both hear and speak. The Lord charged them to tell no man, for the healing was not the great work which the Lord came into the world to do, and the people in their excitement were forgetting the heavenly blessings which He came most of all to give them.

##### Junior

Our lesson takes us away from the Sea of Galilee. We journey north through a country of fine hills and deep valleys. From the hilltops we have grand views of Mount Hermon white with snow, and

soon also of the still higher Lebanon. We turn more westward, and having journeyed some four or five days from the Sea of Galilee, we look down from the hills upon the Mediterranean Sea. A low, green plain with a sandy margin stretches along the shore, and a point of land, larger at the end, reaches out into the sea. On this is a little town, the remains of Tyre. In the very old time the city stood on the shore, and this point was a rocky island. Later, palaces and temples were built upon the island, and ships found shelter between it and the busy wharves along the shore. The ships from Tyre went through all the Mediterranean Sea and far along the coasts of Africa and Europe, and brought home precious things to trade. Further up the shore was a sister city, Sidon, under the slopes of Mount Lebanon.

In old days Tyre was wonderfully rich and beautiful. Read about it in Ezekiel 27. Remember in the days of Solomon how Hiram, King of Tyre, sent him cedar wood from Lebanon, and workmen to help in the building of the temple; and remember how Hiram's sailors went with those of Solomon to distant lands. (1 Kings 5; 10:22) The island city was very strong. It resisted one siege of five years, and was taken by Nebuchadnezzar after a siege of thirteen years. And now you wonder why it is no more an island. Alexander the Great, with his army, destroyed the city along the shore, and used its stones to build a way out to the island. The sands have washed in upon the causeway he built, and it is an island no more. All this was long before our Gospel story, but even today you see great columns lying half under water along the shore. The people of Tyre and Sidon were not Israelites, and they did not know the Lord and His commandments. They worshiped idols and the sun and moon and stars, and many evil ways which the Israelites learned were taught them by these people. (1 Kings 16:31)

The Lord came into the borders of the land of Tyre and Sidon, but He was not hid. A woman whose daughter was possessed with a devil, cried to Him to help her. Remember how in those days evil spirits had power over people, but the Lord could drive them out. The woman was a Canaanite; so the people of the lowland by the sea and Jordan were called. She was a Greek, which means a Gentile and not a Jew. She is called also a Syrophenician. The people of Tyre and Sidon were Phoenicians, but they had planted many colonies in other places on the Mediterranean shore, especially in Africa, so that the name Syrophenician was used to mean the Phoenicians still living in Syria.

The disciples would have the Lord send her away, and the Lord's own words sounded at first as if He could not help her. We know that the Lord loved the woman and longed to help her, but she must first know who it was that was helping her. She must know that the help came not from a mere man, and not from an idol, but from the Lord, the God of Israel. When she confessed humbly that she looked up to the Lord of Israel as dogs for crumbs from their master's table, then she could receive the help she asked.

The Lord now returned from that region through a country where the people had never seen Him before nor heard His teaching. He passed through the hills close under Mount Lebanon and Mount Hermon, and so down into the country east of Jordan. "Through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis," it says. Decapolis means "the ten cities." It was a league of cities, about ten, which the Jews had not conquered when they came back from captivity in Babylon. They lay to the south of the Sea of Galilee, and all but one of them east of Jordan. That one, Scythopolis, the old Bethshan, was in the valley which runs to the Jordan from the spring of Jezreel. They were heathen cities; the people worshiped idols, and among the ruins are the remains of many heathen temples. This

is the first long journey that we read of the Lord's making east of the Jordan, but by and by He spent much time there, and did many miracles and spoke many parables. At this time we are told especially of His healing one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech.

1. Where were Tyre and Sidon? For what were the Phoenicians famous?
2. What miracle did the Lord do in that country?
3. Why did He at first seem reluctant to help the woman? When did He help her?
4. Where do you look for Decapolis?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

What prophet of the Lord was received in the Phoenician land when he was not safe in Israel? (1 Kings 17:9) When did the Lord use this to show that Gentiles are more ready to receive Him than many who have better opportunities? (Luke 4:25, 26) This visit of the Lord to the borders of Tyre and Sidon shows His desire to help people in natural, Gentile states.

Phoenicia. The land of Israel represents a spiritual life; neighboring lands represent natural states or faculties which are good if they minister to spiritual life. We have learned that the sea represents an atmosphere of worldly, natural thought and interest. The Phoenicians, the sailors and traders of the world, represent our faculty for gathering in and for imparting all kinds of natural knowledge. This faculty in its right place as servant of spiritual life is represented by Hiram manning Solomon's ships, and furnishing stones and cedar for the temple of the Lord. Then this natural faculty is good and blessed. But when it ministers to selfish pride it is like Tyre adorning the temples of her idols, and is cursed. (Ezekiel 28:3-5; A. 2967; R. 759; E. 236, 840) The Lord in this country teaches the lesson that the faculty for natural learning (and, indeed, every natural faculty) can receive His blessing and be saved from the possessing power of evil only by becoming a servant of spiritual life, and looking up humbly to be taught by Him.

Dogs under the table. All animals represent human affections. Dogs, especially when contrasted with the masters, represent affections of external, natural kinds, sometimes bad and self-indulgent; sometimes kind in a simple, ignorant way. The children represent developments of spiritual life. Can the Lord bless the natural affections? Not unless they become humble servants of spiritual life, and desire to be taught by Him. (A.9231; E.455)

"Deaf and an impediment in his speech." May we call one deaf when his natural hearing is good? He is "deaf to instruction" if he will not learn and obey. "Hear, O Israel, and observe to do." "Who hath ears to hear let him hear." These are charges to attend and obey. (A. 2542) The deaf man in the Gentile country represents those who from ignorance do not obey. Such a one at the same time has an impediment in his speech, for he is too ignorant to teach others, or even to acknowledge and thank the Lord. Such ones the Lord loves to teach, so that they can both obey and acknowledge Him. (E.455; A. 9311)

## **Lesson 16**

### **Mark 8:1-26: Feeding Four Thousand**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The Lord was to do one more great miracle before crossing back to the west side of the Sea of Galilee. He had been healing and helping the Gentile or partly Gentile people east of the sea and the Jordan, and we read that a great multitude of four thousand people followed Him and stayed with Him in a desert place three days, and that they had nothing to eat; and the Lord had compassion upon them, for many of them were far from their homes. But His disciples said, "From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?" The Lord asked them how many loaves they had, and they said seven. And He commanded the people to sit down upon the ground, and He gave thanks and brake the bread and gave it to His disciples to set before the people. They also had a few small fishes; these the Lord blessed also and they were set before the people, and when all were filled they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that remained. Read verses 1-9.

Have we heard a story much like this before? It seems strange that the disciples should again be anxious about the possibility of feeding a multitude when they had seen the wonderful feeding of the five thousand. But when we are in trouble and fear do we always remember how the Lord has taken care of us before? It is also possible that they did remember, but that it was such a great and wonderful miracle that they did not quite dare to think that the Lord would repeat it. Again they may have thought that as this was a Gentile multitude the Lord would not care to feed them with the heavenly bread.

After the feeding of the multitude the Lord crossed with the disciples in a ship home to the western shore. There the Pharisees met Him and asked Him to give them a sign from heaven. Were not the miracles of feeding the multitude and of healing enough to show His Divine power to all who were willing to see it?

It was beginning to appear that there was more willingness to receive the Lord among the Gentile people outside the land of Israel. Again He crossed the sea to Bethsaida on the eastern side. There they brought a blind man to the Lord. He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town, and putting water from His mouth upon his eyes, and putting His hand upon him, He asked if he could see. The man looked up and said he saw men like trees walking. He could see a little, but not plainly. Then the Lord put His hands again upon his eyes and he saw distinctly. In a sense we are all blind, but the Lord will help us to see, though as with this poor man it will not come all at once.

##### **Junior**

The Lord had returned from Tyre and Sidon "through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis," and was in the country east of Jordan. He drew near to the Sea of Galilee and went up into a mountain and sat down there, and the people came about Him. You read again of a feeding of a multitude.

Compare this miracle with the one so like it, described in Mark 6:31-44. Carefully note the differences. In the first miracle the people had been with the Lord one day, now three days. The multitude in the first miracle were Israelites, in the second Gentiles. In the first five thousand were fed, in the second four thousand. In the first there were five loaves and two fishes. In the second seven loaves and a few fishes. In the first twelve baskets full of fragments, in the second seven baskets. After the first miracle the Lord sent the disciples away in the boat, after the second miracle He crossed with them to Dalmanutha, apparently near Magdala. (Matthew 15:39)

The miracle which the Lord does for us in sending the sunshine and the rain, and making the grain and fruit trees grow to give us food, is no less wonderful than the gift of food right from His own hand. Especially we see His power in the spring when life from Him makes all things begin to grow. "These wait all upon Thee; that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season. Thou openest Thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou sendest forth Thy spirit, they are created: and Thou renewest the face of the earth." (Psalm 104:27-30)

The disciples seemed slow to learn the lesson of the Lord's care from the first miracle. (Mark 6:52) They were slow to learn even when they had seen the sign of power repeated. (Mark 8:14-21)

Read also of the healing of a blind man at Bethsaida, - apparently the Bethsaida that we learned of in the first feeding of the multitude. (Luke 9:10)

1. How many miracles of feeding the multitude have we learned of? Where was the second miracle?
2. What differences between the two miracles can you point out?
3. Did the Pharisees see the Divine power in the Lord's works? Were the disciples quick to learn the lesson?
4. What did the blind man see before he could see clearly?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Remind me what spiritual work of the Lord is represented in the miracle of feeding the multitude. The giving of spiritual food, which is instruction about good things to satisfy our affections and thoughts. All plants represent growing intelligence of many kinds. Grains represent little plans for daily duties, and in their fruit, the duties well done, the heart finds the chief satisfaction of life - daily bread. The sea represents an atmosphere of natural thought, and fishes affections for thinking in it and gathering natural knowledge. Bread and fishes therefore represent satisfaction in duty well done, and interest in learning the ways of right and use -gifts from the Lord on which our souls grow strong. (E. 340, 430, 617)

Carefully compare the two miracles:

5000 men; 5 loaves; 2 fishes; 12 baskets full

4000 men; 7 loaves; few fishes; 7 baskets full

The Lord's own words about the miracles, in Mark 8:19, 20, show that there is especial meaning in the numbers. (E. 430.) Can we weigh or measure spiritual things? We weigh arguments, and take the measure of one's ability. "So teach us to number our days" (Psalm 90:12), is a prayer to be taught the quality and purpose of each passing state. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered," means that the Lord knows the quality of each little thing we do or say. (E. 453; A. 10217) We go but a step further to learn that each number carries the idea of some particular quality. (A. 648; R. 348)

The second miracle represents a deeper, more spiritual feeding of the soul than the first. The five loaves and the five thousand of the first miracle represent what is few and little, for this meaning is always connected with five. The four thousand of the second miracle represents what is more full and perfect; and this is especially suggested by the two sevens in the second miracle, for seven represents what is very full and heavenly. (R. 905-908; A. 9717; E. 257)

The healing of the blind man you will see represents the opening of the understanding to the truths of heavenly life; for to understand is to see. Study the particulars of the miracle. Leading the blind man out of the town suggests freeing one from old associations and habits of thought. The spittle upon his eyes suggests true instruction from the currents of the Lord's own thought. Seeing men as trees represents an intellectual comprehension, for trees are types of intelligence of many kinds. To see every man clearly is to perceive truths of life not only intellectually, but in all their human quality. (A. 6990; E. 239)

## **Lesson 17**

### **Mark 8:27-38: Peter's Confession**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We follow the Lord and His disciples northward to Caesarea Philippi, a town near the foot of Mount Hermon. He had taken His disciples to this quiet place away from the disbelieving Pharisees and the idolizing multitude. Before, when He took the disciples apart for rest, the multitudes followed them. But now He must tell His disciples many things, and first of all they must know who He really was. So He asked them first, "Whom do men say that I am? and they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets." All these answers show that men thought of Him as having heavenly power; but not till the Lord asked, "But whom say ye that I am?" did Peter say, "Thou art the Christ," perhaps speaking what was in the hearts of all the twelve who had been with Him and seen all His wonderful works and heard all His wonderful words.

In Matthew the Lord says, that upon this rock He will build His church; which means that upon the belief in the Lord Jesus Christ the Lord's church is built. The Lord told His disciples to tell no man, but began to tell them of the things that must happen to Him before His work on earth was done. And it was all so different from what they had expected! They could not believe that the

Christ, the Messiah, instead of being a great king should be despised and rejected and killed. And Peter tried to persuade Him that it could not be so; but the Lord knew that it was the only way for Him to save men, and that to come as a great earthly king would not help men to be good. It was a temptation to do the easier, pleasanter way, and the Lord said, "Get thee behind Me, Satan," for that was not the way of God but of evil men.

Then He told them plainly that to be His followers they must expect hard things in this world; that those who were not willing to give up the pleasures of this world for His sake could not be His disciples. And He tried to show them that it would not do them any good if they gained the whole world and lost their own souls or their chance of heaven; for this life is soon over, but the life that is coming will last for ever and ever.

This was a sad, hard lesson for the disciples to learn, for it was all so different from what they had hoped and expected. This was not at all the kind of king that the Jews had been looking for, but He was a king so great that He did not need an earthly crown, for His kingdom was a heavenly kingdom. And He said that whosoever should be ashamed of Him and His words while He was here as one of themselves, of him would the Lord be ashamed when they should see Him as the King of heaven.

## **Junior**

Find on the map where the Jordan rises. Stand on these hills to the west of the river and look across the green meadow to the snowy range of Hermon which rises against the blue sky. It is a fine mountain nine thousand feet high. The great snow banks on the mountain melt in the warm sun, and the water finding its way in among the rocks, bursts out at the foot of the mountain in fine great springs. One of these springs to the northeast of Hermon sends a beautiful fresh river into the desert, watering the gardens of Damascus; one to the west sends the Hasbany to join the streams from two other springs to form the Jordan, winding southward through great marshes of papyrus till it spreads out in the pretty Lake Huleh.

The two other springs are at Dan and Banias. Near the middle of the valley is a little round hill with an enormous spreading oak tree on the top. That is where the city Dan stood, and from the side of the little hill the largest branch of the Jordan rushes out, making trees and flowers plentiful. The other great spring is at the foot of the bare cliffs of Hermon. The streams from this spring dash down among the rocks watering the thickets of poplar, the great oaks, the orchards and gardens, the wild roses and the vines of clematis which festoon the trees. Once a large town stood here. In the old time the spring was sacred to the Greek god Pan, and the city was called Paneas. Today it is called Banias. In the Gospel time it belonged to the district of Herod's son Philip. (Luke 3:1) He enlarged and adorned the place and called it Caesarea in honor of Caesar, and he added Philippi to distinguish it from another Caesarea on the Mediterranean shore. This beautiful region the Lord visited with His disciples.

Did most people who saw the Lord know that He was very unlike other men? They saw Him working as a carpenter, walking from town to town, resting on the well. But they saw that He had power such as no mere man had, to calm the sea, to heal the sick, to awaken from the sleep of death, to cast out devils. Those who knew Him best felt something of the Divine love in all His works, and they believed, although He was so unlike the king whom they had looked for, that He was the Christ, the Anointed, the long expected Messiah - for all three names mean the same. It

was here near Caesarea Philippi that Peter, speaking for the disciples, confessed their belief in the Lord. The knowledge that the Lord is not merely a man, but "God with us," is the rock on which the Christian Church stands firm.

1. Where was Caesarea Philippi?
2. What questions did the Lord ask His disciples there?
3. Who did others say that the Lord was?
4. Who did the disciples say that He was?
5. Which answer was right?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Who had said of the Lord, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead"? (Matthew 14:2; Luke 9:7-9)

Sure unchanging facts on which we base our plans and our reasoning, are rocks in the mind. Natural everyday facts are common rocks; facts through which the light of heaven shines are precious stones. Such a one is the corner stone of the church, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This truth is the rock, and not Peter personally, except as he stands for the truth he spoke. The Son of the living God means God Himself come down to the plane of human life. (R. 768; E. 411; T. 342)

See in verse 33 how even the intended kindness of Peter was a trial to the Lord, holding Him back from doing His perfect work. In this way at times even the angels were a hindrance to the Lord, for not even they could understand the depth and greatness of His love.

What life must we lose? What life is saved?

Think of verses 36, 37 when we see the anxiety and care for things and formalities of earthly life - for clothes, for good appearance, for money - crowding out the thoughts and affections for the Lord and heaven which make life really precious.

Are there any ways in which boys and girls may show that they are ashamed of the Lord? Remember the warning in verse 38.

## **Lesson 18**

### **Mark 9:1-13: The Transfiguration**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

In our last lesson do you remember the two great questions which the Lord asked the disciples? First, whom men said that He was? Second, whom they said that He was? Do you remember the answers? Then you remember that the Lord began to explain to the disciples how instead of being a great earthly king, He was to be despised and rejected by men, but His kingdom was to be a heavenly kingdom. In our lesson today we learn how in a wonderful way the Lord strengthened their belief in Him and His heavenly glory.

You remember that the Lord had taken His disciples to a quiet place, Caesarea Philippi. It was a lovely region near the foot of Mount Hermon, and near the source of the river Jordan. Mount Hermon is the finest mountain in the land (second only to Mount Lebanon in height), standing majestic and beautiful with its top white with snow against the wonderful blue Syrian sky. The Lord and His disciples stayed in this neighborhood for about a week, when one day, toward evening, He took Peter and James and John up into the mountain to pray. And as the Lord prayed a wonderful thing happened: the three disciples were allowed to see Him as the angels in heaven saw Him, "His face shining as the sun, and His raiment white as the light." And as they looked they saw two men talking with Him, whom they knew to be Moses and Elias. And they heard something of what they said about the last days of the Lord's life on earth at Jerusalem. Do you remember Moses and Elias, who long ago had gone from this world and were living now in heaven?

##### **Junior**

There were soon to be hard trials for the disciples. Their Master would be taken and crucified. To strengthen them in the trials which He knew were coming, the Lord let three of the disciples see something of His Divine glory. He led the three who knew Him best, Peter, James, and John, into a high mountain apart, probably to some high slope of Mount Hermon. It was probably afternoon as they left the people below and climbed the mountain. (Luke 9:37) The rich valley, with its springs and river and lake, lay below in the lengthening shadows. The rocky slopes of the mountain stood around with their snowy crests. The Lord was praying; the three disciples were heavy with sleep. Suddenly they were awake and their eyes were opened into heaven. Two angels were talking with the Lord - Moses and Elias, and they saw the Lord, "His face shining as the sun, and His raiment white as the light." You must read the rest.

The Lord charged the three disciples not to tell as yet what they had seen. But must not what they saw that night have strengthened them and others in the hard times which followed? Perhaps it would not have been possible for the disciples to remain firm in their belief in their Master when He was taken and condemned and crucified but for the memory of His glory on the mountain.

Read the conversation as they came down from the mountain. What prophecy had said that Elias must first come? In what sense was John the Baptist Elias?

1. At what other time did the Lord lead the disciples into a mountain? And what other time had Peter, James, and John been chosen to be with Him?
2. How did the Lord appear when He was transfigured? Who were speaking with Him?
3. What overshadowed the disciples?
4. Of what did they speak as they came down from the mountain?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

What spiritual reason was there for the Lord's leading the disciples into a mountain to see Him transfigured?

Why were Peter, James, and John the three to be with the Lord? These three represent three chief elements in the church and in every Christian life, which bring us near to the Lord, and enable us to rise into the mountain with Him and see His glory. Peter, we see from his confession, stands for firm faith in the Lord's Divinity. And what is represented by the disciple whom Jesus loved, who wrote the loving words in the fourth Gospel and in the fourth chapter of the first Epistle of John? He represents deep love for the Lord. And James his brother represents the love of the second great commandment, like unto the first - charity to our neighbor. All in whom these are, come near to the Lord in the mountain and see His glory. (R. 768, 879; E. 600)

Was it with natural or spiritual eyes that the disciples saw Moses and Elias and the Lord transfigured? How is the Lord seen by angels in heaven? (H. 118, 119; W. 97) What do these words mean in Luke 16:29: "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them"? Moses speaks to us in the commandments and the history of the Old Testament, and Elias (Elijah) and other prophets in its prophecy. When we come near to the Lord in a spiritual life, His love shines forth in the Gospels as glory from His face; His words and acts in which He clothed His love have a more than earthly brightness; and even the history and prophecy of the Old Testament become glorious as we see that they tell of His human life and glorification. (Luke 9:31) But we may not always perceive such glory, and the letter of the Word like a bright cloud overshadows us, and we see Jesus only. (E. 64, 906)

After the Sermon on the Mount, the coming down from the mountain describes the bringing down of the Christian law to its application in life in the world. So now the coming down from the mountain of transfiguration means the bringing down of the power of the vision to the plane of daily life. They talked of John the Baptist as they came down the mountain; for it is by repentance that the power of the Lord is brought into life. The result we see as we read on in the story.

## **Lesson 19**

### **Mark 9:14-29: At the Foot of the Mountain**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

As they came down from the mountain they saw an excited crowd of people. There were the nine disciples looking troubled and perplexed, and scribes questioning with them. And there was a piteously anxious father with his sick boy, who was possessed by a devil; and besides, there was an excited crowd of on-lookers. The father had brought his child to the disciples to be healed and they could not cast the devil out of the boy. But when the Lord had sent out His disciples to preach and to heal they had been able to cast out devils, and the poor father was grievously disappointed. Now he came to the Lord and told Him about his boy, and how he had brought him to the disciples but they had not been able to cast out the evil spirit. "Bring him unto Me," the Lord said. He asked about the sick boy, and the father said he was possessed of a deaf and dumb spirit and that it often cast him into the fire and into the water to destroy him. "But," he cried, "if Thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us." But the Lord said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Then the poor man cried with tears that he did believe, but prayed the Lord to help him to have greater faith. So the Lord rebuked the evil spirit and commanded it to come out of the boy; and the spirit screamed and tore the child and came out of him, leaving him lying on the ground as if he were dead, but the Lord took him by the hand and he arose.

Afterwards the disciples came to the Lord and asked Him why they had not been able to cast out the evil spirit, and the Lord said to them gently, "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting." The Lord can only send away the bad and evil feelings and thoughts from us if we trust in Him and pray Him to help us. Every little child must learn to turn quickly to Him and ask His help whenever the bad thoughts and feelings come, and if he asks with all his heart the Lord will take them away every time.

##### **Junior**

While the Lord and the three disciples were coming down from the mountain, the other disciples were at the foot of the mountain. A multitude was about them, among them a man with his son who had been from a child possessed by an unclean spirit. Tell me of others that we have learned of who were possessed. You remember the man in the synagogue at Capernaum, how the evil spirit in him cried out with fear at the Lord's presence, and tore the poor man as he came out of him. (Mark 1:21-28) You surely remember the man who met the Lord on the east side of the Sea of Galilee who lived in the tombs, exceeding fierce; how he too cried out as the Lord came near, and at His word the devils went out into the swine. (Mark 5:1-17)

In those days evil spirits had power over men such as they do not have now. Even children were possessed and driven by the devils to do harm to themselves and others.

The reason that evil spirits cannot do this today is that the Lord overcame them and protects us from them. He gave a little of His power to the disciples to use in His name, as He sent them out to preach and heal. But the power was all the Lord's; they must always think of it as His and not their own.

Read now of the man and his son, who came to the disciples at the foot of the mountain of transfiguration. What a sad picture! The devil had possessed him from a child; it tried often to destroy him; it cried out with fear at the Lord's presence, and threw down the boy and tore him before it left him. And how plainly the story teaches that the only power to cast out devils, and indeed to overcome any evil, is the Lord's! We have no strength of our own, but only as we trust Him and ask His help.

1. Who met the Lord as He came down from the mountain of transfiguration?
2. How had the evil spirit tried to destroy the boy?
3. What did the Lord do for the boy?
4. Why could not the disciples cure him?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Contrast the scenes in the mountain and at the mountain's foot. Is there sometimes such a difference between our ideals and our realization of them?

Fire and water. The harm which the possessing spirits did to their victims in natural, external ways was representative of the spiritual harm to us if we let evil gain a hold upon us. What two dangers into which evil leads us and from which the Lord saves us, are suggested by the child's falling into the fire and into the water? The fire into which we fall is the burning of evil passion, and the water is the false thought which is the companion of evil. Compare the promise in Isaiah 43:2. (A. 739; E. 504, 518)

When the devil was cast out the boy was as dead, but he received new life from the Lord. So when we let the Lord overcome any evil in us, it is a laying down of the old life to receive a new. If He should in a moment take away all that is not good we should die. Therefore He deals gently with us and takes away the old only as we are able to receive the new.

Belief in the Lord was needed in the father of the boy, before the boy could be healed (but notice the rendering of Mark 9:23 in the Revised Version); and the disciples' lack of power was because of their unbelief. (Matthew 17:20) Recall other times when the Lord required the people to express their faith in Him before giving the blessing they asked, or when the blessing was said to be the result of their faith. (Matthew 8:13; 15:28; Luke 8:50) The reason is that true knowledge and practical living acknowledgment of the Lord give His Divine power access to our souls, to do for us what is impossible while we are ignorant of Him and still more so if we willfully deny and disobey Him. Even the disciples only began to know the great goodness of the Lord; they were men of little faith: and therefore what they could receive was little compared to what He had to give. Read E. 815. See also A. 10083.

Prayer and fasting. There seems to be a suggestion of self-confidence in the disciples' question, "Why could not we cast him out?" which is gently rebuked by the Lord's answer, "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting": by trusting the Lord with all the heart, confessing our own utter helplessness. Notice that the words which follow in each Gospel teach that the natural, selfish life must die and that heavenly strength comes with trustfulness as of a little child.

## Lesson 20

### Mark 9:30-50: Who is Greatest

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

As the Lord and the disciples journeyed to Capernaum He told them many things about what would happen. They did not understand, and were afraid to ask Him. Something quite different was in their minds.

They came to Capernaum where the Lord had spent so much time in teaching and healing. And when they were together in the house He asked them what they had been disputing about on the way; but they were ashamed to answer, for by the way they had been disputing as to which of them should be the greatest. But the Lord knew what they had been thinking and speaking about and did not need that they should tell Him. They still had the idea that He would be a great earthly king, and that they would be great rulers with Him. But He said if any man wants to be first, let him be last of all and servant of all; that is, the one who is most truly humble and helpful is the one who is really the greatest. Which kind of greatness was most like the Lord's, the gentle helpful kind, or that of the great kings and emperors?

And as He sat in the midst of them He took a little child in His arms and told them, "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in My name, receiveth Me: and whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth not Me, but Him that sent me." That is, it is only when we become innocent and trustful as a little child that we can receive the Lord.

In the next chapter we read again about the Lord and little children. He was now journeying toward Judea through the country east of Jordan. It would seem that their parents brought them to the Lord, that He would lay His hands upon them and bless them. It was a custom of the Jewish mothers to bring their children to the presidents of the synagogues, that they might lay their hands upon them. But the disciples rebuked those that brought them to the Lord, which displeased Him, and He said unto them - Repeat verses 14, 15, 16. These are the words which are read when a little child is baptized into the church, and they show the Lord's tender love for every little child and His loving welcome for them in His church on earth and in heaven.

## **Junior**

What do you suppose the disciples thought of when they disputed about being great? They knew that the Lord was called great and a king (Luke 1:32, 33), and they thought of a great earthly kingdom like the Roman empire only larger and grander. They believed that they should be rulers in this kingdom; but which of them should have the most power and be nearest to the King? At other times also such thoughts were in the disciples' minds (Mark 10:35-45; Luke 22:24-30); even after the Lord's resurrection, they asked "Lord wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6)

They were thinking of such a kingdom, and disputing about the places that they should have in it as they walked to Capernaum. Now they were in the house with the Lord. He knew their thoughts and what they had been saying. Would it please Him to have them thinking of His kingdom in this way, each one wanting, the first place and the most power, or would it grieve Him?

People are really great if they think little about themselves and what they want, and love rather to do for others than to have others do for them (Luke 22:26, 27); and they are the greatest who have no wish but like little children to do every day what the Lord shows them to do. In heaven angels are great because they are useful, and they are the greatest who have least thought of themselves and most willingly let the Lord guide them and make them strong in all they do. They are the most like His little children.

The Lord wanted to teach the disciples this and He called a little child and set him in the midst of them. What a different kind of greatness from that that they had hoped for! But in which way was the Lord Himself great? By having great riches and honor, or by being always kind and helping everybody that needed help? Perhaps we have a new idea who are the great men, in our government and in business; who are great at home and in school, in the sight of angels and the Lord.

It is beautiful to put with this the picture of the Lord blessing little children, which is given us in the next chapter. (Mark 10:13-16)

But do not pass over the very strong practical lessons in the last verses of chapter 9. The Lord's words to John show that there are many ways of serving Him. Our way is not the only way. Especially beware of condemning others because they do not honor us.

The cutting off of hand or foot and plucking out the eye is a very strong lesson of the necessity for cutting off promptly and with courage every habit of action or of thought which offends or causes us to stumble. Our eternal state depends upon it.

1. What idea of greatness did the Lord's disciples have? What new idea of greatness did the Lord give them?
2. How did He show them the true greatness in His own example? How else did He show it to them?
3. How must I cut off my hand or foot, or pluck out my eye?
4. What is the little child which it is so dangerous to offend?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

Find other places in the Bible where little children are symbols of heavenly innocence with its true greatness. (Mark 10:14-16; Matthew 11:25; Isaiah 11:8, 9; A. 5608) In what sense is it true of us all, that the Lord sets a little child in the midst of us, which it is our duty to protect and nourish, and by no means to injure? It is the little child of innocence in our hearts that keeps us open to heaven and the Lord. (H. 407, 408) If we willfully do violence to this innocence we sink into evil and into hell. The condition is more serious than when one is led astray by false reasoning, which is represented by being drowned by an ass-millstone. The great stone is the stone of falsity, and the ass marks it as falsity of natural thought and reason. (E. 1182; A. 9755)

How are we to cut off and cast away the hand or foot that causes us to stumble? The hand stands for acts done by the hand and for the desire which prompts them. The foot also stands for the little acts which are as steps on our path of life; the understanding with its thoughts is the mind's eye. Cut off summarily and without reserve every habit and every desire and thought which leads away from innocence. (A. 9051; E. 600) He is truly a great hero who does this promptly and thoroughly. (Proverbs 16:32) Compare what is said here about entering into life with one eye, with the saying in Matthew 6:22, about the need for keeping the eye single. There must be no division of love or thought between good and evil, truth and falsity.

What are the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched? You easily see that the fire is the burning of evil love, which if confirmed in this life burns on hereafter. You will infer that the worm is the gnawing of false thought, and it is. (A. 8481)

What is good salt, and salt which has lost its savor? Salt which promotes the assimilation of food and in turn awakens thirst, represents the necessity for union between truth and goodness, falsity and evil. Our verse extends the thought to happy, peaceful union of one with another. Salt without savor is truth not joined with good, which also tends to division and dissension among brethren. You see the meaning of the command to offer salt with every sacrifice. (Leviticus 2:13; A. 9207; E. 223)

## **Lesson 21**

### **Mark 10:17-31: The Rich Young Man**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The Lord took the little children in His arms and blessed them, as He was journeying with the disciples from Galilee toward Judea, through the country east of Jordan. Today we still follow them on the journey.

As they were walking, a young man, a ruler, came running to Him and kneeling asked Him what he should do that he might have part in the kingdom of heaven. The Lord reminded him of the Ten

Commandments, and he said he had always kept them. Then it is said that the Lord looked upon him and loved him. He saw a young man who had sincerely tried to do what was right, a young man rich and honored by others, well satisfied with himself, and happy in his power and riches, probably thinking that but little would be necessary to make him worthy of a place in heaven. But when the Lord told him to sell all that he had and give to the poor, that then he would have treasure in heaven, and that then also he would be worthy to follow Him in His life of humble service, the young man realized how much more dear to him were the things of this world than the things of heaven, "and he went away grieved." And the Lord said how hard it is for those that have riches and trust in them to enter into the kingdom of heaven. If we trust in our riches or anything of this world, we find it impossible humbly to trust in the Lord, and then, as the Lord says, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for us to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Then Peter told of all that the disciples had left to follow the Lord, and He said that no one should give up any earthly thing for His sake who would not receive things a hundred-fold more precious in the heavenly life. "But," He said, "many that are first shall be last; and the last first."

### **Junior**

At the time of the Gospel story the northern part of Canaan where Nazareth and Capernaum are was called Galilee, and the southern part where Jerusalem is was called Judea. The district between was Samaria. People often journeyed back and forth between Galilee and Judea, going to the Passover and the other feasts, and coming home again. You know how Mary and Joseph and others from Nazareth went every year to the Passover, and how the Lord went with them, when He was twelve years old. There were two ways by which people traveled back and forth. One went through the whole country of Samaria; the other went down to the Jordan and through the country on the eastern side of the river. The Lord was taking the way through Samaria when He rested on Jacob's well and talked with the woman. (John 4:3, 4) Now He was going from Capernaum to Judea, and took the way through the country east of Jordan. It was a pleasant country with many streams and fine woods, and many towns where the people were glad to welcome the Lord. As they journeyed along the foot paths from town to town, the Lord taught the disciples and the many people who gathered to hear Him. All this comes to mind as we read the first verse of chapter 10.

We have already looked forward to one incident of this journey, the Lord's blessing the little children.

And now a young man ran to meet Him, asking what he must do to inherit eternal life. The Lord spoke of the Commandments; the young man believed that he had kept them. With his riches and his power as a ruler the young man had grown to think that he was strong and could be good without any help. But that is not true. No one can be good except with the Lord's help, and if we forget this and trust ourselves we are sure to fail. It is better to learn the lesson and ask the Lord to help us, before our self-confidence brings us into trouble, as it surely will. That feeling of being strong and good of ourselves is the opposite of being poor in spirit. It was that feeling that the young man needed to get rid of with his riches, before he could be ready for heaven.

Do you think a person may be rich in money and other things, and at the same time be poor in spirit? Yes, if he is not proud of his riches, but asks the Lord to help him make good use of them.

And might another person, perhaps with less money, have that feeling that he is all right and in need of nothing, which cannot come into heaven? Yes, and the Lord says it is easier for a great camel to go through the little eye of a needle than for such a one to come into heaven. Both those who are rich and those who are poor in worldly things, may go to heaven, but all must be poor in spirit who go there.

The disciples did not at first understand that a humble spirit is the poorness that is needed. Peter said, "Lo, we have left all, and have followed Thee." We remember how some had left their boats and nets, and one had left the office where he took customs, and others had left their homes. If they did this because they loved the Lord and trusted Him, it helped to prepare them for heaven, but not otherwise. What a new way this was of judging of things from what the disciples or anyone in the world had known! Many things that they thought were most important, the Lord said were not important at all, and the humble spirit which they had thought nothing about, the Lord said was the really important thing.

1. "He arose from thence" (verse 1): where was the Lord? What other way to Judea might He have taken?
2. How did the Lord show His love for little children? Does He love little children now as much as those who came to Him in the world?
3. What had the young man done that was right? What did he still need to do to be ready for heaven?
4. May rich people go to heaven? May poor people go? In what way must every one be poor to go there?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Read carefully verses 1-12. They are a lesson about marriage. They teach that it is very holy. The best of all blessings come in marriage when it is kept sacred, and the worst of sadness and misery come from its abuse. We ought never to speak carelessly about marriage or in any way make joke of it. We should keep our minds pure and feel that we are preparing for a blessed marriage in this world or in heaven. There is also a marriage of goodness and truth in our own souls, and of our souls with the Lord; and these deeper things also are cared for by the Lord, as with His help we keep all things connected with natural marriage sacred. (E. 710, 981, 982, and on.)

Read again verses 13-16, and remind me of their deeper lesson.

The first duty pointed out to the young man is to keep the Commandments. See Psalm 119:9. But something more is needed. The doing good is not deep and genuine and trustworthy until we learn to walk humbly with the Lord, trusting His strength and not our own. Find the same lesson in Micah 6:8. Do other young men, and young women too, need to learn this lesson, who run forth into the way of life confident in their own knowledge and strength? (Life 66; E. 934)

What is the meaning of the Lord's words about riches and heaven? May people who are rich in this world go to heaven? (H. 357-365) Will all who are poor go to heaven? Do angels have rich and

beautiful things? (H. 185; T. 740) What is it connected with riches, which cannot come into heaven, nor exist among the angels? There are also riches of knowledge and goodness. Do they unfit us for heaven? Does trust in our own knowledge and goodness? "How hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!" The self-trustful, the opposite of the poor in spirit, are the rich who cannot enter heaven.

The Lord's words seem to imply that in some sense by His power, the camel can go through the needle's eye. The camel, which is associated with the desert and John the Baptist, stands for such strength, especially such strength of understanding, as the young man had, external and self-confident. The needle's eye stands for the fine interior perception of a spiritual state. The Lord will bring us from the natural into the spiritual state, if we are faithful - something which we cannot possibly do for ourselves. (H. 365; A. 3048)

The household that must be left are the selfish, evil thoughts and feelings that are natural to us. The new household are the new heavenly thoughts and feelings which the Lord will give "now in this time," and more abundantly in heaven. (Matthew 10:34-38; E. 724)

## Lesson 22

### Mark 10:32-52: Servant of All: Blind Man Healed

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

The Lord had taught the disciples about real greatness, but we see how little they as yet understood it, when on this journey to Jerusalem two of the disciples, James and John, came to Him and asked that they might sit one at His right hand and the other at His left hand in His glory. And this at the very time when the Lord was telling them of His near coming trial and death, and there was such need that the disciples should understand His life's work of loving service and loyally support each other in the great trouble which was so near to them. Again the Lord's infinite patience is so very touching. He said, "Ye know not what ye ask," and asks them if they are able to drink of the cup that He drinks of, or to be baptized with the baptism that He is baptized with; by which the Lord meant to ask them if they were able to undergo the great temptations which He suffered, and overcome by their own strength as He overcame them. But they knew so little of what it all meant that they said, "We are able"; and the Lord said they might drink of His cup and be baptized with His baptism, for He would help them as He helps us. But He said only those who were prepared could be with Him on His right hand and on His left as they had asked. We sit at the Lord's right hand and left if we share His power to do good in love to Him and in love to one another.

They came to Jericho on their way up to Jerusalem. Jericho, the city of palm trees, a beautiful city with walls, theaters, and a palace built by Herod and Archaelaus. It is spoken of as the "Eden of Palestine, the fairyland of the old world." A beautiful garden of palms and roses, and plantations of sweet balsam filling the air with sweet fragrance which may have given it its name Jericho, "a fragrant place."

It was customary when a band of pilgrims passed through a town for the people to come out of their houses to welcome them, and the crowd would be greater than usual to see the Lord and His disciples and many followers come. Luke tells us how the crowd was so great that Zacchaeus, who was short, could only see the Lord by climbing a tree by the roadside.

As the Lord and the multitude passed out of the town, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. He heard the great company coming and when he was told that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out to the Lord to have mercy upon him. You will be sure that the Lord did have mercy on him; but I must not tell the story.

## **Junior**

A little company of men was journeying along from town to town through the pleasant country east of Jordan. Here they stopped in the shade by some village, and people came to listen, and brought little children for a blessing. Here a young man comes running to them in the way. Who were they? The Lord and His disciples. They had been in Galilee and they were journeying to the great city where the temple was. Yes, Jerusalem. It says (verse 32), "They were in the way going up to Jerusalem." Presently they must cross the river - yes, the Jordan - and must cross the sunny meadows to Jericho, the city here under the hills, and then climb up a steep, rough road. If we listen, we can hear what the Lord was saying as they walked along. And then if we watch we can see something that He did on the way.

They were talking about a kingdom, the Lord's kingdom, and about being great in that kingdom. As we listen we see that the idea of the kingdom which was in the disciples' minds, was very different from the Lord's idea. They thought the Lord was going to make Himself a great earthly king, and that He would make them rulers over different parts of the world. They thought that the Lord was going now up to Jerusalem to do it. But really the Lord's kingdom was to be everywhere where people learned and obeyed His laws; and those would be the greatest in the kingdom, who kept the laws best, the Great Commandments to love the Lord and one another, and the Golden Rule to be kind and useful to everybody. This was really the opposite of the disciples' idea, for they were thinking of having other people their slaves and servants; the Lord was thinking of serving other people as much as possible.

This talk about the kingdom began by two of the disciples asking that they might sit on the Lord's right and left hand in His glory. They were James and John, two brothers who had left their father (what was his name?) in the fishing boat at the Sea of Galilee to follow the Lord. They knew and loved the Lord better than most of the disciples, and yet how little they understood what His kingdom should be like! So the Lord told them about it, and that it is really great to be kind and useful. Read verses 35-45. "Minister" in verse 43 means "servant," and the word in verse 44 means "bond-servant" or "slave."

Now the little company had crossed the Jordan and come through the broad sunny meadows where grain was growing in the hot sunshine, to Jericho, the "fragrant city," where the road begins to climb the hills towards Jerusalem. The Lord was passing through the gardens of the town, where palms and other fruit trees were growing and broad-spreading sycamore figs shaded the paths. There was a beggar by the wayside, where he could ask money of those who passed. He heard the sound of feet and voices, and when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out for help. He was not asking alms, but he had heard how Jesus healed many who were sick;

and he was blind. (One Gospel speaks of two blind men.) There were some who rebuked the blind man, as they had tried to keep the little children from the Lord. But if they had remembered what the Lord told them about His kingdom and true greatness, would they have rebuked the poor blind man and wanted to pass him by? What would the Lord say, and what would He do? And what do you think the beggar would do then? Read verses 46-52 and see if you are right.

1. Who were the sons of Zebedee? Where did the Lord call them to be disciples? What did they ask of the Lord?
2. What sort of kingdom did the disciples expect the Lord to establish? What sort of kingdom did He establish?
3. What makes one a citizen of the Lord's kingdom? Who is greatest in that kingdom?
4. Where was Jericho? What road passed through the place? What once happened by the wayside near the city, when the Lord passed that way?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Can you find other places which show that the disciples expected the Lord to establish a great earthly kingdom? They expected it to the very end of the Lord's life on earth, and were very slow to learn what His kingdom really was. (Acts 1:6) Can you think why the Lord let them cling to this idea; why He did not tell them more plainly that there would be no such kingdom? If He had done so at once, the disciples would not have followed Him. He could teach them only gradually a truer idea. It is an example of the Lord's gentleness with all of us, and shows why He does not correct all errors at once. He does not take an imperfect thought rudely away, but makes it a stepping-stone to a truer one. (A. 3417, 3857, 8705)

Is there a sense in which the first disciples, and all the Lord's disciples may be at His right and left hand in His kingdom? What is meant when one is said to be his master's "right hand man"? He helps the master very much in doing his work. And so those who help to do the kind works of the Lord's kingdom are in a sense His hands, and they work with His strength. The right hand means especially those who work in the strength of love to the Lord, the highest of all loves; and the left hand means those who are wise in kind uses to one another. There is a reason why James and John should ask this question. Each of the twelve apostles, like each of the twelve tribes, stands for some quality of a heavenly character. John, whose Gospel and Epistles are so full of love for the Lord (John 15; 1 John 4) and who is called "the disciple whom Jesus loved," stands for this love of the First Great Commandment. James, the brother of John, stands for the love which is like this, and only a little less, love for one another. (James 2; 3) The brothers stand for the two loves which are the strength of heaven. That is another reason for the Lord's answer to them. What they asked might not be granted in the way that they meant it, and yet whoever should live from the loves which John and James represented, would in a deep, true sense be at the Lord's right and left hand in His kingdom. (E. 8, 600, 785)

Read Matthew 26:36-42, and then tell me what you think is meant by the cup in verses 38, 39 of our chapter. It means the Lord's temptations, and the baptism means the purification by

temptations. The Lord's disciples must have such experiences too, but how little they are, compared with the Lord's! (E. 893)

When are we spiritually blind? When are we spiritually beggars, or poor in spirit? How can we spiritually arise? How can we follow Jesus in the way? See Psalm 119:18, 35, 59. Why did the Lord ask the blind man, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee"? To know definitely our weaknesses and to confess them to the Lord is the first step in being healed. (N. 162)

## Lesson 23

### Mark 11:1-11: Riding into Jerusalem

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

With our lesson to-day we begin to learn of the events of "Holy Week" or the last week of the Lord's life upon earth. And first let us get a little idea of where the week was spent.

You know the great city of Jerusalem, set on its hills, with the beautiful temple all of shining white marble and bright yellow gold, standing like a beautiful jewel to the east, and to the west the magnificent palace of Herod. On the east of the temple hill is a deep valley called the Kidron valley. The valley of Hinnom runs along the west and south sides, joining the Kidron valley below the southeast corner of the city. These valleys make the city seem to stand up very high and grand with the beautiful temple crowning all. Across the Kidron valley rises the Mount of Olives whose gentle slopes were covered with olive orchards. Over the top of the Mount of Olives, in a little valley on its southeastern slope rested the little town of Bethany. Here Mary and Martha lived, and their brother Lazarus whom the Lord raised from the dead. And here the Lord found a resting place three or four nights of this last week. Another place mentioned in our story today is Bethphage, a little town very near to Bethany on the Mount of Olives.

Our story is of the Sunday when the Lord and His disciples entered Jerusalem, a large multitude with them, all on their way to celebrate the Feast of the Passover. As they came to Bethphage the Lord called two of His disciples and told them to go into the village near by (perhaps Bethphage, perhaps a neighboring hamlet), and that there they would find a colt tied. It was an ass's colt which had never yet been ridden, but was still running with its mother. The Lord told the disciples to loose the colt and bring it to Him, and said if any man asked them why they were taking the colt, to say that the Lord had need of him, and they would let him go.

So the two disciples went to the village, and there in a lane that went round a house they found the mother ass and her colt tied, and they began to loose them, when the owners who stood by asked, "What do ye, loosing the colt?" And they said as the Lord had told them, "The Lord has need of him," and they let them go. They brought them to the Lord and put their garments upon the colt, and the Lord sat upon him; and others laid their garments in the path to carpet the way for the Lord, as they might do for a king; and some took branches from the trees and strewed them in the path. As they came down the hillside they looked and saw another multitude come out of one of the city gates with palm branches in their hands to meet the Lord, having heard of

the wonderful things He had done, and that He was coming up to the city. And as they come near we can hear them shout, "Hosanna;" "Save now;" "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord;" and the multitude with the Lord answering, "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest." So on Palm Sunday the Lord rode as a King into Jerusalem.

## **Junior**

It was the early spring, when companies of pilgrims from all parts of Palestine and from distant countries were going to Jerusalem to the Passover. Many pilgrims were among the multitudes who were with the Lord as He entered and passed through Jericho, and climbed the rough way toward Jerusalem. They had probably rested in Bethany on the Sabbath. Now on the morning which we remember as Palm Sunday the Lord sent for a young ass, and rode as a king into Jerusalem. Imagine the thoughts that filled these people's minds. He was riding on an ass, as kings and judges in the days of David used to ride. (Judges 5:10; 10:3, 4; 12:14; 1 Kings 1:33-45) The disciples and all the people thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. (Luke 19:11) Read what the prophet Zechariah had said. (9:9) Though it was not till afterwards that the disciples remembered this prophecy and saw how it had been fulfilled. (John 12:16)

Now they rounded the shoulder of the Mount of Olives, and Jerusalem lay before them on its hills. Remember how the pilgrims used to sing, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem" (Psalm 122), and other Psalms of rejoicing. So the company passed down the hill across the Kidron and up into the city. "And when He was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth in Galilee." (Matthew 21:10, 11)

"And Jesus entered into Jerusalem into the temple, and when He had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, He went out unto Bethany with the twelve."

1. What journey ended with the events of Palm Sunday? What week of sacred events began with that day?
2. From what hill did the Lord ride into Jerusalem? In what ways was it like the welcome of a king?
3. How did the multitude show their gladness?
4. Where did the Lord go as evening fell?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

Palms. Tell me about date palms, their shape, their leaves, their fruit. They grow in the hottest desert, wherever there is a stream or spring to give them water. Trees represent growing intelligence of different kinds. What is the one supreme subject of knowledge? The Lord. And this lofty, straight, unbranching tree of the desert represents such knowledge of the Lord-as springs up in times of temptations and trial, when we find refreshment and strength in the water of His

commandments. The palm is the knowledge of His power to conquer in temptation and to save. Remember how in ancient times the palm was an emblem of victory; and we still speak of "the victor's palm," and of "yielding the palm" to one who excels. The hosannas of the people, and the palm leaves in their hands had the same meaning, expressions of gratitude for His saving power. See also Revelation 7:9, 10. (E. 458; R. 367; A. 8369)

The ass. Animals represent human affections. The animals of work, especially the horse and ass, represent affections for intellectual labor, thinking and understanding. The horse, the noblest of all animals of work, represents the affection for understanding spiritually. The less noble and more willful ass represents the affection for reasoning and understanding naturally. Which kind of understanding was needed by the kings and judges who heard and settled questions of natural right and wrong? Therefore they rode on asses and mules. (A. 2761, 2762, 2781) The Lord's loosing the ass and riding on him, was a sign that He came down to meet men on the plane of natural understanding; to loose that faculty from bondage and to teach men to rule their lives by His Divine natural precepts. (A. 2781) Contrast the appearance of the Lord in the Revelation, when He came to open men's spiritual understanding to the spiritual truth of the Word. (Revelation 19:11-14; 6:2; E. 355; R. 298)

The Mount of Olives above Jerusalem is a symbol of the Lord's love guarding His church. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even forever." (Psalm 125:2; A. 10261; R. 336, 493) The Lord's coming down from the hill into the city is a picture of His coming to His church from the heights of His love. From the Mount of Olives He looked upon the city and wept over it, so soon to be destroyed. (A. 5480)

How can we make the Lord our king? Should we do it sadly and reluctantly, or with rejoicing? With enthusiasm?

## Lesson 24

### Mark 11:12-33: Cleansing the Temple

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

You remember that after the great multitude had gone up to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday it is said that when the Lord had entered the temple and looked round about upon all things He went back again to Bethany with the twelve.

On Monday morning He went again to Jerusalem, and we are told the Lord was hungry and seeing a fig tree covered with leaves He came to it but found no fruit on it. It was early for the tree to be covered with leaves; generally the early fruit begins to form before the leaves. The Lord said to the fig tree which promised so much and had nothing to give, "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever."

Then they came into the city and going into the temple He found the people buying and selling, and changing money in the temple courts, making God's house a marketplace, and a dishonest

marketplace too. The Lord commanded them all to leave the temple and not even carry things back and forth through the courts. And He said, "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." All these things made the scribes and Pharisees very angry, but the simple people were loving Him more and more.

In the evening He and His disciples again left Jerusalem and crossing the valley of the Kidron climbed the hill to Bethany.

Again we think of them starting out on Tuesday morning, and as they came near they saw the fig tree that the Lord had spoken to the day before, and now it had all withered away even to the roots.

Then they came again to the temple and the Lord spent the day in teaching. It was the last day of His public teaching, but instead of listening lovingly to His words the Jews were trying to catch Him in His talk.

## **Junior**

We must learn what happened between the Sunday when the Lord rode into Jerusalem, and the Thursday night when He was betrayed and taken. Monday in the morning they went again over the Mount of Olives to the city. (Take the order of events from Mark 11:11-19, adding particulars from Matthew 21:12-19.) As they walked the Lord was hungry. A fig tree full of leaves stood near the way, but when they came to it there was no fruit. Many fig trees grew on the hills about. They have large, dark green leaves, and the sweet fruit is formed by the thickening of the little twigs, the flowers being hidden inside the stem. It was now early in April, not yet the usual time for figs to be ripe; but on the sheltered slope of the Mount of Olives this tree was already green. The new fruit might also be forming or last year's figs might still hang on the branches. But there were none. Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever; and presently (which means immediately) the fig tree withered away, though apparently the disciples did not see it till the next morning when they came again over the same path.

After hearing the words to the fig tree the disciples came with the Lord into Jerusalem. It was a few days before the Passover. The city was full of people, and in the very courts of the temple men were selling oxen and doves for sacrifices, and lambs for the Passover. Where all should have been quiet for worship, there was quarrelling and cheating and confusion. Money changers too were there, for the pilgrims came from all countries, with all kinds of money, and they must have every one a half shekel piece, a silver coin rather smaller than a quarter of a dollar to pay to the temple. There was much cheating in the money changing. The Lord had once before driven the traders from the temple. (John 2:13-17) But now they were there again. Once more He cast out them that bought and sold, and overthrew the tables of the money changers and the seats of them that sold doves, and would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. It must not be made an ordinary marketplace, or still worse, like a cave where robbers quarreled over stolen goods, but it must be quiet and holy for those who came to worship. We do not bring such things into the Lord's house, we think. But do we not sometimes bring them in our feelings and our thoughts? What must we do? The priests were much displeased and sought how they might destroy Him. And He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there. So passed the Monday.

It was Tuesday in the morning as they went again over the Mount of Olives to the city, that they saw the fig tree withered. They went on into the temple courts, and all day they listened to the Lord's words as He taught the people and answered the questions of the priests.

1. What happened on Palm Sunday? What on Monday? What on Tuesday?
2. Why was the fig tree withered? Does it teach you any lesson?
3. What did the Lord find in the temple? and what did He do? Does this teach you any lesson?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The Lord came looking for fruit upon the fig tree, and when there was none caused it to wither away, because it would be an object lesson to teach us something about ourselves, and about the people in Jerusalem at that time. Do you remember other places where a man or the Lord's church is likened to a tree? (Isaiah 65:22; Psalm 1:3) Where the church is likened to a fig tree? (Luke 13:6-9) What quality in a man or in the church is especially meant when comparison is made to a fig tree? The low spreading fig tree with its sweet fruit represents our intelligence in regard to kind uses of charity. First we must learn how to do these uses, and think about doing them. But if we stop there, what kind of a fig tree are we like? If we do so, even our learning will some day be forgotten. The tree with leaves only, withers away. The lesson applied to the Jews, for they had the Scriptures and abundant knowledge of what was good, but did not do the good works of charity. (E. 386, 403; A. 885)

Remembering that the temple represented the Lord's own Humanity (John 2:19-22; Revelation 21:3), what did this cleansing mean? (E. 220, 325, 840) Do you see any likeness between what the Lord had done in the temple and the work of John the Baptist? It was a deeper work of the same kind. If the priests cared for the Lord's help to repent and make their lives good, they would understand both John's baptism and the Lord's cleansing of the temple. As it was, they cared for neither and understood neither.

Is the mountain which we may remove by prayer natural or spiritual? A spiritual mountain in a good sense is an elevated state of heavenly affection, but in a bad sense it is a state of pride and selfish elation. The promise is that we can with the Lord's help overcome not only the idle thoughts represented by the leafy fig tree, but the worst forms of selfish love. Every victory is possible with His help. (E. 405, 510)

## **Lesson 25**

### **Mark 12:1-27: Parable of the Vineyard**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We remember that it was on Tuesday morning, coming to Jerusalem again from Bethany, that they passed the fig tree which the Lord had forbidden to bear fruit "hereafter forever," and that it was withered from the roots. That day He was teaching in the temple. His teaching was mostly in parables. Do you remember what a parable is? How is a parable different from other stories?

We have in our lesson today a parable which the Lord told about a vineyard. There are many vineyards in Palestine. A man chooses a piece of ground for his vineyard, he digs a ditch around it three or four feet wide and two feet deep, the earth being thrown up on the inner side. In this pile of earth posts are set three or four feet high and branches are twisted and woven in between them making a firm, solid hedge which will keep out the many animals big and little which would do harm to the vineyard. Then the ground is all dug over, and the cuttings are planted in rows about eight feet apart. In many of the old vineyards a wine press was dug out of the soft rock; a square or oblong tank with a hole near the bottom of one end through which the juice could run into a smaller tank. The grapes were put into the first tank and trodden by men with their clean bare feet, amid much shouting and singing. The juice was then taken out of the smaller tank and put in large earthen vessels which were buried in the earth in a cool place. Often the juice is boiled down into a kind of sweet syrup called "dibs." This gathering of the grapes was a very gay and festal time.

Sometimes a man's vineyard would be right near his house; sometimes it would be far off, and in the time of planting and gathering the grapes he must live in his vineyard and protect it from all enemies, so often a little house was built in the vineyard, and sometimes in the case of a large vineyard a tower with windows near the top where the owner could keep watch at night. A husbandman, or farmer, would often hire a vineyard from another for a number of years, agreeing to pay for it in money or in a part of the fruit, generally a half, and at the time of gathering the owner would send a servant to receive his share.

In the parable of the vineyard the Lord told about His people and their unfaithfulness to Him. They knew that the parable was about them, and they were very angry. Read verses 1-12.

##### **Junior**

It was Tuesday; the Lord was teaching in the temple courts, where people often gathered to worship and to listen to the teachers. There were many there at this season, for the great feast of the Passover was near. He was telling of a vineyard such as they all knew well, with its hedge and wine press and tower; and about the wicked husbandmen who refused to give to the owner the fruits. Perhaps some who heard Him, knew that He was really telling about His own people and the care that He had taken to teach them and protect them. Perhaps there were some who knew what the vineyard meant, for when the Lord spoke by the prophet Isaiah, long ago, He had called

His people a vineyard, and had said, "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant." (Isaiah 5:1-7) And they all knew that the Psalm meant the Lord's people when it said, "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: Thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it." (Psalm 80:8-16) They knew that the parable was about themselves.

And the Lord went on to speak of husbandmen who were left in charge of the vineyard - the priests and others who ought to teach the people from the Scriptures how to live good, heavenly lives. Good deeds were what the Lord meant when He spoke of sending for the fruit of the vineyard. Many servants were sent, but the husbandmen gave them nothing and killed some of them. The servants were the Lord's angels and prophets. And at last He came Himself, He was even then standing with them in the temple, but how little they cared to listen to Him! A few days later they would cry out to have Him crucified. But although they would seem to overcome Him, the Lord led the Jews by their own answer to confess that they were in reality destroying themselves.

When you remember that the question about tribute was not asked to learn what was right, but to find something against the Lord, you see why Pharisees and Herodians came together asking, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar?" Caesar was the Roman Emperor, and He taxed the people to build roads and to pay the soldiers to guard the country and to do other things for them. It was a sign of all this that they were using his money. The Pharisees said that it was wrong to pay this tribute. The Herodians said it was right to pay. It seemed that whatever answer the Lord gave, He would offend some of those who asked. He told them to bring a penny. It was a Roman silver coin a little larger than a dime, with the head and name of Caesar on one side. Read the Lord's answer. (Verses 13-17)

Resurrection. This long word means the waking up again to a new life in the other world when we die. There were some people among the Jews, called Sadducees, who did not believe in any life after death. They studied the law of Moses, and they said that there was nothing there about another life. But when they asked the Lord about the resurrection, He showed them that the books of Moses which they studied and believed, do teach that those who have died are living in the other world. It is taught in the story of Moses at the bush. (Exodus 3:6)

1. What is said in Isaiah about the Lord's care in planting a vineyard? What is said in a Psalm about His care for a vine?
2. What is the fruit which the Lord wishes from His vineyard?
3. In what other places is the penny mentioned? What shows its value in those days?
4. Are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob still alive? What determines the kind of life that one will live in the other world?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The Lord's church is sometimes called a flock and sometimes a vineyard. What element of heavenly life is especially meant when it is called a flock? Innocent, heavenly affection. And what

when it is called a vineyard? Heavenly intelligence leading to sweet Christian uses. Plants and trees that bear fruit represent intelligence in regard to good uses, and the vine especially represents such intelligence of a sweet, heavenly kind. (A. 1069, 5113, 9139; E. 376)

What is the hedge about the vineyard? Intelligence of more natural kinds, orderly habits of childhood, and the proprieties and necessities of life, which are safeguards to the deeper, holier things of heaven. The wine press, where the grapes were trodden out, suggests the ability which the Lord gives through experience of temptation to draw out and purify the deep hidden thoughts and affections. The tower suggests the power which the Lord gives us of rising in thought and looking down upon ourselves, to see where there is danger to be guarded against. The Lord entrusts such a vineyard to every one of us, and He looks for the fruit at its season - for some wise heavenly kindness every day, according to the opportunity. The servants which come asking for the fruit are still the angels, and prophets - heavenly influences, and the reminders of our duty in the Lord's Word. Do we welcome them, or are we indifferent and do we try to put them out of mind? (E. 315)

The question of the Sadducees was primarily in regard to the resurrection, and the Lord answered them on that point from their own authority, Moses. The question also opened the subject of marriage in heaven. The Lord's words have seemed to some to mean that there is no marriage with the angels. They do not mean that. The Lord in His parables called heaven a marriage and a marriage feast. Heaven really consists in the marriage of the soul with the Lord, and in the marriage of good affection and true thought in each heavenly life. We are also taught that there is marriage among the angels, which is most holy and blessed. The Lord's answer means that there is not in heaven such merely natural and external marriage as was known to the Jews. It means also that the marriage of good and truth in the soul and of the soul with the Lord, must be begun if at all in the life of this world. It does not have its beginning, but its development, in the other world, and its quality forever is determined by the beginning made here. And as the marriage among the angels grows out of the heavenly character of each, this too is determined by the life in this world. (M. 41, 44; H. 366-386) The question of the Sadducees also unconsciously described their own spiritual state. The church with them was the woman. It had taken up one evil motive after another till it had tried all possible ones, with no good result, and now the church itself was about to die.

## Lesson 26

### Mark 12:28-44: The Two Great Commandments

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Again, a scribe came to Him and asked Him a question, and his question was, "Which is the first commandment of all?" It was a question that the teachers of the church disputed about. They had so many commandments, six hundred and thirteen in all, and the ones made by the scribes were thought to be just as binding as those in the Bible. But the Lord answered, "Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: 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. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." If we obey these two in everything we do, we shall be obeying all the Lord's commandments.

If we love a person very much, in what ways do we show it? Do we try to please him or not? Do we try to learn and remember the things he wants us to do? Do we love the things he gives us? Are we grateful for the care he takes of us? Do we try to help him when we can? If we would want to do these things and would enjoy doing them for a friend we love, how should we feel about the Lord who made us, who has given us everything we have, our families, our friends, our homes, and all the beautiful world to live in, and who thinks of us and takes care of us every minute we live, guarding us from all sorts of evil things and misfortunes that we know nothing about? How often do you think of Him? Do you love Him with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength?

Then about loving our neighbor as ourselves. We are so far from doing that, that it is almost hard to imagine; can you imagine being really as truly glad of a good thing coming to a friend as if it came to you? A word of praise being said of him as if it were said of you? And how about these things coming to, people we don't like? There are many ways we can watch ourselves. Something has gone wrong: isn't our first impulse to think, and make other people think, that it was someone else's fault and not our own? Someone is getting ahead of us in some way: does it give us real pleasure or real pain to hear him praised? Is it easier to say a kind thing about him ourselves, or something just a little unkind? We shall be all our lives learning the lessons of these two commandments; but if we are trying to learn them we shall be happy and make our friends happy, here and in heaven forever. If we just try to learn to keep these two short commandments.

One last little thing happened just before the Lord and the disciples left the temple this day, Tuesday. The Lord was sitting near the treasury, the place where the offerings were brought - offerings to the temple, offerings to the Lord. He was watching the people put in their offerings, some more, some less; and there came a poor widow and put in two mites, the whole gift equal to about a quarter of a cent. Such a little gift it would seem! But it was all that she had, and the Lord knew it, and said she had given more than all the others. The part of the gift which reaches heaven is the love with which it is given.

After this lesson from the poor widow's mite the Lord prepared to leave the temple never to return to it again. His great work of teaching the people was over.

## **Junior**

We should learn to say the Two Great Commandments. They tell us to love the Lord and to love our neighbor. This is all that the Lord asks. But we must think how we can show our love. How can our fathers and mothers know that we love them? By our calling them by loving names, and hugging and kissing them? This helps, but I think I hear them say, "If you really love me, you will do quickly what I asked you to do." And the Lord said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." It is not enough to tell the Lord that we love Him. We love Him by doing what He tells us is right, and doing it promptly and cheerfully. There are as many different ways of loving the Lord as there are right things to do. Can I love Him with my hands? With my tongue? Yes, by doing and saying what is right. The commandment says that we should love the Lord with our heart; that is to feel

lovingly toward Him. And with our soul; that is to think lovingly and gratefully about Him. And with our mind and strength; that is to think of and do all the good things that we know the Lord wants us to do. So we can love Him with every part of our mind and body.

We call the people that live near to us our neighbors; but should we not love people that live further off, and our father and mother and brothers and sisters, who live in the same house with us? We should love them all. The commandment means to love everybody; not to love the bad things in people, but the good things and to try to strengthen these. It does not always mean to give money to a poor man. Perhaps that would just make him more lazy and do him harm. We love him by doing what will really help him most. How can a man who knows a useful trade love his neighbor? A man who keeps a store? A person who has a garden full of beautiful flowers? A person who has two strong hands?

In one of the courts of the temple there were treasure chests into which the people put their offerings. As the Lord sat watching them, some put in a great deal, and some only a little. But it was not the amount that made some gifts more precious than others to the Lord. What makes a present precious to us? Might some very little present be more to us than some great thing? What could make it so; even the widow's two little copper coins?

1. What is the First Great Commandment? How can we love the Lord?
2. What is the Second? Who is our neighbor? How can we love him?
3. What made the poor widow's gift precious? How can I make little gifts and actions precious?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Can you find the Two Great Commandments in the Old Testament? The four faculties with which we are to love the Lord, include all our faculties. Heart and soul mean our inner love and thought; mind and strength mean thought and love brought down to action. (E. 750; A. 9936)

You find the words of David which the Lord quoted, in Psalm 110:1. The words "my Lord" mean the Savior who was coming. That David called Him Lord, showed that He was to be more than a mere man. He was to be God with us. That the Lord should sit on the Divine right hand till His enemies were overcome, means that the Divine power in the Lord would overcome and help us to overcome in every temptation. This is surely something that common people should hear gladly. (E. 298; T. 102)

Can we put all our living into even the smallest useful action? We can put the best we have of feeling and thought into it, and these are like the good Samaritan's two pence, or the widow's two mites. And when are we like a poor widow? We know what it is to be poor in spirit - not self-confident, thinking that we are wise and strong and good, but conscious of our weakness and our need. A widow suggests still more the idea of helplessness, especially the lack of true manly understanding to strengthen and guide the little love of goodness that we have. The Lord loved to

help this humble state of mind and strengthen its goodness. Did the scribes also help those in this state of need? What can it mean spiritually, that they devoured widows' houses? (E. 118; A. 9198)

## Lesson 27

### Mark 13: Signs of the Lord's Coming

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

As they were leaving the temple after this last day of the Lord's public teaching, the disciples pointed to the great stones of the temple, and the beauty of the temple building, and the Lord said that the time would come when it would all be thrown down and not one stone left upon another.

Then they crossed over the Kidron valley and sat on the Mount of Olives, looking down on the beautiful city of Jerusalem with its magnificent temple in the lengthening shadows. The temple was built by Herod and perhaps not wholly finished when the Lord was here. It was built of huge blocks of white marble. It was a saying of the Jews that one had seen nothing if he had not seen the temple. As they looked upon the city and the temple from the Mount of Olives, the disciples asked when it would all be overthrown. The Lord answered in a parable. As we read it together you will see that it tells of dark and troubled times, and of brighter times to come afterward.

But they must watch and pray. For as a householder in leaving his house would give each servant his work to do and tell the porter to watch, so He in leaving His disciples told them to watch that they might be ready to receive Him. And we all must watch and pray, for do we know when the Lord will come to take us to our heavenly home? He may come when we are young or when we are grown or when we are old, but He will surely come sometime and we must be ready.

##### Junior

Perhaps the afternoon shades were lengthening as the Lord with the disciples went out from the temple and across the Kidron to the Mount of Olives. Picture the city as it lay before them; the palace and towers on Mount Zion, the white buildings of the temple, and the wall with its great stones, some, it is said, thirty and even forty feet in length. "Master," one of the disciples said, "see what manner of stones, and what buildings." "Seest thou these buildings?" the Lord answered, "there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." His words were literally fulfilled in the year 70, when the Roman general Titus destroyed Jerusalem. But the Lord spoke not so much of the natural city and, temple, as of true ways of life and worship which were nearly at an end among the Jews. On the same last day in the temple He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." (Matthew 23:37)

As the Lord sat on the slope of the Mount of Olives, over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew, and perhaps other disciples, sat with Him and listened as He told them more of the sad days which should come. He told them of wars and famines and earthquakes, and days of

trial when the love of many should wax cold. The sun and moon would be darkened and the stars would fall. But then would come brighter days, as when after winter the trees begin to bud and give promise of summer, for He Himself would come again to comfort His people. The disciples thought only of natural wars and natural darkness, but we know that the Lord spoke of wars and darkness in men's minds. And the coming again which He promised, was a new and more powerful sense of His presence, which is even now taking place, through the opening of His Word to the New Church.

1. Who built the first temple in Jerusalem? The temple that stood there in Gospel days? When was this temple overthrown?
2. What troubles that were coming did the Lord foretell? What beautiful sign did He also promise?
3. When does the Lord come for each one of us? How should we watch for His coming?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The stones of the temple. What did the Lord say is the stone of which His church is built? The sure, unchanging truth that He is the Christ the Son of the living God - God become man to dwell with us. (Matthew 16:16-18) This was the corner stone which the builders rejected. (Mark 12:10) This and other holy truths about the Lord and heaven are represented by the beautiful stones in the walls and foundations of the Holy City. Jews and Christians have been proud of the holy truths in their possessions; they have boasted of the great stones of their temple. But the stones have fallen apart and crumbled when the Commandments of God have been made of none effect by disobedience and by the inventions of men. Read of the stones of Solomon's temple. (1 Kings 6:7.) (E.411; A. 8581.)

As you read the predictions of the last days, keep in mind that they describe the time of spiritual distress, before the Lord's second coming through the opening of His Word to the New Church. Notice a few particulars. There have been wars between truth and falsity and between different false teachings in the church; there have been earthquakes, when all that was accepted as most sure has been overthrown; and famines, when souls have starved for some true knowledge of heavenly things. And why all this? Because they have rejected the Lord's apostles, His words of Divine truth. But the Lord provides that something of heavenly life shall survive the dark times. In those days of desolation there is safety in the mountains, in states of simple goodness. The sun and moon and stars are darkened when all heavenly light is extinguished. Then the clouds of the Lord's Word open to bring Him again near to men. Trees of intelligence of every beautiful and useful kind, spring into life. We see them all about us, especially the fig tree of interest in good works of natural benevolence. It is the sign of the Lord's coming, and of brighter, happier days. (R. 331-334; E. 403)

## **Lesson 28**

### **Mark 14:1-11: The Anointing in Bethany**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Our lesson today is of a supper in Bethany at the house of "Simon the leper." He, perhaps, was a leper who had been healed by the Lord. Do you know how the people sat at feasts? Not up straight in chairs as we sit at table, but half lying on wide couches in such a way that the feet of a person would come behind his neighbor on one side, bringing his head in front of his neighbor on the other side. In this way you see the feet would be near the outer edge of the couch and could be easily washed by the servants. And it was one of the marks of hospitality to provide for the washing of the feet of guests, for they wore only sandals, which were no protection from the dust of the streets. There is one other thing about the arrangement of the table which will help us to see the picture as it really was. It was sometimes arranged on three sides of a square, the couches for the people being only on the outer sides. Sometimes the couches were arranged on three sides of a square table. In this way the servants could wait upon the guests from the inside of the square, or from the free side of the table without reaching between the guests.

It was at such a table that the Lord sat at meat in Simon's house in the little town of Bethany. John tells us that Lazarus was among the guests at the supper, sitting at the table with the Lord - the same Lazarus whom the Lord raised from the dead - and that his sister Martha was one of the people who waited upon the guests. Their sister Mary came bringing a beautiful box, or flask, of spikenard, a most precious perfumed ointment. She broke the cruse, and poured the precious ointment upon the Lord's head, and then upon His feet, wiping them with the hair of her head; and the whole house was filled with the sweet smell. This was a tribute that might have been paid to a king. No one else in the world had treated Him with so great an honor.

Judas Iscariot and some of the others thought it a waste, for they said the ointment might have been sold for three hundred pence and the money given to the poor. But the Lord said that it was a good work she had done, and that wherever the gospel should be preached in the whole world this that this woman had done would be told as a memorial of her. It is a very precious story.

##### **Junior**

The story of the anointing in Bethany is told by Matthew, Mark, and John. Matthew and Mark tell of it as if it might have happened on Wednesday of this last week. John places it definitely on the day before Palm Sunday, but the story is the same. A different anointing, in Galilee, is described in Luke 7:36-50.

You remember Bethany, the village on the Mount of Olives, about two miles from, Jerusalem. Tell me what you can about the family in Bethany whom Jesus loved, and of His visits to their home.

It was probably on the Sabbath evening as the Lord rested in Bethany, that they made Him this supper. The scene is before you, let us think of a few points before we read the story. Alabaster is

a fine white stone like marble. The cruse was a little flask, perhaps "rosebud" shape, sealed at the neck. The spikenard was a plant growing mostly in the mountains of India, from which ointment was made which was highly valued. We read in the Song of Solomon, "While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." (1:12; 4:13, 14) The cruse of ointment which Mary brought was "very costly." It might have been sold for three hundred pence, which is a great deal when we remember that a penny was a day's wages. (Matthew 20:2) She broke the box, perhaps only the wax which sealed the neck, and poured the ointment on the Lord's head and on His feet, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

They murmured against Mary, but Jesus said, "Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She bath wrought a good work on me." It reminds us of the time when Martha complained that Mary did not help in serving, but the Lord said, "Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her." The serving was right and useful, but there was need also to sit at the Lord's feet to hear His word. Then one can serve without being anxious and troubled. So now the Lord's answer shows that it is right to help the poor, but that there is need first to feel and show love for Him. The natural works are really good only when we remember the Lord first and do them for His sake.

The Lord said that Mary anointed Him for His burial. Perhaps Mary who loved to sit at the Lord's feet had understood more than others when He had spoken of His crucifixion now so near. She perhaps felt that it was almost the last time that she could show her love for her dear Lord. What help and comfort He had given them, especially that day when He came to them in their sadness, and raised their brother! What grateful love she poured out with the costly ointment! Was it the costliness of the gift, or the love that was in it which made it precious to the Lord? The grateful affection filled the house with the sweetest fragrance. And so does a sweet odor fill the house whenever we feel grateful love for the Lord and express it in our prayer, or in kind words and deeds to one another. (Compare Genesis 8:21; Leviticus 1:9.)

Notice that both before and after this story of Mary's love, we read of the betrayal of the Lord by Judas. It brings into contrast with true love for the Lord, the love which is only for selfish gain.

1. What do you know of Bethany? Mary? Martha? Lazarus?
2. How did Mary show her love for the Lord?
3. Who objected? On what ground?
4. What did the Lord say of Mary's act?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Ointments were usually olive oil made sweet with various fragrant spices. Read how the ointment was compounded to anoint the holy things of the tabernacle. (Exodus 30:22-26) The olive oil we know is a symbol of the Lord's love and of our love for Him, which should consecrate all things of worship. But love is perceived by the thoughts associated with it. The spices in the ointment

represent the thoughts of gratitude and humility which bring our love for the Lord distinctly to our perception and make it delightful. (C. 9474)

The head and feet. The head represents the interior life of purpose and thought; the feet, the outward conduct. And we can love the Lord on both planes, anointing both His head and feet. But to anoint His feet is harder, even as practice is harder than theory. (Compare John 13:6-10.) We sit at the Lord's feet and hear His word, when we come to Him in His human life to teach us how to live, and as we obey His teaching. We anoint His feet, when through obedience we have learned the goodness of His paths, and our heart overflows with grateful love for Him who leads us in them. (A. 2162; R. 49)

Anointing for burial. Death suggests to the natural thought burial, but to the spiritual thought resurrection and eternal life. The custom of embalming the body arose not from any thought that the body would rise again, but from the desire to represent the eternal life of the spirit. The anointing of the Lord's body represented the fact that He could not die, but was "alive for evermore." Grateful love for the Lord keeps Him not merely a precious memory, but a living presence in every heart. (John 19:39; Luke 23:56; 24:1; A. 10252)

The Lord said that Mary's act should be told for a memorial of her. She became known, and will always be known, as "that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair." And so will every one be remembered by His anointing of the Lord. As we love the Lord and live for His sake our spiritual character is formed, by which we shall be known forever in heaven.

## **Lesson 29**

### **Mark 14:12-26: The Last Supper**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Our story today is of Thursday. Now for the last time the Lord and the disciples leave their resting place in the little town of Bethany, coming over the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem. This was the day of the Passover, the great feast, and the city must have presented its most festive appearance with its gaily colored crowds of people, perhaps little tents covering the hillsides. The disciples had come to the Lord asking Him what preparations they should make for Him and themselves. He sent two of them, Peter and John, to the city. Following a man carrying a jar of water, they found the house and the large upper room. It is possible that the "good man of the house" was a friend, but all the dwellers in Jerusalem opened their houses to visitors at the feast.

The room was "furnished and prepared," probably arranged with the tables and couches for the feast. Possibly the wine, the cakes of unleavened bread, the bitter herbs, and the preserve of fruits, into which the bread was to be dipped, may have been in readiness also. If not, Peter and John would prepare them and also the lamb, for the feast. This lamb must have been bought the day before; and been examined by the priests. Today Peter and John would kill it in the temple court when the trumpets blew. The blood would be taken in a golden bowl and poured out by the

priests at the foot of the altar. All the while the Levites would chant the Psalms from 113 to 118, the people joining in some of the lines, and responding by a hallelujah to others. After this ceremony Peter and John would have their lamb roasted, and take it to the larger upper room to have it in readiness for the Lord and the other disciples.

In the evening the Lord kept the Passover with the disciples, with its blessings and singing of Psalms, and the story of deliverance from Egypt.

This feast they partook of after the manner of the Jews, but the Lord had come to bring a new and different worship; so after the feast He "took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is My body. And He took the cup and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them; and they all drank of it. And He said unto them, this is My blood of the new testament (or covenant), which is shed for many." He also said (in Luke), "This do in remembrance of Me." And this new feast, called the "Holy Communion," given for the first time by the Lord Himself, the Christian Church observes in remembrance of Him.

## **Junior**

Review the events of Holy Week: the entrance into the city on Palm Sunday; Monday the fig tree and the cleansing of the temple; Tuesday the day of teaching in the temple. Wednesday we think of as spent in the quiet of Bethany.

Thursday came, when in the evening the Passover should be eaten, and for a week all leaven should be put away. Each household kept the Passover, by itself, or two households together, if one was too small. The twelve disciples were the Lord's household, and in the morning of the feast day the Lord sent Peter and John from Bethany to prepare the feast. About sunset all was ready. The Lord with the other disciples came from Bethany, over the Mount of Olives, to the large upper room where Peter and John had made ready.

As they were eating, the Lord sadly told them that one of them should betray Him. Have you not seen Leonardo da Vinci's famous picture of the disciples about the table with the Lord? You remember they are all looking up startled and troubled. They are looking toward the Lord. Some are holding up their hands inquiringly. The Lord has just told them that one of them will betray Him, and they are asking, "Lord, is it I?" John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next before the Lord at the table. Peter beckoned to him to ask who it should be. "Lord, who is it?" he asked; and the Lord said, "He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it." Then, taking a sprig of the bitter herbs or a piece of a cake of bread, he dipped it in the preserved fruit, and handed it to Judas Iscariot. Evil thoughts and feelings came into Judas's heart, and he rose from the table and went out into the night.

There, as they were with Him at the table, the Lord gave them the bread and wine, and charged them to keep His Holy Supper. There, too, He spoke to them wonderfully tender words, which John has preserved for us in his Gospel: "Let not your heart be troubled." John 14 and following chapters.

1. When was the Passover kept? In memory of what?
2. When did the Lord keep it for the last time with the disciples? How did they find the place?

3. What Christian feast did the Lord give in place of the Passover?
4. What is represented by the bread, and what by the wine of the Holy Supper?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The meaning of the Passover. The escape from Egypt represents the deliverance from bondage to natural pleasure and evil, through the power of the Lord and His commandments. The feast represents the gift of new and better life. What does the lamb represent? Innocent affection from the Lord. Its blood on the door, innocent thoughts which belong to good affection, which keep evil from intruding. The unleavened bread represents the strength of pure affection free from all uncleanness; the bitter herbs, the temptations through which alone we can receive the good gifts. The feast originally was eaten girded and in haste, to teach that we cannot receive heavenly gifts to enjoy idly, but only to use. The feast was commanded to be kept forever, because we cannot be delivered and strengthened by the Lord once for all, but need His help continually forever. This same need is the reason for the Holy Supper which the Lord commanded instead of the Passover, saying, "This do in remembrance of Me." The bread and wine represent the gifts of heavenly affection and thought, the Lord's own flesh and blood, which we need to receive constantly from Him; and the reverent observance of the sacrament promotes their reception. (E. 329, 340; T. 702-710)

What preparation do we need for this reception of heavenly life from the Lord? We need to put away the wrong things which fill our minds and prevent our accepting His gifts. We must learn from the Lord what is wrong and with His help put away the evil of our doings from before His eyes. This preparation of repentance is represented by the jar of water which led the disciples to the place where they should keep the Passover with the Lord. A deeper repentance must be represented by the Lord's washing the disciple's feet at the table. (T. 722; A. 3147, 7442) Why were John and Peter sent? What is the meaning of the large upper room?

## Lesson 30

### Mark 14:27-52: In Gethsemane

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

When the supper was ended and they had sung a hymn, the Lord and the eleven disciples (for Judas had left the table and gone to the priests, to arrange to betray the Lord to them) went from the upper chamber and the city. They passed down over the slope of the hill and across the Kidron to a garden low down on the Mount of Olives, which was probably a favorite resting place for the Lord and His disciples. We can think of them going to this quiet, lonely place in the moonlight, the Lord knowing that Judas would find them there. The Lord was telling them that this very night they would all be offended in Him. Their faith in Him would be shaken. But Peter

was sure that he would never be offended in the Lord, even if all the rest of the world were. The Lord said to Peter, that this very night, before the cock should crow twice in the early dawn, Peter would deny three times that he knew Him. This, Peter could not believe, and said even if he should have to die with the Lord he would never deny Him; and all the others said the same.

When they came to the garden the Lord took Peter and James and John, the three who had several times been with Him; but they could not be near Him in His agony of prayer, and could not even keep awake, though He bade them to watch.

Then Judas came with armed men - his sign was a kiss - and the Lord let them take Him. "And they all forsook Him and fled." How soon their brave resolutions had vanished and the Lord's prediction had come true!

## **Junior**

In pictures looking eastward from Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives you see the garden of Gethsemane on the lower slope of the hill, an enclosure with flowers and olives and tall, dark cypress trees. It was probably a grove of olives in the old days, for the name means "oil-press." It was toward midnight as the Lord came with the disciples to this place from the large upper room where they had kept the Passover together. Notice three things as you read the story. The Lord's warning and the protests of the disciples as they walked; the Lord's earnest prayer three times repeated in the garden; the coming of Judas with armed men.

Read verses 26-31. How confident the disciples were that they would be faithful to the Lord! How soon they would fail! We have only to look forward to verse 50 and to the end of the chapter, to find the Lord's warning fulfilled. Notice verse 28. Who would remind the disciples of this promise by and by? (Mark 16:7)

Read verses 32-42. Three disciples went farther into the shadow with the Lord, but He left even these, and went alone to the place of prayer. The disciples slept. They could not understand and we cannot fully understand the trial which led the Lord to pray so earnestly three times. It was one of the last struggles of His life, in which He met all the powers of evil which urged Him to save Himself, to resent the injustice and ingratitude of men, to compel their obedience. What the Lord said tenderly of the disciples, "The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak," reveals a deep truth in regard to Himself in this and in all His temptations. It was the weak human nature that was tempted, and His struggle was to bring down in place of this weakness the strength of the Divine Spirit within. You feel the victory that He gained, when you see the Lord meeting Judas and his men so calm and strong.

Read verses 43-52. What have we learned before about Judas and his bargain with the priests? (Mark 14:1, 2, 10, 11) The deceitful kiss of Judas seems more contemptible than an open attack. (Psalm 41:9; 55:12-14) Who drew the sword? But the love and obedience that the Lord desired could not be compelled by force, such as Judas and his men were using. In the Lord's perfect gentleness there was a greater strength.

1. Where did the Lord go with the disciples from the table of the Last Supper? What is the meaning of the name?
2. What warning did the Lord give them as they walked?

3. What did the Lord do in the garden? The disciples?
4. Who came with Judas? What was his sign?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Let me suggest several points in the lesson for your study. Do you see why this experience of trial should be in Gethsemane, the "oil press"? Connect the oil press in your mind with a wine press and a threshing floor. (R.493; E.359)

Was it also right in a spiritual sense, when all the disciples were offended? (A. 6000) Do you see how at the same time the spiritual sheep were scattered?

Why did the Lord pray three times in the garden? (E. 820; T. 211)

What does the sleep of the disciples suggest, when they should have been watching with the Lord? Their dullness and indifference to the deep things of spiritual life. Presently when the Lord said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest," there is a suggestion of the peaceful trust which we may have in the protecting power gained in His victories. We need not know the depth of evil that He saves us from. There is a wrong sleep of indifference, and a right sleep of peaceful trust. (A. 3696; E. 187) A kiss is a token of love. The kiss of Judas is the token of love for the sake of selfish gain. (A. 4215)

## Lesson 31

### Mark 14:53-72: Before the Priests

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

The armed men who came with Judas bound the Lord and He was taken to the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest. We follow from Gethsemane up into the city and to the palace near the temple. We look two ways: to a hall above, where scribes and priests were gathered and the Lord was standing in the midst before them, and to the open court below, where servants were passing and talking together.

In the hall above the priests were calling witnesses to find some excuse to bring the Lord to Pilate, the Roman governor, and demand His death. They found none, except the Lord's own declaration that He was the Christ, which would indeed have been blasphemy if it had not been true. But it was true, a blessed truth of hope for all the world.

In the meantime Peter and John had followed the Lord to the palace, and as John knew the high priest they let him in, and he got permission for Peter to enter also. It was cold and the servants had made a charcoal fire, probably in a large metal dish or brazier, in the court or open space

around which the palace was built. Here were the servants and the people who were not allowed inside the palace. It was a dangerous place for Peter to be, for as a disciple of the Lord he too might have been taken before the high priest, and yet he wanted to stay to learn what he could of what was happening. All the people about him must have been talking against the Lord, not believing in Him, and all that was happening must have seemed like an awful dream to Peter, so different from anything that he had expected. It was then while he was warming himself that a maid came up and looked at him and said, "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth," but Peter denied it. Then Peter went out into the porch and the cock crew. A maid there also saw him, possibly the maid who had let him in, and she said to those standing by, "This is one of them, but Peter denied again. Yet again one of the people standing near said, "Surely, thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto," but Peter denied the third time. Then the cock crew the second time, and Luke tells us that the Lord turned where He stood, and looked upon Peter, and Peter remembered His words and he went out and wept bitterly.

It was a terrible lesson that Peter learned that night. He learned that he could not trust himself. It is good to know that after that night Peter was one of the bravest of the disciples, and at last did lay down his life gladly for the Lord's sake.

## **Junior**

The story of the trial and condemnation of the Lord divides into two parts: before the priests, and before Pilate. The first part we study today; the second part, next week. The Lord was led first to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas the high priest, but soon after to the palace of Caiaphas himself. Picture the paved courtyard with the buildings of the palace around it. The servants passed to and fro and warmed themselves at a fire of charcoal, for it was night and was cold. Peter sat with them. In a lighted hall a little above the court, priests in robes and turbans had hastily gathered and sat upon a divan about, the high priest Caiaphas presiding. The Lord stood in the midst, bound and guarded by servants. The priests were determined that the Lord should be put to death, and sought some pretext to make to Pilate the governor. They could find no wrong that He had done; He remained silent as they accused Him. "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." At length in answer to the high priest's question, the Lord told plainly that He was the Christ, the Heavenly King. It was enough. They would make it appear to Pilate that the Lord disputed Caesar's power. The priests scattered to their homes, and the Lord was struck and insulted by the servants.

The story pauses here to tell us how it fared with Peter in the court below. The first verse of the next chapter tells again of a gathering of the priests. The first was perhaps an informal meeting; this was a meeting of their council to take formal action and to lead the Lord to Pilate.

But we must return to Peter and the touching story of his denials of the Lord, and his tears.

1. Where was the Lord taken from Gethsemane? Who was high priest?
2. What were the priests determined to do? What excuse could they find?
3. What disciples followed to the palace? What prediction of the Lord's came true?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

A few points for deeper study. We have seen a spiritual meaning in the fact that it was night when the Lord was taken and the disciples scattered. Is there also a deeper thought in the mention of the cold in connection with Peter's denials of the Lord? (Matthew 24:12)

Had the Lord said that He would destroy the temple and build another? What had He said? And of what temple was He speaking? (John 2:19; E. 220; T. 221)

How would the Lord sit on the right hand of power? Compare Mark 16:19; Matthew 28:18. How would He come in the clouds of heaven? What cloud is now opened to reveal Him? (E. 687; A. 9807)

What kind of grief was represented by rending the clothes? And why? (A. 4763)

What spiritual meaning is there in Peter's three times denying the Lord? (T. 211; S. 29)

The cock crowing suggests the ending of the night and the beginning of the dawn. Do you see the beginning of a new state with Peter? (E. 9)

## **Lesson 32**

### **Mark 15:1-21: Before Pilate**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

It was early Friday morning when the priests led the Lord to Pilate. Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea, and had come up to Jerusalem apparently to keep order at the time of the Passover, the city being so full of strangers at that time there was more danger of disturbance. And so the priests brought the Lord to his palace and asked him to judge and condemn Him.

When Pilate asked the Lord, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" He answered, "Thou hast said"; which meant that it was true. But to the many angry charges of the priests He made no answer. Pilate knew that the Lord had done no wrong, but he was afraid of the angry priests and people.

Pilate offered to let the Lord go free; for it was the custom for him to let some prisoner go free at the Passover season. But the priests urged the people to ask for Barabbas who was in prison for really doing wrong, and they cried out that the Lord should be crucified. Pilate had not courage to refuse them, and said it should be as they asked.

Then for a little time the Lord was left with the soldiers, and they mocked Him, dressing Him in a purple robe and putting a crown of thorns on His head, and calling Him King.

After this He was led away to be crucified. They went from Pilate's palace through the streets to the north gate of the city. They met one Simon from a far-off country, perhaps near the city gate,

and made him bear the heavy wooden cross. It was a sad sight to all who loved the Lord; but turning to the people the Lord told them not to weep for Him. No, we need not weep for the Lord, for really He was King, and He was each moment becoming a stronger and more glorious King.

## Junior

The first scene of the trial and condemnation of the Lord was before the priests at the palace of Caiaphas. The second scene is at Pilate's palace; for early on the Friday morning they went to Pilate to demand that the Lord should be crucified. The story is very briefly told in Mark; many other particulars are given in the other Gospels.

They probably crossed from the temple hill to the hill of Zion, where the great palace stood. It was early Friday, the day of preparation for the Sabbath of the Passover week. The priests would not go into the heathen's house lest they should be defiled. They stood without, and Pilate set his chair on a raised pavement before the gate. The priests charged the Lord with claiming to be a king, and arousing the people against the Romans. Pilate went into the judgment hall and asked the Lord of His kingdom. He said, "I am a king," "My kingdom is not of this world."

Pilate knew that the Lord had done no wrong, and came forth and told the people so. He offered to release the Lord, for it was the custom to release some prisoner at the feast; but they cried out for Barabbas, a man who had taken part in an uprising and committed murder. What then should be done with the Lord? They cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him."

There came to Pilate a message from his wife, saying, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him." But Pilate dared not oppose the cries of the multitude. He washed his hands before them, as if that could free him from guilt; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

The Lord was scourged, as was the custom before crucifixion, and the soldiers in the palace put on Him a scarlet robe and a crown of thorns, and a reed in His hand, like a sceptre, and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

Once more the Lord came forth before the people, wearing the robe and crown, and he said, "Behold, the man!" (L. 16) "Crucify Him," the priests and people cried. Who was in truth the man and king? The priests driven on by cruel passion, Pilate fearing to do right, or the Lord, who conquered every selfish feeling, and who stood before them in the strength of perfect truth and goodness?

1. "Straightway in the morning." What day was it? Who was Pilate? Who was Barabbas?
2. Why did Pilate not release the Lord? Who was the more to blame, the priests or Pilate? (John 19:11)
3. Who was gaining a real victory; the priests, or Pilate, or the Lord?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

In the old days priests represented the Lord in the power of His love, and kings represented Him in the power of His truth. They represented the power of will and understanding in a man. In our story the same two powers or elements of character are represented by the priests and Pilate. How true it is when the will is evil, that it compels the understanding to carry out its purpose, as the priests urged Pilate and he dared not refuse. (R. 20; E. 31)

The choice was made between the Lord and Barabbas. It was simply the acting out of the choice they were making in their own souls, releasing the spirit of violence and murder, and rejecting the true manliness of the Lord. We also must often choose between the Lord and Barabbas. (A.4751; E. 740)

The soldiers arrayed the Lord as a King and mocked Him. This was permitted to be done because it pictured the contempt which the Jews were showing for the Lord as the heavenly King and for His kingly power. The crown of a king is especially an emblem of wisdom and the purple robe suggests the love from which he rules. Both these they ridiculed and despised. (E. 577, 627)

## **Lesson 33**

### **Mark 15:22-47: At the Cross**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We have in mind the Lord's words to the daughters of Jerusalem: "Weep not for Me." We also remember the care of angel teachers in teaching little children of the Lord's resurrection, to avoid anything funereal. (H.335) We shall therefore tell briefly this part of the sacred story, and pass on to the gladness of Easter morning.

The hill Golgotha was near the city, outside the northern gate. It was about nine o'clock when the Lord was crucified. From noon till three o'clock there was darkness over all the land. It was as if the whole earth felt the sadness of this rejecting of the Lord.

We see three kinds of people among those near the cross. There were the soldiers who crucified the Lord. We see them parting His garments among them, and keeping guard. There were priests still mocking the Lord with cruel words, and there were women who loved the Lord, who looked sadly on.

And now before the sunset came two men who had leave from Pilate and took the body of the Lord and laid it tenderly in a little chamber in the rocky hillside near by. The women saw the place and the stone which closed the door, and the garden that was about it. Now all was peaceful and the Sabbath rest had come.

## **Junior**

A sad procession moved through the streets of the city to the northern gate. The Lord clothed in His own garments and bearing His cross; soldiers walked beside Him, one of them carrying as the usual placard to announce the crime, the title which Pilate had written in Hebrew and Greek and Latin "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS." Women wept at the sad sight, and the Lord said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." They met one Simon from the country (his house was in far-off Africa), and on him laid the Lord's cross.

There was a bare-topped hill outside of the city, named from its shape, "The place of a skull." Here they crucified the Lord, and He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The soldiers parted His garments among them; the priests taunted Him. The disciple John and faithful women stood sadly by. The Lord spoke to them, and gave Mary to the care of the beloved disciple.

There was darkness over all the earth from noon till three o'clock. The Lord then cried with a loud voice and bowed His head. The veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom. The great battle which the Lord had fought with all the powers of evil was ended, and He had overcome. What wonderful peace!

There came two men, Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus, and with Pilate's leave took the body of the Lord and wrapped it in linen with spices, and laid him in a new tomb in a garden in the hillside. The women sadly watched them, and saw a great stone rolled to the door. It was toward sunset and the women went to prepare spices, that after the Sabbath rest they might come and anoint the Lord's body.

We may feel a sense of awe as we stand by the cross; we may feel the pity of such ingratitude; but above all feelings of sadness there should be a sense of the great victory which the Lord was gaining, the greatest that was ever gained on earth. We feel the awe of the great conflict, the grandeur of the victory, the perfect peace.

1. What words were written and placed upon the cross? In what languages were they written?
2. Who parted the Lord's garments? Who mocked him? Who were there that loved Him?
3. Who took the body of the Lord? Where was it laid?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

Verse 23 tells of wine mingled with myrrh which the Lord would not drink, and verse 36 speaks of vinegar or sour wine which He received. Wine is often the type of spiritual truth. The wine mingled with myrrh the Lord did not take, for it represented truth perverted by falsity, as it was with the Jews. The sour wine He did receive, for it represented truth, imperfect, indeed, but held honestly by simple minds. (E. 519)

We have thought of the Lord's garments as representing the truth which revealed and clothed His love. The soldiers treated His garments as the Jews, and as others in the church at other times, have treated His Word. They rend it in their quarrels; they destroy it. Yet only its letter, for the deeper meaning of the Word like the inner garment they cannot rend. (A. 3812, 9093)

The cry of the Lord upon the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" expresses the sense of utter desolation which came to Him in His times of temptation. Strength seemed as far away from the Lord as it ever does from us; there was the same despair, the same uncertainty of success. The cry is from the twenty-second Psalm. Read the whole Psalm, for it expresses more of the Lord's heart in this great conflict, and in its later verses it expresses the triumph of His victory, and the blessing that His victory would be to all the world. (T. 126) We remember how in the temptation in the wilderness the Lord found strength in words of Scripture; may we not believe that in this last trial of the cross He was strengthened by this Psalm?

Burial, we are often told, means to angels resurrection and eternal life. The ancient care for burial, as for example the custom of embalming, was that the burial might picture the preservation and continuance of life in heaven. There was the same meaning in all that is told of the burial of the Lord, only all that is told of the Lord must be understood in a "supereminent" sense. That is, in relation to the Lord it does not represent merely resurrection to heavenly life, but glorification, becoming wholly Divine. With this general thought in regard to the meaning of the embalming, can we see in particular what is meant by the ointments, and what by the linen cloth in which the body was swathed? Do the ointments suggest the eternity of love, and the linen the eternity of truth? And in relation to the Lord's burial do these represent the truth that His love and truth had not perished, were not lost, but had become Divine? Remember the Lord's saying of Mary, that she did a good work in anointing His body for burial. She expressed the truth that the world needs to know, that the Lord's Humanity by glorification became Divine. (A. 10252)

## **Lesson 34**

### **Mark 16:1-11: At the Sepulchre**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The Sabbath rest was past. Very early on the first day of the week an angel of the Lord came and rolled away the stone. And so it was that when the women came as the sun was rising, bringing their spices to prepare the body of the Lord more carefully (for the burial on Friday night must have been a hurried one), they found the great stone rolled away from the door of the sepulchre, and when they went into the tomb they saw a young man, an angel, dressed in white, and they were frightened; but the angel told them to fear not, that Jesus was risen; and they must go and tell the disciples. It would seem that Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples, the others being too frightened to tell anyone.

Mary Magdalene was the first to see the risen Lord. She stood by the sepulchre weeping, when she saw two angels in white, who said to her, "Why wepest thou?" and she said, "Because they

have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have lain Him." And turning round she saw one whom she supposed was the gardener, who said, "Why wepest thou? whom seekest thou?" And she said, "Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." Then she heard the dear familiar voice say, "Mary," and she knew it was the Lord.

This is what He had told His disciples, that He would rise on the third day. He appeared to His disciples many times in the next few days. He wanted them to feel His loving presence with them, wanted them to know that His life was not over with the death on the cross; that the Master they had followed, and were to follow, had not failed, and given up in death, but had been victorious and conquered. He wanted them to know and feel this, and He wants us to know and feel it, for we too may be His disciples.

### **Junior**

Some of the faithful women who loved the Lord and had followed Him from Galilee, looked from a distance when, on the Friday evening, Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus had tenderly taken the body of the Lord, wrapped it in linen cloths with spices, and had laid it in the new sepulchre cut in the rock off the hillside with a garden around it. Then they went and prepared spices, that when the Sabbath rest was past they might come and anoint the Lord.

As the Easter morning began to dawn they came to the sepulchre, five of them or more, bringing the spices which they had prepared. It was yet dark as they started, and as they reached the sepulchre the sun was rising. We see them going from Jerusalem as the sky was brightening above the Mount of Olives. They remembered the sepulchre as they had seen it on the Friday evening, and the great wheel-shaped stone which rolled in its track across the door. They were saying, Who shall roll us away the stone? But when they came near they saw that it was rolled away, for angels had come from heaven, and one with shining garments and face like lightning, rolled back the stone and sat upon it. For fear of him the Roman guards set by the priests to watch at the sepulchre did shake and become as dead men.

All that the women saw at first was that the stone was rolled away and that the Lord was not there. Then angels spoke to them and comforted them; they showed them where the body of the Lord had lain, and sent them to tell the disciples that He was risen.

The appearance of the Lord to Mary Magdalene, that is Mary of Magdala, first of all, mentioned in verse 9, we find described in John 20:11-18.

All this was at the sepulchre Easter morning.

1. Who were the first at the sepulchre Easter morning? What did the women come to do?
2. What did the angels tell them? What did they send them to do? Of what promise of the Lord did they remind them?
3. Who first saw the risen Lord?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

Was it yet dark in any other than a natural sense, as the faithful women started to go to the sepulchre? Was it true in any but a natural sense that they came to the sepulchre at the rising of the sun? (A. 2405)

The women coming with their ointments were the first to learn that the Lord was risen. The disciples learned from them. Our hearts may feel the eternal presence of the Lord before we understand it.

Among the women Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils, was the first to see the risen Lord. The casting out of seven devils represents a very full experience of the Lord's power to save from evil; and surely it is this experience that opens our eyes to see Him, our minds to understand Him. (Luke 7:47)

As the Lord rose on the third day, so is our resurrection usually on the third day, but with variety. (Hosea 6:2; R. 153; T. 281) The number three always carries with it the idea of completeness, and the Lord's remaining in the sepulchre until the third day represents the completeness with which He endured all states of temptation and laid down everything of imperfect life, that He might bring new life in fullness. (Matthew 12:40; A. 2788; E. 532)

The great truth which the Lord taught by appearing to the women and the disciples after His resurrection was that He had not left them. The visible body so necessary for a time as a means of coming to men and becoming known to them, was really a hindrance to the fullness of the Lord's presence. It was a staging or scaffold which was removed when the Divine tabernacle and temple of God among men was finished.

## **Lesson 35**

### **Mark 16:12-20: The Risen Lord**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

This is our last lesson from the Gospel of Mark. We learned of the Lord's birth; can you tell about it, where it was? And about the shepherds? Can you tell about the wise men who came to see the Lord? What did they follow? Who came to prepare the way for the Lord? What did John preach and do? Who came to him to be baptized in Jordan? Where had the Lord lived before His baptism? For about how many years? After His baptism He chose disciples to be with Him. How many? Near what sea did they live for a time after this? In what ways did the Lord show His love to the people among whom He lived? In teaching, He told them stories which were called what? Besides the healing of sickness what other kinds of miracles did He do? Who learned to love Him? And who hated Him as He lived this most holy life among men? Then came the news of the death of John the Baptist. Can you tell of that? What wonderful thing was given to three of His disciples to

see on Mount Hermon? Can you tell of that? After this the Lord left Galilee. We learned of the journey to Jerusalem. Can you remember any of the things that happened on the way?

The events of the last week we have reviewed very thoroughly, beginning with Palm Sunday, and ending with the burial on Friday, and the rising again on Sunday, the glad Easter Sunday, the first day of the week and ever after the Christian Sabbath! We have learned of the Lord's appearing to Mary on the morning of that day, and now we are to learn of the other times that He appeared to His disciples. For He appeared to some or all of them many times during forty days after His resurrection.

## **Junior**

During forty days after the resurrection the Lord appeared many times to the disciples, till they knew that He still was living and was with them.

The appearance of the Lord to two as they walked and went into the country, we read of in Luke in the story of the walk to Emmaus. (Luke 24:13-35)

Verse 14 refers to His coming to the disciples gathered together in Jerusalem, especially, it would seem, to the coming a week after Easter, when Thomas was with them. (John 20:19-29)

The charge and promise in verses 15-18 are probably a part of the charge given to the disciples when they met Him on the mountain in Galilee. See also Matthew 28: 16-20.

The ascension, verse 19, is more fully described in Luke 24:50-53 and in Acts 1:1-11. We must have clearly before us this last appearance of the Lord to the disciples. Forty days had passed since the Easter morning (Acts 1:3), and the Lord had appeared many times to the disciples. Once more the disciples were in Jerusalem, and the Lord appeared to them for the last time. He bade them tarry in Jerusalem until they received power from on high. How little the disciples yet understood about the Lord's kingdom! They were still hoping for earthly power, and asked, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" The Lord answered them most gently, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father bath put in His own power"; and He told them of the great work before them.

Then He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. How many times the disciples had gone with the Lord out to the Mount of Olives, and over the hill to the little town, the home of Mary and Martha. "And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." (Luke 24:51) "And a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven." (Acts 1:9-12.) "And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God." (Luke 24:52, 53)

1. During how many days after His resurrection was the Lord seen by the disciples?
2. Tell me of His coming to them in Jerusalem. In a mountain in Galilee.
3. When did they last see Him? How was He parted from them?
4. How does the Lord come again in the clouds?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The great purpose of the Lord's appearing to the disciples during forty days after His resurrection, was to teach them that He was still with them, the same Lord, real and powerful. The human nature by which the Lord came near to men in the world was gradually glorified. What was from men and from the earth was gradually laid aside, and what was Divine was brought down in its place. In the sepulchre the material dust of the Lord's body was dissipated and its place supplied by Divine substances. Thus, even the Lord's body was glorified. Still for a short time there was somewhat finite about the Lord which could make Him sensible to the spiritual senses of the disciples, and His appearing to them in that way prepared them for the time near at hand when He would be wholly and absolutely Divine - too glorious for human eyes to see. There is an important difference between the Lord's resurrection and ours, which He taught by saying, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." When we die we leave the natural body and the natural plane of life behind. The Lord did not leave that plane of life, but retained it and glorified it by replacing the weak substances of earth by Divine substances, on that same natural plane. He has not left us;

He is with us still, and forever. (L. 35)

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Is it the mere ceremony of baptism which saves, or is it repentance, and a practical confidence in the Lord, leading us to look to Him for strength to repent? (E. 475; T. 673)

Signs following belief. Were these signs ever literally fulfilled with the disciples? (Acts 5:12-16; 28:3-6) How may we cast out devils? speak with new tongues? The serpents are affections for pleasant things of sense. The Lord gives power to control these. Evils and false things which enter our minds from without we can reject with the Lord's help, and suffer no harm. Compare Matthew 15:10-20. (E. 706)

The Lord's ascension into the cloud reminds us of the bright cloud which overshadowed the disciples when He was transfigured. They could not bear the fullness of His Divine glory, but it must be veiled and interpreted to them by simple forms of thought, such as those of the letter of the Word. But as we become able to understand something of the spiritual truth within the letter of the Word, which is all about the Lord, the cloud opens and reveals Him. The Lord has made His second coming in the opening of His Word to the New Church.

## **Lesson 36**

### **Luke 1:1-25: The Promise to Zacharias**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

The Lord's disciples told and told again the wonderful story of His life. See 1 Peter 1: 16 and 1 John 1: 1, 3. Parts of the story were written down.

But the Lord did not leave us with no other accounts but those that men wrote of themselves. He breathed His Holy Spirit upon four chosen men, bringing all things to their remembrance, whatsoever He had said (John 14:26), and guiding them to write the four Gospels, the Divine record of His life. Luke was one of those who loved to hear the story from the apostles and others who had been nearest to the Lord, though he was not one of the twelve himself. What he wrote to his friend Theophilus, "the beloved of God," is also for all who love the Lord and desire to know the certainty of the things which have been taught concerning His coming into the world. Read Luke 1:1-4.

Now before we read the story, I must show you a picture that is in my mind. It is of a city, standing on its hills. The city had high stone walls and towers and arched gateways. On one hill there was a palace where a king lived; a cruel king, and the people were afraid of him. His name was Herod. On another hill there was a temple, all beautiful with white marble and gold. In front of the shining building was the altar where sacrifices were burned, and priests were there, dressed in white robes, with turbans on their heads. Only the priests came into the inner court around the altar. Down a few steps, under a gateway, there was another court, and below this another and another; and in these a great many people gathered at the feast times, and morning and evening, at the hour of prayer.

It was the time of prayer, on a day probably in the first week of October. The priests had made ready a lamb on the altar. The same priests did not serve all the time. There were twenty-four sets of priests, or courses, which came one course at a time for one week twice a year. Then they went back to their homes in different towns. The priests on duty at the time I am telling you of, were called the course of Abia, and among them was a good old priest Zacharias, who came from his home in the hill country of Judea, perhaps in Hebron. The offering was ready on the great altar before the temple, and now the incense, the sweet gum, must be burned on the little golden altar inside, that the smoke might go up as a sign of the prayers of all the people standing without, and of many more in their homes who remembered the time of prayer and turned their faces towards the temple. It was a very sacred duty to burn the incense in the temple. A priest was chosen by lot to do it, and no one was allowed to do it but once. This time the old priest Zacharias was chosen. I see him going into the temple with the golden bowl of incense. Another priest had gone before him with live coals from the great altar. He was in the holy place, as it was called. The golden lamps were on his left, and the table with piles of shewbread on his right. In front, before the veil which hid the most holy chamber, was the little golden altar with the live coals on it. Zacharias scattered the incense on the coals, and the prayers of all the people went up to the Lord.

Then Zacharias saw an angel by the altar, and heard a message from heaven. It was a promise that Zacharias and his wife Elisabeth should have a son, and that he should make ready the people for the Lord, as had been promised long ago by the prophets. The angel told what the child's name should be. It should be John. And he said that he should drink no wine, but be kept holy to the Lord, like Samson and Samuel. These men were called Nazarites; and another rule was that their hair should grow long and not be cut. The old priest could not believe the angel's words, and a sign was given; dumbness came upon him which lasted until the promise was fulfilled. But that was not at Jerusalem. It was at the old priest's home among the hills of Judea. Now you have the picture in your minds, and we must read the story. (Verses 5-23.)

1. Which Gospel tells us most about the childhood of the Lord?
2. Who were John the Baptist's father and mother? Where was their home?
3. Where was Zacharias when the promise came to him that John should be born? What was he doing?
4. What did the angel tell about John? His name, how he should be kept holy, what his work should be?
5. What sign was given to Zacharias when he did not know how to believe the angel?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

When we read in Matthew and in Luke of the Lord's coming "in the days of Herod the king," it means something more than the time of His coming. We remember the cruel Herod who killed the little children in Bethlehem, and who tried to kill the Lord. That Herod was king means that the spirit of cruelty was ruling in the world. But there was a Zacharias, which means "whom Jehovah remembers." He stands for the love for the Lord which lingered in the minds of men, which made it possible for Him to come and to be received.

A child was given to Zacharias and Elisabeth in their old age. Isaac was born when Abraham and Sarah were old, and Samuel was given by the Lord in answer to Hannah's prayer. It suggests that in every one the new birth from above is from the Lord, and comes as we recognize completely our inability to attain heavenly life in our own strength. (P. 83; A. 9325)

Read Revelation 5:8; 8:3, 4, and see if incense there is associated with prayer as in this story of Zacharias. The odor ascending from the glowing coals represents sweet, grateful, humble thoughts rising from a loving heart. The love must be a pure heavenly love received from the Lord, as the coals for the incense were taken from the undying fire of the great altar, which represented the Lord's own love. We read (Leviticus 10:1) of the sin of offering incense with strange fire, that is, fire not from the altar, for it is the pure love in prayer and worship, that makes them acceptable. (A. 10177)

What prophecy is almost repeated in the angel's words in verse 17? See the last words of the Old Testament. What is Elias called in the Old Testament? What was the character of his spirit and

work? We see the same fearless, reforming spirit in John the Baptist, working for the Lord and in His strength. (E. 724)

Signs in the Bible were never arbitrary, but were always outward expressions of the spiritual state of the people concerned. What spiritual condition was represented by Zacharias' dumbness? One is naturally dumb when his physical organs cannot articulate words. He is spiritually dumb when from ignorance or disbelief he cannot acknowledge the Lord's goodness and thank Him for it. The disbelief of Zacharias was represented by his dumbness, and by and by when he understood and believed, his tongue was loosed. (E. 455; A. 6988)

## Lesson 37

### Luke 1:26-56: Promise to Mary

#### THE STORY

##### Primary and Junior

When the Lord came there were not many people in this world who were glad to welcome Him, or who even knew of His coming. But how was it in heaven with the angels? They knew of His coming and were very glad. You know how an angel came to the old priest Zacharias as he burned incense in the temple, and told him that John the Baptist should be born, who would make ready the people for the Lord. And now we learn how the angel brought another message. Angels are near to all little children, and take care of them, and they are near before little children are born, to make ready the hearts of fathers and mothers and friends to welcome and love them.

Do you think the angels can come to us in one place as well as in another? In a little country town as well as in a city? In our own home as well as in a temple? The angel came to Zacharias in the great temple at Jerusalem, but when six months had passed he was sent to Mary in the little town of Nazareth, to tell her that the Lord should be born. Can you show me Nazareth on the map? You see this great, broad, green meadow of Esdraelon. Here the path climbs up into the hills and it leads to a little upland meadow with hills all around it. The houses of Nazareth, little flat-roofed, stone houses, stood on the sunny slope of the hill at the upper end of the meadow. There are little houses there now, and narrow streets with shops. The spring is still there just outside the town, where travelers stop to water their horses, and where the women fill their jars to carry on their heads up to their homes. The little town is shut in from the world, but if you climb the hill above you get a wide view of meadows and mountains and sea. This little town was Mary's home. The angel came, to her there to tell her that the Lord should be born. He told her that His name should be Jesus, which means "Savior." He should be great; He should reign forever, and His kingdom should have no end.

After the visit of the angel, Mary went from Nazareth to the town among the hills of Judea where Elisabeth lived. Elisabeth was Mary's cousin, and Mary stayed with her about three months and then went back to her own home. You must read the beautiful words that Mary spoke in the house of Elisabeth, praising and thanking the Lord for His great goodness and mercy in coming into the world to live with His people and to save them. (Verses 46-56)

1. Who helped in the Lord's coming besides the people of this world?
2. Who said, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus"? Who said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord"?
3. Where was the home of Zacharias and Elisabeth? Where was Mary's home? Shall we hear of Nazareth again?
4. How were the promises of the angel to Mary fulfilled in the Lord's life? Was He great? Was He a king?
5. What mighty ones did the Lord put down? What hungry ones did He fill with good things?
6. How was the Lord's coming promised to Abraham? Genesis 12:3)

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

The angel who came to Zacharias and to Mary is called Gabriel. This name, and other names, like Michael (Revelation 12:7), are not the names of particular angels, but describe certain kinds of heavenly character and use, and in a still deeper sense indicate the quality of the Divine presence which is with those angels who are in certain kinds of use. "By Gabriel is understood the ministry of those who teach from the Word that Jehovah came into the world, and that the Humanity He there assumed is the Son of God, and Divine." (R. 548; A. 8192) We can see why angels of this kind were sent to bring the promise of John's coming and of the Lord's own coming to Zacharias and to Mary.

"He shall be great." Great as an earthly ruler? great in riches? What makes one truly great? Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

"The throne of David." David was the king who fought many battles and gained many victories and established the kingdom securely. Did the Lord fight battles and gain victories? He fought with all false and evil things, and He overcame them and brought all things into order according to the principles of Divine truth. The Lord accepted the name of King because He bore witness unto the truth. (John 18:37) Truth is the kingly element in any character, and in the Lord it was the Divine truth. (A.5313)

"The house of Jacob" means, literally, all the tribes descended from Jacob. The tribes filled the Holy Land, which represents heaven. In the Revelation we read, of those from every tribe who were saved (7:4-8), and the names of the tribes were on the gates of entrance to the holy city. (21:12) The tribes represent all departments of good life. The Lord ruled the house of Jacob from the throne of David, because He used the Divine truth to establish and protect all forms of practical goodness in His own life and in the lives of men. (A.3305)

The angel's words to Mary teach as plainly as words could do, that the Lord was not born from a human father, but from the Divine life. When we know this, and when we reflect that the infinite Divine life cannot be divided and remain Divine, we see that the life within our Lord was the infinite life itself. The Divine Son was not a separate being from God, but God Himself clothed with the nature of men. The Lord said, "I and My Father are one." (T. 538)

Mary reverently submitted to the Divine will, saying, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to Thy word." By and by the Lord said that all are His brethren and mother who hear the word of God and keep it; that is, who do their part to bring forth the Divine truth and love into the world. We should do it in the humble, reverent, willing spirit expressed in Mary's words.

"Strength with His arm." The Lord's arm means His loving power, especially His power reaching down into the world to save. His coming was predicted in the words, "The Lord hath made bare His holy arm," etc. (Isaiah 52:10; A. 7205) The proud and the mighty whom He scattered and put down were all evil feelings and false thoughts, and evil spirits who love such things. The hungry whom He filled with good things were the poor in spirit who were willing to be helped; and the rich whom He sent empty away were those who felt strong and good and in need of no help. Compare Mary's song with the song of Hannah in 1 Samuel 2:1-10. The child Samuel who served at the tabernacle was a type of the Lord who should come; and Hannah's song gives thanks not only for Samuel, but for the Lord's own coming. (R. 323; E. 386.)

## **Lesson 38**

### **Luke 1:57-80: John the Baptist**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We are in the home of Zacharias and Elisabeth, in the hill country of Judea, perhaps in Hebron where Abraham lived so long. The friends and relatives are at the house to rejoice with Zacharias and Elisabeth and to have part in the naming of the boy, now eight days old. Who remembers about the coming of the angel to Zacharias in the temple at Jerusalem, telling him that this child would be born, and what his name should be? What was to be his name? What was to be his work? Why, when they asked Zacharias the child's name, did he write it instead of telling them? But now he was filled with the Holy Spirit, and said, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He bath visited and redeemed His people." Words of rejoicing that the time for the Lord's coming was at hand; the coming which had been so long promised and expected, which would bring salvation and happiness to the world.

##### **Junior**

Let us look together at a good large map of the Holy Land. Which part of the country was Judea? A line across the map halfway between Shechem and Jerusalem shows about the northern limit of Judea, and it extended southward to Hebron and the pasture country beyond. You see by the map that Judea is full of hills and mountains. Valleys run out to the west, into the Philistine meadows, and to the east to the Dead Sea. Many of the hillsides were terraced in the old days so that trees and vines could be planted, and many mountain brooks were dammed up, so that the water could be used to water the gardens and orchards. There were beautiful grain fields there in those days. We read about some near Bethlehem in the Book of Ruth. And in the orchards there were olives,

and figs and pomegranates. It was in a valley near Hebron that the spies found the bunch of grapes so large that it had to be carried between two on a staff. (Numbers 13:23.)

It was among these hills of Judea, and perhaps in this old town of Hebron, which was so long Abraham's home, that Zacharias and Elisabeth lived. The old priest had been at Jerusalem taking his turn of service at the temple. There he heard the promise of the angel, that they should have a son. The promise was fulfilled; the child was born; and the friends had come to the house to rejoice with Elisabeth and to give the child his name. His mother said, "He shall be called John." Zacharias could not speak, but he asked for a writing tablet - perhaps a little wooden tablet covered with wax; on which one could scratch with a sharp point - and wrote, "His name is John." The friends did not know, but you know why they gave the child this name. The people wondered, and as the child grew they saw that the Lord was with him.

When Zacharias had obeyed the angel and named the child John, his voice came again, for he had not spoken since that day in the temple. And the first words that he spoke were words that the Lord gave him to say. They were a beautiful song of thanksgiving for the Lord's great mercy in making ready for His coming into the world. His coming had been promised by prophets for many ages (Genesis 3:15), and especially to Abraham. (Genesis 12:3; 12:16, 17) He would deliver His people from their enemies - you know what enemies are meant - not from the Romans and enemies of this world, but from evil spirits and evil thoughts and feelings, which are much the worst enemies of all. And John would help by teaching repentance. He would be like a messenger going before a great king, to have the roads made ready and smooth for him. The Lord's coming would be like the dawn of a new day. It would send light into all the dark places of the earth, and everybody with His help would be able to live a good life, and be peaceful and happy.

You will remember also predictions by later prophets. "Unto us a child is born." (Isaiah 9:6)  
"There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse." (Isaiah 11:1) "And thou, Bethlehem in the land of Judah." (Micah

5:2) And many more. And now, last of the long line of prophets and forerunners of the Lord, has come John the Baptist. But we must not linger long in the home of John the Baptist. The time of fulfillment is at hand, and we must hasten on to Bethlehem. The predictions of the prophets and the promises to Abraham are about to be fulfilled.

Why do I find on the maps so few towns in the part of Judea that is near to the Dead Sea? This part of the country is a desert. It is made of rock and of hard chalky soil in which little that is green can grow. There are steep cliffs and deep, wild gorges. Still, in the rainy winter there were a good many flowers on these hills. Sheep could find pasture, and the wild bees could find honey to lay up in their combs in cracks and caves among the rocks. You remember how David used to keep his father's sheep on the hills near Bethlehem, and there were shepherds in these same fields on Christmas night. And it was among these wild hills and valleys further south that David fled from Saul. At the time that John was born there were many hermits living in this wilderness keeping away from the world. John went and lived in the desert. His hair was long like all the Nazarites. Perhaps already he wore the robe of coarse camel's-hair cloth with the leather belt. He ate the brown locusts as the poor Arabs do, salted and dried, or stewed with butter. And he found the wild honey in the rocks. So he lived as a young man, until the time came, and he was sent to preach repentance and to baptize.

1. Who first spoke John the Baptist's name? Who wrote it? Where was John born? What was his father's name? his mother's?
2. When did Zacharias become dumb? When did his speech return? What were his first words? Were they really his words?
3. What enemies did the Lord come to save us from? What beautiful thing is the Lord's coming compared to?
4. Where did John make his home? How was he by and by to help in the Lord's work?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

From the time when people first disobeyed the Lord and followed instead what seemed good to them, there were predictions of the coming of a Savior. The predictions were general at first, but became more clear and definite as the time drew near. Our study of Genesis has shown us that it is not only a verse here and there in the Old Testament which foretells the Lord's coming, but that all Scripture in its deepest sense is about Him. (A. 9389, 2523) The Lord said that Moses wrote about Him, and He opened in Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms things concerning Himself. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." He was the Word made flesh. The foretelling of the Lord's life by Divine inspiration so fully in the Old Testament Scriptures, was a strength to angels and men during the long ages before He came; it was a needed help to the Lord in living His Divine life and doing His saving work; and it makes the Old Testament for us a store of deeper knowledge of the Lord's life which does not appear in the letter of the Gospels.

What spiritual condition was represented by the dumbness of Zacharias after hearing the message of the angel? His disbelief, which made it impossible for him to acknowledge the Lord's goodness and praise Him for it. But see what his first words were when the gift of speech returned. The spiritual obstruction had also been removed. (E. 455; A. 6988)

Circumcision in the Jewish Church had the same use and meaning as baptism in the Christian Church. Both ceremonies represent the putting away of what is evil from the mind and life. "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, . . . to love the Lord." (Deuteronomy 30:6; T. 674, 675)

Were the words of thanksgiving that Zacharias spoke, his own words? What is meant by the statement that he was filled with the Holy Ghost or Spirit? Remember how David said, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue." (2 Samuel 23:2) The Lord's spirit moved their minds and tongues and the words they spoke at these times were the Lord's words and not their own. We call such words "inspired." The whole of the Scripture is inspired. (H. 254; A. 1886, 1887)

The Lord was born in the family of David (Matthew 1:6; Luke 3:31), but what deeper thought is in the saying that He raised up an horn of salvation in the house of David? He brought the real kingly power which David represented, the power of the Divine truth to save from all the enemies of evil feelings and false thoughts. (E. 316)

The "dayspring" is the dawn. Do you remember other places where the Lord's coming is called a dawn and sunrise? (2 Samuel 23:4; Isaiah 9:1-3; John 21:3, 4) The brightening light, the new warmth, the awakening of the world to life are a lovely picture of the Lord's coming to reveal His truth and love anew and to give new life. (A. 2405, 2780)

When you remember what John the Baptist's work was, the teaching of repentance, the cutting off of the evils of self-indulgence, do you see any appropriateness in his living in the desert? What part of the story of Israel represents a similar spiritual experience? What experience of the Lord's own life is associated with the wilderness? (A. 2708; R. 546)

## Lesson 39

### Luke 2:1-20: Birth of the Lord

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

There is a happy spirit at Christmas time. We feel it in church as we hear the Christmas story and sing our Christmas songs. We feel it at home as we get ready the presents we are to give, and as we see and smell the Christmas tree. We feel it as we walk in the street and see the many people hurrying home with bundles, or look in at the lighted windows and see companies of happy children. The Christmas spirit takes us back to the first Christmas long ago in Bethlehem, when the baby Lord was born and His mother wrapped Him in soft baby clothes and laid Him in a manger, one of the little boxes where the animals have their food. It seems to be the happiness of that Christmas that we still feel.

We must go to Bethlehem to be with those who first learn of the Lord's coming and who are first to welcome Him. Why are these crowds in the streets of the town, so that travelers coming from a distance can find no room, not even in the inn where travelers usually stay? Some coming from Galilee must find a resting place where sheep and cattle are sheltered, in a sort of cave in the hillside. Here the Holy Child was born. We can still go to the place, and around a silver star in the floor of the cave we read, in Latin words, "Here of the Virgin Mary Jesus Christ was born." Who were the first visitors who came to greet the baby Lord? How did they know when they had found Him that it was the Lord? Who had told them that the Lord was born and that all the world ought to be glad?

There were shepherds in the field near Bethlehem. The shepherds in that country live with their sheep in the fields, leading them about to the good pastures and to the watering places, and at night gathering them in some sheltered place and watching to protect them from wild animals or other harm. To the east from Bethlehem there were open pasture hills, and shepherds who had been leading their sheep about by day had now found shelter and were keeping watch over their flocks by night. You can imagine yourself with them there, the hills are dark, the bright stars overhead, the sheep nestling close together. Then an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. He told them that the Lord was born, a little child in Bethlehem. "This shall be a sign unto you," he said; "ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling

clothes, lying in a manger." Then many angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Then the angels were gone, and the brightness, and it was dark again on the hills; but the happy spirit was with the shepherds still.

"Let us go to Bethlehem," they said; and they started together to go to see the baby Lord. They went quickly across the hills and came to the little town. They found the place, and the Holy Child wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. They remembered the sign, and they knew that it was the Lord. They told to everyone what they had heard from heaven. All that heard it wondered, and Mary kept the sayings in her heart. The holy Christmas spirit was there as the shepherds stood about the manger and saw the baby Lord. The same happy spirit which was with the angels, and with the shepherds in the field, and about the little child in Bethlehem is with us still at Christmas time.

All who can, say with me the verses beginning, "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field." (Luke 2:8-20)

## **Junior**

We read and recite again today the story of the Lord's birth in Bethlehem. First let us read it slowly and talk about it as we go, and then we will read the whole together without interruption.

Caesar Augustus - the great Emperor at Rome, who had so much of the world under his rule. The taxing was an enrolling as a basis for taxation and military service in all countries under Roman rule. The Jews according to their ancient custom were enrolled by families and tribes, each in his old family town. It was this that brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem from Nazareth where they had been living, for they were of the family of David, and Bethlehem was David's town. This also perhaps explains why there was no room for them in the inn, for so many others had come on the same errand, and the place where travelers rested was full. The Lord was born, a Holy Child, and Mary wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger.

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field," in the pasture country near to Bethlehem, which lay to the eastward of the little town. Tell me what you can about the shepherds in that land and their life with the sheep. You learn some things from the story of David who kept the sheep on these same hills of Bethlehem. You remember how he had his shepherd's staff and bag and his sling; how he once saved the sheep from a lion and a bear (1 Samuel 17:34, 35, 40); and how at night he watched the stars, and said in a Psalm, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" (Psalm 8:3) You learn more about the shepherds from John 10, where the Lord tells about the good and bad shepherds, how each sheep has its name, and they know the shepherd's voice; how the shepherd goes before them and the sheep follow; how he protects them from wolves, and the good shepherd ever giveth his life for the sheep. So you think of the shepherds in the field near Bethlehem, keeping watch over their flock by night, when the angel came with brightness and told them good tidings of great joy. What were the tidings? What was the sign? What were the words of the multitude of the heavenly host?

Then you go with the shepherds as they hasten to Bethlehem. Today in Bethlehem you go into a cave beneath a little church, and there in the pavement of the floor you see a star and the words in Latin, "Here of the Virgin Mary Jesus Christ was born." None of these things were there then, just

a rude place, perhaps a cave in the hillside, for such caves were often used for shelter for animals, and even for dwellings. It was a very holy place where the Child was lying in His rude bed, the shepherds telling the tidings of joy which they had heard from the angels, the mother Mary laying up the sayings in her heart.

Does it seem to you sad that when the Lord came into the world there were so few who knew it and so few to welcome Him? Does even the crowded inn suggest how full the minds of people were of worldly and evil things, with small place for the Lord? As the Lord once said, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man bath not where to lay His head." But the angels rejoiced, and they found some simple people to share their joy. Why were they so glad? Who did they say He was Who had been born?

1. Where was Mary's home when the angel foretold to her the birth of the Lord? Why were Mary and Joseph afterwards in Bethlehem?
2. Where was the Lord laid on the first Christmas night? Why?
3. Tell me some of the prophecies of the Lord's coming, which had given the angels hope. With whom did the angels share their joy when the Lord was born?
4. Who came to see the Lord that night? By what sign did they know Him?
5. What words did the shepherds hear from the multitude of the heavenly host?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

How much more truly the angels knew the meaning of the Lord's coming than anyone on earth! Who did they say He was? What did they say would be the effect of His coming, in heaven and on earth? Who did they say would share the joy of His coming? But what did the world know about His coming? And how little did it care! What is represented by the fact that Caesar was enrolling all the world? What by the fact there was no room in the inn? (Luke 9:58) What by the coming in the night? (Luke 2:8; Isaiah 60:2) But what brighter thought is suggested by the shepherds keeping watch at night?

The shepherds keeping watch by night represent also all who in that dark time were cherishing affections of innocence and charity which kept them near to heaven and ready for the coming of the Lord. We thought of the shepherds and of others who were waiting for the Lord when we read in Malachi of those that feared the Lord speaking often one to another. The meaning is not limited to one time and place. Always the cherishing of affections of innocence and charity keeps us near to heaven and open to the coming of the Lord. As compared with the wise men, the shepherds represent those who are drawn to the Lord more by innocent affection, and the wise men those who are led more by the light of truth.

You will know that the place of the Lord's birth is representative of the state in which He was born. Bethlehem of Judea. Judah or Judea was always representative of states of holy love, and Bethlehem, the town of Benjamin's birth and David's home, represents a state of holy perception belonging to this love. "That the Lord was born there, and not elsewhere, was because He alone

was born a spiritual celestial man, but all others natural with the faculty, or ability, that by regeneration from the Lord they may be made either celestial or spiritual." (A. 4549) We cannot fully understand what is meant by a spiritual celestial man. In speaking of Benjamin, Swedenborg says, that the quality which he represented, the spiritual of the celestial, cannot be described to the apprehension, but that in heaven the quality appears as in clear day. (A. 5411) We can, at least notice the meaning of the name Bethlehem, "house of bread," and see that it was a fitting birthplace for the Lord, who was the living bread which came down from heaven, that men might eat and not die.

There is beautiful meaning in all particulars of the story. Let someone find and read the passage in E. 706, which begins with the words, "If it had pleased the Lord, He might have been born in a most splendid palace," which goes on to show that such a birth would not have been truly representative of the spirit of His coming. Notice in particular the swaddling clothes and the manger which the angels gave to the shepherds as a sign, and which evidently to them were full of deep significance. In general they bore witness to the gentleness of the Lord's coming, His Divine accommodation to the humble states of men. There was nothing terrible, nothing unapproachable, nothing to keep from Him the sick, the sinful, or the children. The swaddling clothes in particular represent the accommodation of His truth, the manger the accommodation of His love. All through the Gospel story the Lord's garments are emblems of the words in which He gave expression to His love. The swaddling clothes of the little Child represent the simplest expressions, such as He Himself could give as a child, and such as children and those of simple and childlike hearts can understand. He spoke in human language; He clothed His truth in parables. The manger was the place where gentle animals found their food, and these animals represent gentle, useful affections of human hearts. The Lord was laid in the manger, because He came to feed and strengthen every innocent gentle affection. More strictly, the manger shows the mercy in which the Lord brought the Divine goodness, the food of life, within reach of all simple good affections, and the swaddling clothes show the mercy in which He brought the Divine truth to the understanding of the children and of all childlike minds. We may believe that these signs of Divine humility were to the angels a revelation of mercy. They saw in them assurance of the accomplishment of the Divine saving work. (E. 706)

The reverent attitude which the church should keep and which every mind should keep toward the Lord, toward His Divine birth and His Divine mission, hoping always for fuller understanding of them, is suggested by Mary's keeping the words of the shepherds and pondering them in her heart. See also Luke 2:51.

## **Lesson 40**

### **Luke 2:21-39: Simeon and Anna**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

We once imagined ourselves in the courts of the temple at Jerusalem, at the hour of morning or evening prayer. The great building of marble and gold stood on the top of the hill, with the altar

before the door. Steps led down to a pavement at a lower level, called the court of Israel. Other steps under a beautiful gateway led from this to the court of the women; and still beyond was the court of the Gentiles, which reached to the brow of the city wall. At the hour of prayer there were many worshipers in the courts.

Many other duties brought people to the temple. Often fathers and mothers with little children in their arms came to the great gate that led up from the court of the women. They came to present the children to the Lord, to confess that they were the Lord's children and to thank Him that He had given them to their care. It was the law of Israel that every first born child, if a boy, should be the Lord's. They were not to be offered as a sacrifice, as was common among heathen people, and they were not all needed to serve, like Samuel, at the temple, for the Levites were appointed for that work; but the parents must confess that the children were the Lord's and must pay the ransom money, five silver shekels, as large as fifty cent pieces. (Numbers 18:16)

The ransom might be paid to any priest, not necessarily in the temple. But there was another duty which could be done only in the temple. On some day (at least forty days after the birth of a boy, or at least eighty days after the birth of a girl) the mother must come from her home and bring to the Lord an offering of a lamb and a turtledove or a young pigeon. "And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons." (Leviticus 12) The mother gave these offerings to the priest at the gate in the temple courts. They were signs of the innocent, humble, grateful feeling she should have in being blessed by the Lord with a little child.

The Lord was born in Bethlehem on Christmas night, and on the eighth day when they came together to give Him a name, He was called Jesus, which means Savior, the name that had been given by the angel who came to Mary before the Lord was born. And now forty days or more after Christmas they brought Him to Jerusalem and stood at the great gate in the temple courts. If it is true that every little child is the Lord's, it is still more true of the Holy Child that had been given to Mary and Joseph's care. And they had brought the pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons as the mother's offering, for they were poor. As they came into the temple an old man named Simeon met them, and he took the child Jesus in his arms and blessed God. Anna too, a good woman now about eighty-four years old, came in at the same time and gave thanks. How little Mary and Joseph could give thanks as they should! Simeon and Anna were inspired to speak grateful words for them and for us all because the Lord had come. Read the story and what Simeon and Anna said.

1. Why was the name Jesus given to the Lord? What does the name mean?
2. When did the Lord first come to the temple at Jerusalem? Why was He brought there as a little child?
3. What offerings did Mary make? Was she rich or poor in worldly means? How do her offerings show it?
4. Who met Mary and Joseph in the temple and gave thanks for the coming of the Lord?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Long before the days of the Jews and Abraham, wise, good people used to sanctify their first born children to the Lord, but afterwards the real meaning of this sanctifying was forgotten and children were sometimes sacrificed as offerings. You remember that the Lord would not let Abraham sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22:1-12), and He gave laws to the people, that instead of sacrificing their children they should confess that they were the Lord's and pay a ransom. (A. 8080) We ought to feel that all little children are the Lord's, and that it is a wonderful blessing and privilege if we are allowed to help the Lord in caring for them. (Psalm 127:3; Matthew 18:5)

The things that are said in the Bible about little children apply also to the new development of innocent and holy life, which, as the Lord told Nicodemus, is born from above. (John 3:1-13) We have thought of these children of spiritual life when we have read how the Lord loves and blesses little children and charges us not to despise them nor offend them. It is very necessary that we shall remember that each newly developed faculty and ability is the Lord's and consecrate it to Him. It is natural to feel some pride in any new attainment, and we have a little struggle with ourselves before we feel humble and can use it wholly as the Lord's. This time of effort to come into the right feeling about any new power, is represented by the forty or eighty days of the mother's purification. Forty is a number especially associated with states of temptation. You remember the forty days and nights of rain which caused the flood (Genesis 7:12), the forty years wanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 8:2-4), and the Lord's temptation of forty days. (Matthew 4:1, 2; A. 730; E. 633, 725)

The mother's offerings after the forty or eighty days represent the innocent feelings with which we should enjoy and use the Lord's gifts after selfish feelings in regard to them have been overcome. Doves and lambs both represent what is innocent, lambs especially represent innocent feelings and doves innocent thoughts. The dove for a sin offering is the humble, repentant thought in regard to the selfishness which we at first felt; the lamb for a burnt offering is the grateful, humble sense that the new gift is the Lord's. It was a beautiful provision of the law that if the mother was too poor to bring the lamb, she might bring a second dove. If one cannot as yet feel, as he should, that the new ability is wholly the Lord's, he can at least know that it is so, and confess it, and hope to feel it. This is the dove in place of the lamb. (A. 10132; E. 314)

Simeon and Anna gave thanks for all of us, for the Lord's coming. Simeon's words expressed especially gladness of the understanding ("Mine eyes have seen") on account of the new truth that the Lord brought with power to save from evil, and to enlighten ignorance, and to search, as with a sharp sword, the lives not only of Mary, but of all disciples who were, in a deeper sense, His mother and brethren. Anna's words express especially gladness of heart, because of the Lord's redeeming power. (A. 10574)

## **Lesson 41**

### **Luke 2:40-52: Childhood of the Lord**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

Every one of the children can tell me where the Lord was born. In Bethlehem. And you can show me the town on the map, just a little south from Jerusalem. Mary and Joseph no doubt went from Bethlehem when they took the Child Jesus to present Him in the temple. If we had only the story in Luke, we should suppose that they went immediately from Jerusalem to Nazareth, the little town of Galilee, which had been Mary and Joseph's home (Luke 2:39), but from Matthew, it seems that they first went back to Bethlehem, and after the visit of the wise men, went into Egypt until the death of Herod. Then they came back from Egypt and were told by the angel to go to the old home in Galilee.

I wish you could climb with me up the steep path from the great plain of Esdraelon to the little meadow with the circle of hills about it, where Nazareth is. The low stone houses of the town, with flat, earthen roofs and little domes, nestle together on the sunny hillside at the head of the meadow. Near by is the springhouse where we would stop for a drink of water, and where we should see the girls from the town washing wool and filling their water jars. The Lord often drank from this spring. Then we would walk through the narrow streets of the town and look into some of the houses and see the little bare rooms with earthen floors. We should hear the millstones as the women grind the meal for making bread. The Lord lived in such a home. We would go through the streets of little shops where shoemakers are busy and workmen of other trades. Here a carpenter is at work, and boys sit on the floor helping him. This was Joseph's trade, and the Lord Himself was known as "the carpenter."

Then we would leave the houses and follow one of the paths up to the top of the hill behind the town. In places the paths are deeply worn in the soft rock. How many, many feet must have passed over them! The Lord Himself must often have walked here. And we would sit down on top of the hill and look at the beautiful view, the great green plain and the hills of Samaria to the south, the blue water of the Mediterranean to the west, and range upon range of hills and mountains in the north. The Lord must often have looked upon this view, for Nazareth was His home from when He was a very little boy until He was about thirty years old. We are told very little about the Lord's life as a boy in Nazareth. "The Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him." He was subject to Mary and Joseph. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." And we know that the Child Jesus was truthful and kind and useful, for He has told us that children ought to be so. It will many times be a help to you when the thought of doing wrong comes to your mind, to think that the Lord as a little Child in Nazareth bravely put such thoughts away, and did what was right.

We are told of one thing that happened when the Lord was twelve years old. It was springtime, when the meadows were green and the hills were bright with flowers. A company of friends were journeying from Nazareth to Jerusalem to the Passover, the great feast of the year, and the Lord was going with them. Can you tell me when the first Passover was kept? On the night that the

children of Israel came out of Egypt; and it was kept each year at Jerusalem in memory of the deliverance. Pilgrims came at that season from all parts of the country and from foreign lands. The company from Nazareth were among them. It was a wonderful experience for the children who were old enough to go for the first time to the Passover. It was still more wonderful and holy to the Lord, for when He saw the beautiful city and the great temple and the ceremonies of the feast, He saw a holy meaning in all these things, which no one else knew.

The celebration lasted for some days, but when the night of the special feast was over the people began to scatter to their homes. The friends from Nazareth drew off a little from the confusion of the crowded city, and stopped in some quiet place to make ready for the journey home. You know what happened, how the Lord was not with them, how Mary and Joseph turned back to Jerusalem, seeking Him, and how, after three days of sad searching, they found Him in the temple. And He went back with Mary and Joseph to Nazareth. Now let us read the story.

1. Where is Nazareth? When is it first mentioned in the Gospel story? When did it become the Lord's home?
2. What was the Passover? At what season was it kept?
3. What was the reason of the visit to Jerusalem when the Lord was twelve years old? What did He say when they found Him in the temple? 4. What is the Father's business?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

It often seems that it would be a help to us if we might know more about the Lord's life in Nazareth. Much more is told us in the Old Testament, for the whole Bible is about the Lord. (John 5:39; Luke 24:27, 44) It is true that the Old Testament tells little about the outward circumstances of the Lord's life. The Gospels tell all of these things that we need to know, and we can see the town of Nazareth and the paths where the Lord walked, and feel how real the story is. But the Old Testament tells what is much more interesting and important to know, the inner experiences, the inner thoughts and feelings, of the Lord's life. The stories of Abraham and Joseph and Samuel tell in a deeper sense about Him. Abraham especially represents the Lord in His childhood.

Abraham's journeys describe the Lord's progress as a child in knowledge and intelligence. Abraham's wars describe the terrible conflicts with evil thoughts and feelings and evil spirits, that the Lord endured even as a little child, so that He might be able to help us. You will greatly enjoy reading parts of A. 1458, 1460, 1461, 1673, 1690, 1705.

The question which the Lord asked when Mary and Joseph found Him in the temple means a great deal to every growing boy and girl. "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" We are old enough to realize that the Lord is our Father and that He has made us as His children in His image and likeness, and that He has work for each one of us to do, some little part of His great work of making people better and happier. There is often a choice between something that will please ourselves and something that we know the Lord, wishes us to do. It is a help at such times to say, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" (E. 430)

If we know that the Lord is our Father and we are trying to do His work, ought it to make us less obedient to our natural parents, or impatient with the humble, narrow circumstances of our life, or neglectful of natural duties? What was the Lord's example? "And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." We must be obedient to natural parents and patient with narrow circumstances and faithful in natural duties. In such patience and faithfulness we do the Father's business best.

## Lesson 42

### Luke 3:1-23: Baptism of the Lord

#### THE STORY

##### Primary and Junior

"John the son of Zacharias." These names sound familiar. They bring pictures to my mind. I seem to see an old priest burning incense in the temple and an angel speaking to him. Who is it? And what is the angel saying? And now I see a home in a city among the hills of Judea, and the neighbors have come together to name a child, and the father writes the name on a tablet. Whose home is it? What has the father written? And now I am in the desert that borders the Dead Sea and the lower Jordan on the west. There are bare, dry hillsides and deep, rough gorges, but still a few flowers, and I seem to hear the hum of wild bees among the rocks and the chirping of big brown locusts. There were hermits living in this lonesome country, and one of them we know. He was about thirty years old. He had lived as a Nazarite: what does that mean? He wore a cloak of coarse camel's-hair cloth held by a leather belt. He was a stern, brave man of the deserts, and the time had come for him to do his work of making ready the people for the Lord.

He came now to the river Jordan, which flows in its deep channel down the eastern border of the land. The place was perhaps near the ford of the river some little way south of the Sea of Galilee, where many people were passing. Sometimes the trees come close and overhang the stream, but there are some open places with a beach of stones and a bank above where many people could sit and stand. They were coming from all sides. There were Pharisees and others from Judea: that was the part of the country from Mount Carmel southward, including Jerusalem and Bethlehem and Hebron. The old Herod was no longer king in Jerusalem, for he was dead. Judea was ruled by a governor, Pontius Pilate, who was sent by the emperor, Tiberius Caesar, who lived at Rome. And in Jerusalem the high priest Caiaphas lived and his father-in-law, Annas, who had been high priest and who still had great power. (John 18:13) Other people came from the northern hills near Nazareth, and from the shore of the little sea. That northern district was Galilee. Herod was the ruler, a son of the old king Herod. He ruled also the region east of Jordan, from the Sea of Galilee southward. This was called the Peraea, "the beyond." Philip, another son of the old king Herod, ruled the country east of the Sea of Galilee and northward to Mount Hermon. Caesarea Philippi, at the springs of the Jordan, had its name from him. And another governor ruled the district of Abilene, still further north in the mountains. People were coming from every part of the land.

John preached repentance. He told the people that they must stop doing the wrong things that they had been doing. He told them that they must share what they had with those who were in

need. The publicans, the tax gatherers, must not take more than was right. The soldiers must do violence to no man and must be content with their wages. Those who were sorry for their sins and resolved to do better were baptized by John in the river, and the washing was a sign that they were making their lives clean. John told them that the Lord was coming with much greater power than his. He told them that the Lord would separate the good from the bad, as the farmer separates the grain from the chaff, when it has been trodden out on the smooth spot of the earth which is called the threshing floor and is thrown by the big fan or shovel into the wind.

It was not far to Tiberias where Herod lived, a town which he had just built by the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Herod heard of John, but he was a bad man like his father. The Lord called him a fox, for he was crafty; and the wife whom he had married was worse than he. She was the wife of a brother Philip, not the Philip who ruled in the north, but a rich brother who lived in Jerusalem. John told Herod that he had done wrong, and the king was angry and shut up John in the castle of Machaerus, on the mountains east of the Dead Sea; and you know how by and by he sent and beheaded John in the prison. (Matthew 14:3-12)

And now one day as John was teaching and baptizing, the Lord came from Nazareth and was baptized. And do you know what beautiful sign John saw and what words he heard that made him sure that it was the Lord? Let us stand with the people by the river while we read the story.

1. Who was ruler of Judea at the time of our lesson? Where did he live? Who was ruler of Galilee? Where did he live?
2. What other name do we know for John the son of Zacharias? Where was he born? Where did he live as a young man? Where did he do his public work? Where did he die? About how old was he?
3. What did John tell the publicans to do? the soldiers?
4. What sign did John see when the Lord was baptized? What did it mean?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

What form of the name Esaias is more familiar? Where is the prophecy about making straight the way of the Lord? What crooked things must be straightened? What low things must be raised? What high things must be made low in us to prepare for the Lord? (A.3527)

The washing of baptism pictured the deeper work that John was doing. There was a special reason for his baptizing in the Jordan. When we learn what is right from any source and correct our lives by it, it is a kind of washing; but the Jordan was the sacred stream at the entrance of the Holy Land, and it represents the Lord's commandments and His teaching of what is right. There is a power in these to overcome evil, which no other teaching has. This was why Naaman must wash in the Jordan and not in some other stream. (2 Kings 5:12, 13) John's baptism represented a cleansing of outward actions, and his teaching was of that kind, but this would prepare for cleansing of the inner thoughts and inmost feelings, which is meant by baptism with the Holy Spirit and with fire. (A.4255; T. 144)

The Jews prided themselves on being children of Abraham. There was no virtue in that; but to be children of Abraham in a deeper sense means to be children of the Lord and to live in heaven. John said that God could raise up such children from the stones. It means that a heavenly character would grow up from the simple facts of right and wrong which John was teaching, with those who would take them to heart. (E. 724)

If baptism represents putting away evil and repenting, why did the Lord need to be baptized? He never did anything wrong, but all the temptations to do wrong which come to men came to Him and with much greater power. He had to resist these, and to explore them and condemn them by the rule of the Commandments. He spoke of this as His baptism, and it was represented by His baptism in the Jordan. (Luke 12:50; A. 10239)

When we repent of any wrong thing the way is opened wider between us and heaven, and more of heavenly innocence can come down into our lives. As the Lord overcame each temptation to do wrong, the perfect Divine innocence came more fully into His human life. This was represented by the opening of heaven after His baptism, and the descent of the dove upon Him. (L. 19)

The genealogy in this chapter of Luke and that in Matthew 1 tell something of the history of the family into which the Lord was born. We know also that the Old Testament characters represent elements in every regenerating soul, and the Old Testament story is the story of regeneration. As applied to the Lord, it is the story of His glorification. This thought shows a meaning in these genealogies in Matthew and in Luke and their relation to each other. They are given in reverse order. That in Matthew, from Abraham to Joseph, following the Old

Testament story, represents the formation step by step of the humanity of our Lord to be the tabernacle of the Divine. This in Luke, from Joseph to Abraham and to God, represents the filling of humanity with the Divine as it was prepared to receive it. This seems also to account for the position of the genealogy in Luke, not at the beginning of the story, but in connection with the descent of the Holy Spirit at the baptism of the Lord. See Matthew's Gospel, J. Worcester, pages 5-31.

## **Lesson 43**

### **Luke 4: In the Synagogue at Nazareth**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

We have days when things go hard. The world may be beautiful and friends may be kind, but they do not seem so to us. The trouble is that evil spirits are awakening the bad feelings and bad thoughts in us, and happy things are shut out. The conflict between wrong things and good things in us is called temptation; while it lasts we are in a wilderness. Such times came also to the Lord, and much harder temptations than come to us for we have Him to help us, but He was alone and all the evil powers of earth and hell were joined against Him. There was such a time of temptation soon after the Lord was baptized by John at the Jordan. The wilderness of Judea was near by, and we may well believe that the Lord in His temptation turned aside among the barren hills, which

would seem to picture the unhappy state of mind. A weather-beaten cliff, Mount Karantel, behind the ruins of old Jericho, has its name (Karantel or Quarantana means forty) from this story of the Lord's temptations, and many hermits have lived in its caves. Read the story of the temptations and notice especially how the Lord answered every suggestion of the tempter with a Divine commandment from the Bible. This is what we should do whenever a suggestion to do wrong comes. We should not delay and reason about it; we grow weaker every moment if we do. We should say, No, shortly and decidedly and repeat the Lord's commandment which forbids the wrong thing, for there is power in the commandments to send evil spirits away and to bring angels near.

A long time had passed since the baptism and temptation, probably more than a year, and the Lord had taught and done many wonderful works in Galilee and Samaria and Judea. (John 1-5) He came again to Nazareth, which had been his home for many years. On the Sabbath day He went with the people to the synagogue. It was their church, a large plain building, probably with a flat roof held up by pillars. There were no seats, but the men sat on the floor, some of the great men perhaps on rugs or cushions. The women no doubt were by themselves, perhaps in the gallery. There was a platform with a desk, and behind it the sacred place where the books of the Bible were kept. Each book was written in columns on a long strip of parchment, with a handle at either end. As it was read the parchment was unrolled from one handle and rolled up on the other. There was prayer and singing in the service, and someone was asked by those in charge to read from the Scriptures the lesson appointed for the day.

On this day the Lord was asked to read. The lesson was from the Book of Isaiah, a beautiful prophecy about Himself and the works of Divine mercy which He came to do. When He had read it, the scroll was rolled up and given to the keeper to put back in its place, and the Lord sat down on the platform as was usual in teaching, and began to speak to the people about the words that had been read. Remember who the people were in the synagogue: those who had been the Lord's neighbors for many years, who had seen Him as a child, and as a man working with the carpenters. At first they were touched by the kindness of His words; but when they thought that one who had lived among them and had been their neighbor now claimed to be working and speaking from the Divine Spirit, in other words, that He was the Heavenly Father living with them, then they were angry.

The Lord told them that it had been the same in the old days. The prophet Elijah was not safe among his own people, but must flee to the house of the poor widow at Zarephath or Sarepta on the seashore between Tyre and Sidon. No lepers from his own people came to the prophet Elisha for healing, but Naaman a stranger from Damascus. So those who should have known and loved the Lord best did not love Him, but simple, Gentile people in other places loved Him more. He did not live any more in Nazareth, but made His home in Capernaum, a busy city of fishermen and farmers and traders by the shore of the Sea of Galilee. "And He preached in the synagogues of Galilee."

1. What wilderness do we think of when we read the story of the Lord's temptations? What does it suggest besides a natural wilderness?
2. What three temptations are mentioned in our lesson?
3. How ought we to answer the tempter?

4. When did we first hear of Nazareth? When did it become the Lord's home? How long was it His home? Where did the Lord live after leaving Nazareth?
5. What prophecy did the Lord read in Nazareth? and what did He say about its fulfillment?
6. Who was Elijah? Where was Sarepta? Who was Naaman?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Do you remember other times when the wilderness is associated with temptations? Other times when the number forty is associated with temptations? (Genesis 7:12; Deuteronomy 8:2-4; A. 730, 8098; E. 633)

What words in this story of temptation imply that it was not the only time of temptation which came to the Lord? (Verse 13) What other times of temptation do the Gospels tell us of? (John 6:15; Matthew 26:36-45; 27:46; see also Isaiah 53.) Read of the Lord's temptations in A. 1444; E. 730. We ought to be brave in our little trials which are almost nothing compared with His; and He gives us what help we need.

The temptation to make the stones His bread is the temptation to be discouraged, to give up the effort for heavenly things, and to be content with what is naturally pleasant and easy. The temptation to rule all kingdoms of the earth is the same which makes us wish to be great and to have our own way. The mountain is the mountain of self-love. The temptation of the pinnacle of the temple is the desire to be saved by the Divine power without effort on our part. Jerusalem and the temple suggest intellectual pride, and the assumption of superiority on account of holy things. The story of the temptations describes, as in a parable, many deep and severe trials of the Lord's life, which the disciples could not understand and which we as yet know little of. (A. 1690; E. 617)

Read verse 18 and Isaiah 61:1, and think what is meant by preaching to the poor (Matthew 5:3); by healing the broken-hearted (Psalm 51:17); by preaching deliverance to the captives (John 8:34); by restoring sight to the blind (John 9:39-41; Psalm 119:18). Does the acceptable year of the Lord mean that He is more ready to help us at one time than another, or that He can help us more when we are in certain states; when we are humble and obedient? (Isaiah 55:6, 7)

Tell me about Elijah and the widow; about Elisha and Naaman. It is true still, as it was in the days of the prophets and at the Lord's coming that many persons who know little about Him, even those in heathen lands, love Him more and are more ready for heaven than some who call themselves Christians. (H. 324; A. 4844, 9198; E. 475)

## **Lesson 44**

### **Luke 5: Call of the Disciples**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

Watch me now and see how soon you can tell what I am drawing? An ear? An oyster shell? No, the Sea of Galilee. People long ago thought it looked like a musical instrument that they used, and that was the reason of its old name, Chinneroth or Gennesaret. (Kinnor, a lute.) What is this river?

What towns shall I put down near the shore? I wish we could walk along the shore at the northwestern part of the sea where the meadow of Gennesaret comes to the water, with just a little beach of shells and sand between. We would look out over the blue lake and see a white sail or two between us and the farther shore. Once there were many fishing boats sailing or lying near the beach. Turning about we should see the meadows now grown up with tall thistles, but once cultivated and filled with rich gardens and orchards. Beyond the meadow is the line of rocky hills which keep off the cold wind. At the northern corner of the plain, where the cliff comes down to the water, we believe that Capernaum stood, where the Lord made His home after He left Nazareth.

He walked along this same shore, and saw the water, the meadow, the hills; but there were many people then where it is lonely now, farmers in the fields, traders passing with loaded camels and stopping at the custom house to pay taxes, fishermen fishing from the shore or washing or mending nets on the beach or in the boats as they lay at anchor. The boats had three-cornered sails, one side fastened to a yard which was drawn to the top of the mast, the opposite corner made fast to the boat. One boat belonged to Simon and Andrew, and another boat near by belonged to James and John and their father Zebedee. Had either of these men ever seen the Lord? Some at least had seen Him at the Jordan where John baptized, and they had been with Him at Cana and in Judea and at Jacob's well. The time had now come for them to leave their boats and nets and to go with Him and be His faithful disciples. He had come to call them. Instead of drawing up the fishes from the natural water they would help to lift people from merely worldly pleasures and cares into a heavenly state. But first He gave them a sign that His power would be with them to make their work succeed. Read verses 1-11. Not long after, the Lord walked again by the sea, and called Matthew to be a disciple. He was a collector of taxes, one of the publicans who were despised and hated by the Jews. Read verses 27-32.

Every day of the Lord's life was full of kindness, and the Gospels tell us only a few of His works of mercy. (John 20:30; 21:25) Do you know what leprosy was? A disease chiefly of the skin. It made the skin dead, either white or discolored, and it sometimes broke out in sores. It was called very unclean in the Jewish law, so that the lepers had to live away from other people and cry "Unclean!" to warn people away when they saw them coming. (Leviticus 13:38-46) Most people would not go near a leper, but the Lord put forth His hand and touched the leper and made him clean. The law said that one who was healed of leprosy should make a grateful offering to the Lord. (Leviticus 14:4, 10, 21, 22) The leper who was healed by the Lord's hand ought to make the same grateful offering. Read verses 12-16.

The Lord was in Capernaum, which was now His home. The multitude crowded into the courtyard of the house and about the doorway which led from the street. We think of the people looking up, perhaps to a balcony above the court, where the Lord was standing teaching, with

Pharisees and others sitting by Him listening. Some kind of light thatch was over the balcony to protect it from the sun, projecting from the flat, earthen roof which covered the house. There were people in the town who were very anxious to come to the Lord, for they had a friend sick with palsy or paralysis, who could not move. They knew that the Lord could heal him, and they came, four of them carrying the mat or light couch on which he lay.. But the crowd was about the door. They roof, perhaps by outside stairs, and uncovering the thatch they let the sick man down before the Lord. All the people were watching - and what did they see? Read verses 17-26.

1. At what other time was the disciples' net filled with fishes by the Sea of Galilee? Which of the Lord's disciples were fishermen?
2. Who was Matthew? Why do we remember his name so well? By what other name was he called?
3. What was leprosy? How were lepers treated? How did the Lord once treat a leper?
4. What is palsy? How was one sick of the palsy once brought to the Lord? What did the Lord say and do?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The sea in contrast with the upper air and sunshine represents the atmosphere of natural thoughts and interests. Fishes represent affections for natural things, especially for natural knowledge. One is a spiritual fisherman who lifts men up to higher interests; also one who loves to see in natural knowledge Divine and heavenly meaning, and who uses every natural experience in a way to contribute to heavenly life. (A. 3309, 10582; E. 513, 600; R. 405)

What is it spiritually to toil all night and catch nothing? (Verse 5; A. 10134) What is it to pray in the wilderness? (Verse 16)

The men who were called to be the Lord's disciples represent several elements in the church and in Christian character. Peter represents faith in the Lord, and his brother Andrew obedience to what is right; both belong to the understanding. The companions of the understanding are the will and its loves. These are represented by the men in the other boat, partners with Simon. John represents the deepest love for the Lord, and James love for the neighbor. The Lord needs all of these. (A. Preface to Genesis 18; R. 768, 879; E. 821) Must we leave our homes and business to follow the Lord, or how ought we to forsake all for His sake?

Do you remember the healing of a leper described in the Old Testament? The disease was so unclean in the law because it represents a state of life that is very unheavenly. The skin represents the outmost things of conduct. These should be a true and living expression of heavenly affection in the heart, but if one is a hypocrite the skin is dead. This and other kinds of profanation, or mingling of good and evil, are represented by leprosy. The Lord heals our leprosy when He helps

us to make our life good and beautiful, a genuine expression of a heavenly affection within. (A. 6963; P. 231; E. 475)

The words which the Lord spoke to the man sick of the palsy teach very plainly that He did the miracles of physical healing to show us His power to make our spirits strong: "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins." The helpless state of this man sick of the palsy represents the helplessness which one is in when he knows that he has done wrong and thinks that he cannot be forgiven, that it is too late to begin again and do better. But it is never too late to make a new beginning with the Lord's help - never so long as we live on earth. The Lord thought of us too and our discouragements when He said, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." (Matthew 9:2) "Arise, ... go into thine house" - to the useful life intended for us here and to the home in heaven.

The Lord was in many ways setting aside the requirements of the Pharisees, for new garments and new bottles of Christian life and worship were needed to contain the Christian spirit. (A. 9212; T. 784)

## **Lesson 45**

### **Luke 6:1-26: Healing the Sick**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

We all know the Commandment to keep the Sabbath holy and to make it a day of rest. Do you know how the Pharisees kept the day? They said it was wrong to do any useful thing, to walk more than a very little way, or to carry more than a very little burden, or even to help sick people on the Sabbath. The Lord did not keep the Sabbath so. He taught and healed the people on that day. (John 5:9, 10; 9:14-16) One Sabbath the Lord and the disciples were walking through the grain fields. It was probably in the plain of Gennesaret, near Capernaum, where the wheat overhung the beaten path on either side. The Lord was teaching as they walked, and while they listened the disciples picked and ate the wheat, rubbing out the grains in their hands. The Pharisees said that they did wrong to do so much work on the Sabbath. The Lord said it was not a wrong use of the day; it is not wrong to make good use of holy things. He reminded them how David, when he fled from Saul, ate holy bread from the tabernacle and gave to his companions, and it was not wrong.

On another Sabbath the Lord was in a synagogue. We remember the synagogue in Nazareth, and that it was the Lord's custom to read and teach in the synagogues. A man was there whose right hand was shrunken and helpless; was it right to heal the man on the Sabbath day? What would the Pharisees say? What would the Lord say and do?

How should we keep the Sabbath? We must remember that it is a holy day, and must lay aside the hard work and rough plays which belong to other days, and must take time to learn about heavenly things. It is also a day to do and say kind things, to help the sick and to comfort wounded feelings.

From the plain of Gennesaret you can look up through a rocky valley to a mountain. It was perhaps in this mountain that the Lord spent a night in prayer. In the morning many of His disciples came to Him there, and He chose twelve who should be with Him more than the rest and help in His work. He called them apostles, which means, "sent forth," because he sent them with His message. How many of the twelve have we already learned about? Simon, Andrew, and John saw the Lord at the Jordan, and afterwards He called them from their nets by the sea of Galilee. James was called with his brother from the nets. Philip followed the Lord as He went from the Jordan to Galilee. Where was Philip's home? (John 1:44) Bartholomew, probably the same as Nathaniel, was called by Philip as he sat under the fig tree. Where was his home? (John 21:2) Matthew was called as he was collecting taxes at Capernaum. The rest of the twelve we shall learn more about by and by.

The Lord came down with the apostles from the top of the mountain to a level place. It was still on the mountain and perhaps was the little level which lies between the two tops which give the mountain its name, "Horns of Hattin." A multitude was gathering there from Judea and Jerusalem, from Tyre and Sidon on the seashore, and from beyond Jordan. (Matthew 4:25) The Lord sat down. The twelve were near Him and the multitude all about. In this peaceful spot above the world, open to the sunshine of heaven, He told how angels live and how Christian people ought to live. We call it the Sermon on the Mount. The first words of the sermon were the Ten Blessings. Let us say them and imagine that we are with the people on the mountain, listening to the Lord's own voice.

1. How did the Pharisees keep the Sabbath? How did the Lord keep the day? How ought we to keep it?
2. What happened one Sabbath in the grain fields? What happened one Sabbath in the synagogue?
3. Tell me of some other works of healing that the Lord did on the Sabbath day.
4. What does the name "apostles" mean? How many apostles did the Lord choose?
5. Who spoke the Blessings? Where were they spoken? Who heard them?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The disciples ate the ears of grain as they walked with the Lord. Were they eating in a spiritual way at the same time? They were listening to His teaching. And He was not giving them dry, lifeless food as the Pharisees did, but He taught them out of His own living experience. This is suggested by their eating the growing grain. Rubbing it in their hands pictures an active desire to find the application of the teaching to themselves and to put it into practice. Eating the grain was not wrong, and what the rubbing and eating of the grain represented was especially appropriate to the Sabbath. (T. 301-304) What is the truest kind of rest? Doing nothing? Doing kind, useful works, when selfish feelings are overcome and the mind is united and happy. This is the rest of heaven, which the Sabbath represents.

The Lord appealed to what David did. David represented the Lord, and those who were with him were like the Lord's disciples. His act in feeding them with holy bread was a sort of picture and prophecy of the Lord's feeding His disciples, and of His feeding us all with heavenly instruction on the Sabbath day.

The hands stand for the actions; so we are commanded to make our hands clean, and to bind the law upon our hands. The love which prompts the actions is especially represented by the strong right hand. In what condition was practical good life and love for good life among the Jews? It was withered like the right hand of the man in the synagogue; for they left good deeds out of the Sabbath day and out of religion and out of their idea of heaven. (A. 10061; E. 600.)

Why did the Lord choose twelve apostles? Because twelve represents heavenly people of all kinds, like the twelve tribes; and it represents all heavenly faculties in ourselves. Does anyone know what element of character Peter represents? Andrew? James? John? (A. 3858; E. 430)

What kind of state does a mountain represent? A state of interior, heavenly affection, of love to the Lord and one another. Why did the Lord speak the Blessings and the Christian law on the mountain? Contrast the giving of the Jewish law, when the people were forbidden to come near the mountain or even to touch it. (E. 405; A. 8797, 9422)

In studying verses 27-49 of this chapter, compare with the fuller version of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 to 7. Notice especially verse 38 of our chapter: "Give, and it shall be given unto you," and learn the lesson that abilities are given us to use and are increased by use. We are recipients of life from the Lord, and as we give forth to others the channels of life are opened for us to receive in larger measure. (A. 7984; H. 349)

Other lessons in regard to prayer and trust in the Lord's care, which in Matthew form a part of the Sermon on the Mount, have a close parallel in discourses of the Lord on the last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, recorded in Luke 11 and 12 - a beautiful reminder that Christian truth is intended not only for contemplation but to live by in the journey of life. It is to be talked of in the house and by the way, lying down and rising up.

## **Lesson 46**

### **Luke 7:1-23: At the Gate of Nain**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

The Lord had spoken the Blessings and the rest of the Sermon, on the mountain. Now He was coming down to the busy towns to help people to do what He had been teaching. There was sorrow in a house in Capernaum; it was the house of the centurion, the leader of soldiers who were stationed there. A century when full contained a hundred men. The centurion was not an Israelite, but was the representative of Herod and the Roman power. The servant of the centurion was sick and ready to die - sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. (Matthew 8:6)

The Lord had come down from the mountain and the centurion heard that He was in the city. He sent elders of the Jews, begging that the Lord would come and help him. Perhaps they doubted whether the Lord would go, because the centurion was not a Jew and the Jews despised those who were not of their own nation. The Lord loves everybody and He went with them. But while He was coming, the centurion sent asking that He would say the word only, for he was not worthy that the Lord should come under his roof. It showed great faith in the Lord's power. The centurion knew how he obeyed his commander, and how his soldiers and his servant obeyed him. In the same way he felt that the Lord could command and be obeyed, and so it was. Read verses 1-10.

Nain means "pleasant"; it was the name of a little city at the foot of the northern slope of Little Hermon; can you find it? If so you will see that it looked out over the broad green plain and across to Mount Tabor. A young man had died in Nain, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. A sad procession of friends was carrying the body from the widow's house. The company grew as they went, for in that country people showed their sympathy by turning and going with a funeral procession. They came to the city gate and were passing out to go to the tombs in the rocky hillside. Suddenly they stood still; some One had touched the bier and was speaking to the young man. The Lord had come from Capernaum to help the people of Nain and of other towns. He took the young man by the hand and said, "Young man, arise," and gave him again, to his mother. The people knew that God had done it. By the same power the Lord raises us all up into the other world when we die. Happy friends were about the young man at Nain, and the mother was glad to receive her son again. So loving friends welcome everyone when the Lord wakens him into the other world. Read verses 11-16.

The report of the Lord's works and teaching spread through all the country. Some faithful men heard it and brought word to their master and teacher who was in prison, in a strong fortress on the mountains, east of the Dead Sea. He had been put in prison because he taught that men must repent, and told Herod boldly that he had done wrong. Who was it that was in prison? Can some one tell me the whole story of his life, how he was promised by the angel in the temple, how he was born and received his name in the hill country of Judea, how he lived in the wilderness, and taught and baptized at the Jordan? When had John seen the Lord? And how did he know that it was the Lord? But as John was kept day after day in prison, we cannot wonder if he longed to be made more sure that it really was the Lord. He heard the report of His miracles and teaching, and he sent two of his disciples to ask, "Art thou He that should come? or look we for another?" They found the Lord in Galilee. He went on doing His works of mercy and sent the messengers back to tell John what they saw. He would feel how abundant and how good the Lord's works were, and would know that He was the promised One, God with us. Read verses 17-23.

1. What did the centurion ask of the Lord when He came again to Capernaum? What is a centurion?
2. What was the feeling of the Jews toward Gentiles? How did the Lord feel toward them?
3. Where was Nain? What miracle did the Lord do there? What did it picture which He does for us all?
4. Who heard in the prison about the Lord's miracles and teaching? What question did he send to ask the Lord? What answer did the Lord give?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

When are we in a mountain with the Lord? When does He come down with us into the plain and the busy city? What in us are represented by the sickness and death which needed the Lord's help?

The centurion's servant whom the Lord helped when He came down from the mountain, represents in a general way our ability to obey the Lord and carry out His teaching in practical life. Natural ability ministering to spiritual life is suggested by the Gentile centurion who loved the Jewish nation and built them a synagogue. The orderly discipline of all the faculties when each does its part, the lower obeying the higher and all obeying the Lord, is suggested by the centurion's words about authority and obedience. We ought all to desire such order and discipline, and we can attain it with the Lord's help. As He was ready to go to the centurion's house, so He is always ready to help us in the most external, everyday things of life, and to give power to make them strong, obedient servants.

Older children should learn about the change of death by which we pass to the spiritual world. (H. 449-452)

The young man lying dead is a picture of our spiritual selves when the heavenly life, especially the intelligence which is characteristic of a young man, is dead. This may be on account of ignorance, and there may still be some feeble desire for what is good and heavenly; this desire is represented by the young man's mother. Its weakness, because it has no real truth to guide and support it, is emphasized by her being called a widow. The Lord will restore heavenly intelligence and strength as He restored the young man to his mother. We must arise, must do our part to look up to and attain better things. (E. 899; A. 2401, 4881)

The Lord showed the messengers of John His loving works and bade them tell John about them, for he would feel that they were Divine. The Pharisees could not feel the Divinity in the Lord, because the evil in themselves closed their minds to Him; neither can we feel that He is Divine while we are disobedient. Repentance, which John the Baptist taught, opens the mind and heart to know and love the Lord. "If any man will do his will," the Lord said, "he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself." (John 7:17)

## **Lesson 47**

### **Luke 7:24-50: Anointing the Lord's Feet**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

The Lord had raised the young man at Nain and was teaching and healing in the towns of Galilee when two messengers came to ask a question. Who sent them? What did they ask? When they had gone the Lord spoke to the people about John, reminding them of the days when they had

gone to the Jordan to see and hear him. What did they find? A weak, timid man like one of the reeds trembling in the edge of the river? A man clothed in soft raiment? How was John dressed? He was stern and severe and refused pleasant things. Was he a prophet, one who spoke a message from the Lord? John did more than this, for he not only told about a new life, but helped people to begin to live it. It now appeared how John had prepared the people for the Lord; for those who had been baptized by John were more ready than others to listen to the Lord and to believe him. (Verses 24-30.)

The Lord said that the people were like children in the market-place, who would not join with their companions in a sad play or in a joyful one. It meant that they did not live a happy life with the Lord, and they had not repented with John the Baptist. They could not do the one because they had not done the other. "Wisdom is justified of all her children," seems to mean, "They recognize heavenly wisdom who have something heavenly in themselves." (Verses 31-35)

Now we follow with the Lord into the house of a Pharisee. Who were the Pharisees? We see the low table, perhaps shaped like a U, the guests reclining on couches around the outside. A woman came in by the open door and stood at the Lord's feet. Her tears fell upon His feet and she wiped them away with her hair. It was a common sign of kindness in that country, where people wore sandals on the dusty paths, to cool and wash a guest's feet with water before eating. (Genesis 18:4) The Pharisee had not done it for the Lord, but this poor woman was washing His feet with tears. Why was she weeping? Because she felt very sorry for wrong things that she had done. Then she kissed the Lord's feet, and kept kissing them. Why did she do this? Because she loved Him. And then she gave another sign of her love. She opened a little jar of alabaster, a beautiful stone like marble, and poured out the ointment, the sweet fragrant oil, upon His feet. In those days they sometimes anointed the head of a guest with oil. The Pharisee had not done it for the Lord, but this poor woman poured sweet ointment upon His feet.

The Pharisee would not have let the woman touch Him, for she was a sinner, and he thought that the Lord did not know; but the Lord did know what was in all minds and hearts. He saw the Pharisee's proud, selfish thoughts and the woman's repentance and love. She loved because she had repented and had been forgiven.

The Lord told a parable to teach that we cannot truly love Him except by repenting and feeling His help. (We remember the penny, the Roman silver piece worth about fifteen cents.) And then He turned to the woman and expressed in words what was taking place within her. "Thy sins are forgiven," He said. "Go in peace." He could say this to the woman, but not to the proud Pharisee.

Compare this story of anointing in Galilee with the account of anointing by Mary in Bethany. There are marked differences. (Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8)

1. Who was sent as a messenger before the Lord? How did he prepare the way? What is the John the Baptist which prepares the way for the Lord in us?
2. After reading the little parable about the children in the market place, what meaning do you see in the words, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted"?
3. What was ointment made of? What does the Psalm tell us is like the precious ointment? How is it like it?

4. What is forgiveness? What must we do to be forgiven when we have done wrong?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The Lord's words about John are not about John merely as a man, but about the Divine truth of repentance which John taught. Was it like a reed? In a sense it was, for plants represent different kinds of intelligence, and reeds and rushes represent intelligence of a very simple, external, literal kind, such as John's was. But his was not a weak, shaking reed, for although his teaching was external and literal, it was the Divine truth. (E. 627)

Was John's teaching like soft raiment? Clothing is often in the Scriptures a symbol of the thought and speech that clothe affection. John's teaching was literal Divine truth. There is beautiful and tender truth in the Scriptures, but it is understood only by those in interior, spiritual states, especially by the angels, who are they that dwell in king's houses. (A. 9372)

That the least in the kingdom of God is greater than John, does not mean that the faithful messenger of the Lord would not go to heaven, but the repentance which he taught, with all its laborious effort, is not in itself heavenly, but only introduces to what is heavenly. One who comes even a little way into heaven passes beyond this.

John's neither eating nor drinking suggests the self-denial by which abuses are cutoff. The Lord's eating and drinking pictures the right use and enjoyment of all good things, which the Lord makes possible after repentance.

The Lord once washed the disciples' feet and told them to wash one another's feet. The feet represent the outward life in contact with the world. To wash one another's feet is to help others to make their life good, and to be forgiving in regard to imperfect things which cling to them from the dust of the world. The Lord's feet represent His human life so full of Divine beauty and power. (Isaiah 52: 7; Revelation 1:15; E. 69) We see a beautiful thought in sitting at the Lord's feet, and in holding Him by the feet. We also wash His feet when we repent of wrong things in ourselves, for then the purity of His life grows more and more plain. We wash His feet with tears because the repentance through which we learn to know Him is painful to us. (A. 3147; R. 49)

The olive oil, which was the chief ingredient in the ointment, is a symbol of love and kindness which makes all go smoothly in our relations with others. The sweet odors in the ointment are like the gratitude and humility which make love sweet. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment." (Psalm 133:1, 2; E. 375; A. 9806)

What is the faith that saves? Mere intellectual belief? Was not the faith of the woman more than this? (E. 815; N. 177, 178)

## **Lesson 48**

### **Luke 8:1-21: Parable of the Sower**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

The opening verses of our story tell us of loving women who were with the Lord, Mary from Magdala and others. Remember them, and especially Mary Magdalene, for we shall hear of her again. (Mark 15:40, 41; John 20:11-18)

As we begin to read the parable, "A sower went out to sow," we see the Lord sitting in one of the fishing boats on the Sea of Galilee; the people were listening from the shore. Behind them was the plain with grain fields, crossed here and there by beaten footpaths. In neglected corners of the fields thistles were growing rank. Every year when the autumn rains softened the ground the farmers loosened the soil with their rude plows, and the sowers scattered the grain broadcast. Some grains fell upon the beaten paths and were quickly picked up by the flocks of birds. Around the borders of the plain, ledges of rock from the hills lay near the surface of the ground. Here the grain would start quickly but would soon dry up and wither. Some seeds fell among the thistles and were crowded out. Some fell into good ground and bore fruit. Read the parable.

They all know how the seeds fell when the sower sowed. Perhaps the sowing was going on around them. But did the Lord's lesson mean more than this? It was a parable, and a parable is a story about natural things, which really teaches about heavenly things. The sower meant the Lord Himself, who was sowing His words among the people who stood on shore. They were His field. Who were like the wayside? Those whose minds were full of other things so that the Lord's words were quickly caught away by other thoughts. Who were like the stony ground? Those who were interested to hear what He said, but did not take His words deeply to heart and were easily discouraged. Who were like the thorns? Those who tried to do what He said, but did not try enough. They let wrong things overpower the good in their hearts. And who were like the good ground? There are all these kinds of people among those who hear the Lord's words to-day.

1. Mary Magdalene; why was she so called? For what do we chiefly remember her?
2. Who are the good ground in the parable of the sower?
3. Whom did the Lord call His mother and His brethren?

#### **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

##### **Intermediate**

Do you remember what meaning we saw in the Lord's calling the disciples from their nets, and saying that they should be fishers of men? The sea is a little world with the cold, heavy water for its atmosphere. It is like a mind buried in natural, worldly interests and knowledge. The Lord

called the disciples to learn and teach spiritual things and they would help to lift men up out of a natural state into heavenly sunshine. So we all at death are, as it were, drawn to the shore.

What can it mean when the Lord went into a ship and sat, and taught the people from the sea? It pictures His coming down to meet men in their natural state of mind, speaking in natural forms of thought, in parables of everyday natural things. (E. 514)

If someone is teaching and we say, "I see," what do we mean? Do we mean more when we say, "I hear"? What does the Lord mean when He says, "Who hath ears to hear let him hear." (See also Revelation 2:7; Deuteronomy 5:27; 6:3, 4; A. 396, 4653.) Was it of natural or spiritual ears and eyes that the Lord spoke when He said of the people that their "ears were dull of hearing and their eyes they had closed." They understood little; they listened with little willingness to obey. It was better that they should be thus blind and deaf than that they should understand and return to their evil life. (A. 301-303)

See clearly the several states of reception described in the parable of the sower: the preoccupied, those with merely intellectual interest, those not faithful in temptation, those "which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." (Life 90)

The candle or lamp is truth in the understanding and memory. It is set on a stand as it is lived. (Matthew 5:16) So every truth should be brought forth from its hiding. (Verse 17) As truth is lived goodness is added to it; if it is not lived it is soon forgotten. (Verse 18; A. 2474; P. 227)

Compare verse 21 with John 1:11-13; 3:4-6. (R.32)

## Lesson 49

### Luke 8:22-39: Calming the Storm: Casting Out Devils

#### THE STORY

##### Primary and Junior

There are often hard storms upon the Sea of Galilee. It lies deeply sunk below the country around it, six hundred twenty-seven feet lower than the Mediterranean. The winds which sweep over the country puff down through the narrow valleys on the water, sweeping this way and that, very sudden and changeable, quickly raising the water into white-capped waves. You remember the fishing boats; you have seen pictures of those that are used on the Sea of Galilee today.

It drew toward evening as the Lord was teaching. He said, "Let us pass over unto the other side." We think of them setting sail in the cool of the evening. The Lord was asleep. But there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship so that it was now full. Read the story; how they wondered when they saw the Lord's power.

It probably was early morning as they drew near to the eastern shore, where one of the largest valleys comes down to the water, nearly opposite Magdala. Here by the shore are ruins of Kersa, probably the scene of our story. A path led by the town through the valley up to the pasture

country. The valley bottom was green, its sides were rough cliffs in which were caves, many of them used as tombs.

Near this town the Lord and the disciples landed in the early morning after the stormy night. They seem to have taken the path which led through the valley, but there met them a man (Matthew speaks of two) possessed with devils, whose home was in the tombs of the wilderness, so strong that he could not be bound. How sad to read of this poor man! When the Lord came into the world evil spirits had so much power that sometimes they made men do and say whatever evil thing they pleased, and always tried to hurt them. But the Lord had power to cast them out. The devils felt the Lord's power and cried out with fear. They knew that they must go and leave the poor men safe in the Lord's care.

Near by on the mountain, on a steep slope above the lake, was a great herd of swine. The devils loved to do all the harm they could, and asked that they might go into the swine to destroy them. The Lord gave them leave. They were vile, evil, swine-like spirits; and going into the herd would show them just as they really were. Because the swine were greedy, unclean creatures, the Israelites were commanded not to keep them nor to eat their flesh, but they often did it though they knew that it was wrong. And now the people from the city saw the man sitting at the Lord's feet, clothed and in his right mind. But they forgot to be glad and grateful. They cared more for their swine, and besought the Lord to go away and leave them. The same Lord who sent out the evil spirits from these poor men, keeps them away from us, and makes us able to do right if we will. Shall we be grateful for this wonderful help, or shall we ask Him to go away and leave us?

1. How did the Lord show His power on the sea? With whom was He sailing? What shore were they leaving? To what shore were they going?
2. How did He show His power on the farther shore?
3. Were the people of that place grateful to the Lord? Was the man who was healed?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The sea, with its atmosphere of cold, heavy water, is like a natural, worldly state of mind. Sometimes it pictures a state quite evil and unheavenly. The storm on the sea represents excitement of the worldly thought, which threatens to swallow us up from the light of heaven. Winds represent the silent, unseen influences of the spiritual world. Sometimes good, heavenly influences (John 3:8), but here evil influences which arouse the evil in ourselves. The Lord's calming the winds and waves shows us His power over nature. It is the same power which always stills the storm, dissolves the clouds, and brings the sunshine. But all the Lord's works were signs of spiritual works which He was doing and always desires to do for us. When the Lord rebuked the winds and waves and there was a great calm, it was a sign that He had conquered the worldly nature in Himself, and the influences from hell which aroused that nature. He had conquered them in Himself, and gained the power to still the winds and waves for us. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33; T. 123; E. 419, 514)

In times of excitement and temptation the Lord seems far away, and to have forgotten us. This was represented by His being asleep and seeming not to care if the disciples perished. But really, the Lord never forgets us. He is always near. In temptations He is nearer than at other times, more near than we can know or believe. When any evil is roused with its storm of winds and waves, if we ask the Lord's help He will give it, and say to the storm, "Peace, be still." (E. 514; A. 840; Psalm 107:23-31)

Beyond Jordan. The Holy Land itself represents a spiritual state of life. Lands beyond the border of Canaan represent external, natural states. The Lord crossed the Sea of Galilee to the pastures of the eastern shore as a sign of His presence with us in external states; in our recreation and our enjoyment of natural ease and beauty. We need the Lord's presence in this more natural state, that we may not abuse these enjoyments.

Does the Lord find us in our states of natural enjoyment and rest moderate, with our appetites under strict control, always serviceable to our higher life? Or does He find us as men possessed, in the power of self-indulgent spirits? There are swine-like spirits which make us indolent and greedy, which drive to what is impure, and to indulgence in eating and drinking. When in their power we live in the tombs, in ways in which there is nothing of spiritual life. What spiritual conditions are represented by wearing no clothes and living in no house? Of our own strength we cannot tame or bind them. Only the Lord can. He has overcome such evil spirits, and has power to cast them out from us. He will, if we ask Him, help us to see these enemies as they are - swine, and will cast them out. (A. 1742; E. 659) Then we shall sit at His feet, clothed and in our right mind. We shall be safe and free to do well if we will.

## **Lesson 50**

### **Luke 8:40-56: Jairus' Daughter**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

The Lord came back by boat to the Gennesaret shore. Among those who were waiting for Him was Jairus, whose little girl was dying. The father of the little girl in his grief was not proud as the rulers of the synagogue often were, but came quickly to the Lord, and as he met Him fell at His feet, and besought Him to come and heal his daughter; and the Lord went with him.

As they went from the shore toward the town to the ruler's house many people pressed about them. Among them came a poor woman who had suffered with a sickness twelve years, and tried many doctors, but was no better but rather made worse. At that time the people, and even the doctors, knew almost nothing about the means of healing which the Lord has given us. They did the most useless and foolish things trying to help those who were sick. This poor woman came in the crowd behind the Lord and touched the border of His garment, perhaps the hem or the fringe of His robe. She touched the hem and she felt at once that she was healed. The Lord knew that she had touched Him, for He turned about and asked who had done it. So He feels each one who receives His help.

Meantime at the house of Jairus the little girl had died. You picture the sad scene, made more sad by hired mourners. Picture the Lord's coming to the house. Listen as He says, "She is not dead, but sleepeth." Watch as He takes the little girl by the hand and bids her to arise. Think also that this was said and done to teach us of the Lord's power which wakens us all when we die, in the spiritual world.

1. Who was Jairus? How was the Lord's power seen at his house?
2. What happens when a little girl dies?
3. What miracle is connected with the raising of Jairus' daughter, in each Gospel which tells the story?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

What others do you remember whom the Lord raised from the sleep of death to life again in this world? At what other time did He teach us that death is a sleep? (John 11: 11-14) The sleep lasts for a longer or shorter time, according to the preparation which each one needs. The awakening is usually on the third day. Remember the resurrection of the Lord who was laid in the sepulchre on the Friday evening, and was risen early Sunday morning. Read also Hosea 6:2. (R. 153; T. 281)

There is another kind of death far more serious than passing from the natural to the spiritual world. It is when the life of heavenly affection and truth dies out from the heart. Of which kind of death is it said, "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence. But we will bless the Loin from this time forth and for evermore"? (Psalm 115:17, 18)

Does the heavenly life begin in us full grown and strong? Remember the Lord's words to Nicodemus, that he must be born again. The heavenly life begins like a little child with innocence and feeble affection and understanding. The innocent beginnings of heavenly life are often represented by little children in the Bible; the beginnings of heavenly intelligence especially by boys, and the beginnings of gentle, heavenly affection by girls. It is said of the heavenly Jerusalem, "The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls, playing in the streets thereof." (Zechariah 8:4, 5) How sad it is when the little daughter of gentle, heavenly affection dies! The Lord alone can revive this affection and make it grow strong! (E. 863; A. 2348) Notice that when the Lord recalled the little girl to life He commanded that something be given her to eat. Does it not show our duty to strengthen and keep alive what He gives us of affection for heavenly things?

Is this the only time that persons were healed by touching the Lord's garments? (Mark 6:56) His garments represent His Divine truth and words, which clothe to us His Divine love. We touch the garment's hem when we use the Commandments and the letter of the Lord's Word to make our actions right, and in doing so we feel the Lord's power. In the midst of our everyday work and care we can touch His garment's hem, and receive help, for the Divine power is in the letter of the Word. (E. 195; A. 10023)

## **Lesson 51**

### **Luke 9:1-10: Sending Out the Twelve**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

What were the people called who listened to the Lord and learned of Him? His disciples. How many did He choose and call apostles? How many of their names do you remember? The apostles were simple, ignorant men to whom the Lord gave power and wisdom to do His work. He called them to Him in Capernaum or near by and sent them two and two together through the towns of Galilee with power to cast out devils and to heal diseases.

They must keep in mind that they had no power of themselves, but must always remember that the Lord was their strength. To help to remember this they were to take nothing for their journey. Remember David's script, his shepherd's bag into which he put the five stones when he went against Goliath. (1 Samuel 17:40) They were to take no bag, as if they could lay up strength for themselves. They should not have two coats. They should take no staves or nothing more than a staff. All this would help them to think of the Lord every day, and to remember that all the strength they had was every day from Him. It is for the same reason that the Lord teaches us to pray for our daily bread.

They were not to stay long in a place, nor to go to this house and that to make themselves comfortable. But they were to be about their Father's business, carrying the Lord's message and His healing power to those who needed it. But if they were not received, as they left that house or town they were to shake off the dust from their feet. This meant that where people were not good, and would not listen to the Lord, the apostles should let nothing of those people's evil ways cling to them.

After a time the apostles came together again to the Lord in the old familiar place by the Gennesaret shore, "and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught."

Meantime Herod had heard of the Lord and was perplexed to know who He was. This was Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee and of the district east of Jordan. We learned of this Herod in Luke 3:19, 20, and how he shut up John in prison. You read the story of John's death in Matthew 14:1-12 and Mark 6:14-29. Herod desired to see the Lord. Did he ever see Him? (Luke 23:6-9.)

1. How many apostles did the Lord appoint? What power did He give them when He' sent them out?
2. How were they provided for their journey?
3. What were they to do where they were not received?
4. Tell me about Herod and John the Baptist. About Herod and the Lord.

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

In the charge to take nothing for their journey you see the duty to be poor in spirit, to acknowledge that we have nothing of our own, and to depend for strength upon the Lord. In studying particulars of the charge, read A. 4677, 9942. Singleness of thought and purpose in the service of the Lord is especially suggested by the command not to have two coats, and not to go from house to house. The coat represents thought and intelligence, the clothing of the mind, and the house represents the affection in which one dwells. There must be singleness in both. Compare Mark 9:47; Luke 11:34. (A.9927)

Herod and John the Baptist are several times mentioned together in the Gospels, and stand opposed to each other. A good king represents truth ruling in the mind; but Herod, called by the Lord "that fox," represents deceit and falsity excusing and justifying evil. Such falsity is the enemy of the Divine truth condemning evil, of which John is the type. It opposes and destroys it. And for that reason the false, deceitful mind cannot understand the Lord; He can be known by the mind which is opened by repentance. "John have I beheaded: but who is this?" (Matthew 21:23-27; Luke 7:29, 30)

## **Lesson 52**

### **Luke 9:10-17: Feeding the Five Thousand**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

Tell me about the Lord's sending out the twelve apostles. How did they go? What were they to say? And do? Now they came together again to the Lord by the Gennesaret shore. The multitudes were coming and going. He took the twelve apart to a quiet place for rest. Here is the place, the green slopes at the northeast corner of the lake, pasture land belonging to Bethsaida Julias, a little town east of the Jordan where it comes near the lake. (John 6: 1; Luke 9:10) It is called a desert place, but that does not mean barren for there was much grass in the place. It is a part of the fine pasture land of Bashan. A desert place means quiet, open country with few towns. See on the map, as they sailed across they were not far from the northern shore of the lake. The people saw them setting sail and ran along the shore, others joining them from each town they passed, so that when the boat came to land a great multitude were already there - five thousand men beside women and children. The Lord pitied them. They seemed as sheep not having a shepherd. He healed, those that were sick, and spent the day teaching them heavenly things.

It was spring, when the pastures were rich and green from the winter rains and full of bright flowers. The Lord led the people up on the sunny slopes above the lake, and sat teaching them as they gathered about Him. So the day passed, and it drew toward evening. The people were far from home. The disciples begged the Lord to send away the people that they might go into the towns and country round about and lodge and buy food. But the Lord said, "Give ye them to eat."

There were five thin cakes or loaves, and two small fishes to be eaten as relishes with the bread. There was enough for all, and they filled with pieces that were left twelve baskets - wicker baskets, such as they used on a journey to carry provisions in.

The miracle helps us to realize that it is the Lord's power which gives us all our food. (Psalm 104:28)

1. "When they were returned." From what?
2. "All that they had done." What had they done?
3. Who were the five thousand who were fed? Where were they fed? How were they fed?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

There were two miracles of feeding the multitude. Compare with this one that described in Matthew 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-10, and notice the differences, especially the numbers in each miracle.

We have learned that the Lord's miracles were all outward expressions of His spiritual works. So the healing, and the calming of the storm. What spiritual work does the feeding of the people picture? Do we need spiritual food? Suppose we had plenty of natural food, would that make our spirits grow strong? Our minds need food: interesting subjects of thought, and good things to love. Instruction in these heavenly things is spiritual food. Read of such food in Isaiah 55:1, 2; Amos 8:11; Matthew 16:6, 12. (A. 680; E. 750) The Lord on this day by the Sea of Galilee had been giving spiritual bread as He taught the people; and now to show His desire to feed them and make them strong, He gave them also food for their bodies. Remember the spiritual help we need when we say, "Give us this day our daily bread."

A fruit tree represents growing knowledge about some good use, and the nourishing fruit is the use with the satisfaction we feel in it. Grains represent little plans for daily use; small, in great numbers, comparatively dry and unattractive; but after all they give life its chief satisfaction. John tells us that the loaves were of coarse barley, which represents duties done not from the highest motive of love to the Lord, but from the more natural motive of love to the neighbor. The Lord blesses duties done in this more common motive and makes them strengthening to the soul. And the little fishes. We have thought of the sea as representing an atmosphere of natural thought. The fishes are the affections for learning natural knowledge and thinking in a natural way. The Lord gives the humbler satisfactions, if we are not able to receive the best. (E. 430, 617)

See in the charge to gather up the fragments, and in the gathering of twelve baskets full, the duty to use well the little opportunities, especially the little opportunities for service, in which the satisfaction of life is found. (John 4:34) Look for them, gather them up, save them by using them all.

## Lesson 53

### Luke 9:18-42: Peter's Confession

#### THE STORY

##### Junior

We follow the Lord and the disciples, and come with them now into a beautiful region at the north. Mount Hermon stands up grandly with its snowy ridges. Below the mountain is a broad valley open to the sun and watered by fine springs and streams which are fed by the melting snow. Trees and flowers are plenty. There are good orchards and in the thickets wild roses blossom and wreaths of clematis are festooned from tree to tree. Close under Mount Hermon where one of the fine springs breaks out which helps to make the Jordan, was the town of Caesarea Philippi, named for the Emperor and for Philip who ruled this region. (Luke 3:1) In the old days it had been called Paneas for the Greek god Pan, the god of life, and today it is called Banias. Can you find it on the map?

The Lord and His disciples were in this beautiful region of springs and flowers and fresh mountain air, and He asked them about Himself; first, who the people said that He was, and then their own answer to the question. Looking back to the seventh and eighth verses of this chapter you see what Herod said of the Lord, that He was John the Baptist risen again, and others said He was Elias or one of the old prophets, but Peter answered for the disciples, "The Christ of God." The Christ is the "anointed," the same as the Messiah. It meant that He was more than John or any prophet. He was anointed with the Divine love, which had been represented by the anointing oil that was poured upon kings and priests. He told them in the synagogue at Nazareth, how He was anointed. (Luke 4:18-22) The Lord told the disciples not to make known who He was. The reason seems to be that no one could be convinced that He was the Christ by being told so, but only by feeling for himself how good the Lord was. Peter had learned it in this way (Matthew 16:17), and so others must do if they learned it at all.

A week passed, and the Lord took the three disciples Peter, James, and John with Him into a mountain. It was probably some part of Mount Hermon, which rises so grandly above the valley. It was perhaps evening when they climbed up to a quiet place away from the town and the people. The Lord was praying and the three disciples were heavy with sleep. Then their spiritual eyes were opened and they saw two angels with the Lord, Moses and Elias. And the Lord's face was shining as the sun and His raiment was white as the light. Peter felt that it was good to be there. But the brightness was more than they could bear, and a cloud overshadowed them. A voice was heard out of the cloud, and soon they were alone with the Lord. The Lord told them again not to tell what they had seen till by and by.

Meantime what was taking place at the foot of the mountain?

1. Who did Herod say that the Lord was? What did others say? What was Peter's answer?
2. Where were the disciples and the Lord when He asked them these questions? In what mountain (probably) did the disciples see the Lord transfigured?

3. What three disciples were with the Lord in the mountain? Who else were with Him? What did the disciples see? What did they hear?
4. Who were at the foot of the mountain? What did the Lord do when He came down to them?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Peter's confession, "The Christ of God," or "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16), means that the Lord Jesus Christ was Divine; He was not a mere man, but God with us. Read in Matthew 16 what the Lord said of this acknowledgment. It is the rock on which the church shall stand, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. It means that this fact, that the Lord Jesus Christ is Divine, is the fact on which all other things of the Christian religion depend; and it gives to those who acknowledge it strength to overcome in every temptation. (R. 768; E.411; T.342)

We cannot understand the goodness and power of the Lord's life of trial and sacrifice except by being patient and faithful in our trials with His help. Our own experience enables us to understand His life. What is meant by taking up our cross daily and following the Lord? The cross suggests trial and death, and we must die daily by giving up something of our own selfish way for the sake of what is right. "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it." What life is saved; and what life is lost? (E. 864, 893)

What does it mean to be ashamed of the Lord and of His words? Suppose we want to do something wrong; we know what the Lord says and what He wants us to do; we hesitate. If we turn our backs on the Lord and do wrong, is it not being ashamed of Him? And if we keep on doing this, what will the result be by and by? When we come into the bright light of the other world and the presence of the angels, we shall still turn away from the Lord, and we shall not be able to live in heaven. That is what is meant by the saying that the Lord will be ashamed of us.

Some shall not taste of death. The disciples understood such sayings to mean that some of their number would live on earth till the Lord came again. (See John 21:22, 23) Years passed and all the disciples died - passed on from the natural to the spiritual world. But if one has made a beginning of heavenly life in this world, does he lose this life, does he die, by passing to the spiritual world? Not at all, he lives right on in the Lord's heavenly kingdom. And in another sense some of the Lord's disciples should not die. They represented various elements of Christian character; John, for example, represented love for the Lord; and something of this love should live, even through the dark days that were coming, till the Lord's kingdom should be established.

What is meant spiritually by going into a mountain with the Lord? The elements of character represented by Peter, James, and John - faith, and love for the neighbor, and for the Lord - are those that bring us into the spiritual mountain. The sleep of the apostles on the mountain, as in Gethsemane, suggests their dullness, and our dullness, in learning to know the Lord. What Divine quality is represented by the shining of the Lord's face as the sun? The Divine love, for the fiery sun is a type of the Lord's love. And what by the shining garment? The Divine truth, for garments

are types of the thought and speech which give clothing or expression to love. And how may we hear Moses and Elias talking with the Lord? In the Bible, when we perceive that all its history (Moses) and prophecy (Elias) are about Him. But we cannot bear much of the Lord's glory and so it is veiled for us as with a cloud, by the parables and the letter of the Word. These have been a dark cloud to many persons, but they are a bright cloud to the Lord's disciples. And though the Bible is obscure we can at least learn from it that the Lord Jesus Christ is God with us, whom we ought to trust and obey; it is the voice out of the cloud. (E. 64; A. Preface to Genesis 18)

A child so often represents the new birth of heavenly life in us. What is represented by the child possessed with the devil, which tore him and often cast him into the fire and water to destroy him? It represents our spiritual life overpowered by what is evil and false. (E. 815)

## **Lesson 54**

### **Luke 9:43-62: Leaving Galilee**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

The Lord had been with the disciples in the north, in the region of Caesarea Philippi and Mount Hermon. Now they had come back to Galilee and the old home in Capernaum. Two questions seem to have arisen as they journeyed and they asked the Lord about them when they gathered around Him in Capernaum. The first was, which of them should be greatest. The Lord called a child and explained to them that those who are the most innocent, the most trustful and obedient, the most like good little children are really the greatest. The Lord gives each of us a little child to take care of - the innocent, obedient spirit in our own hearts. All the verses which tell about the Lord's care for little children mean also the little child in ourselves. He took them up in His arms and blessed them. (Mark 10:13-16) The best of the angels are with little children - with the child of innocence in us. (Matthew 18:1-6, 10; A. 5236)

The other question was from John who had rebuked one whom he saw casting out devils in the Lord's name, because he followed not with them. Was that the right spirit? Ought we to feel important and think that nothing good can be done unless we have a hand in it?

The Lord left Galilee where He had lived for many years and done so many miracles, and began the journey to Jerusalem. He knew that He would be condemned and crucified, but there was work for Him to do. It was right for Him to go and "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." There were two ways from Galilee to Jerusalem, the direct way through Samaria and the longer way through the region east of Jordan. The disciples who went before to make ready for the Lord, came to a village of the Samaritans, but they would not receive the Lord. You know that the Jews and the Samaritans were not friendly, and sometimes the Samaritans hindered pilgrims going through their country, though we remember one time when the people of a Samaritan town gladly received the Lord and listened to His teaching. (John 4) James and John remembered how the prophet Elijah called down fire from heaven and destroyed men who came against him. You can read the story in the first chapter of 2 Kings, how twice fire came down from heaven and

burned up a captain and his fifty men whom the king of Israel had sent to take Elijah. They were rough and wicked days when such signs of power were needed to make the people listen to the Lord's Word; but Christian people would not be forced by signs and punishments. They could now feel how good the Lord was, and listen and obey because they loved Him. So they went to another village. They turned away from Samaria and went by the other road which led across the Jordan and down on the eastern side. Then they would cross again near Jericho and climb the hills to Jerusalem. (R. 599)

As the Lord was starting on this journey a man said that he would go with Him, but the Lord warned him that it was only a passing impulse; the Lord did not have a sure and lasting place in his heart. Cunning, selfish feelings and thoughts like foxes and birds had their holes and nests in his mind, but there was no sure place for the Lord. Others said they would go, but they were not quite ready; they must do something at home first; they were not willing to leave everything for the Lord's sake. Disciples of the Lord must not be half-hearted, partly loving Him and partly loving themselves, partly doing right and partly doing as they pleased. They must not delay, intending to do right pretty soon, or by and by. They must serve the Lord at once, with all their heart and soul and mind and strength. (A. 5895)

1. Why were the disciples perplexed and in despair when the Lord was crucified? Had He not told them that it would be so and that He would rise again?
2. Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?
3. How did the way lie from Galilee to Jerusalem? Why should the Samaritans not receive the Lord?
4. What journey to Jerusalem ought we all to take? How can we steadfastly set our faces toward the city?
5. What are the foxes and birds which have a place in our minds when the Lord does not? What kind of followers does the Lord want?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Soon after Peter's confession of the Lord, He began to tell them about His crucifixion which was drawing near. (Matthew 16:21; Luke 9:22) He told them again as they journeyed to Jerusalem. (Mark 10:32-34) But we see how little they understood or remembered His words when we find them so sad and perplexed on the Easter day. (John 20:9)

"He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." Jerusalem represents a heavenly state of nearness to the Lord. In a sense it represents heaven itself. All that is said in the Bible about pilgrimages to Jerusalem is really about the pilgrimage of life, the journey toward heaven. For example, the Psalms of going up (Psalm 120-134) express in a wonderful way the thoughts and hopes of the heavenly journey. So this going of the Lord to Jerusalem represents the progress of His life toward all that was perfect and Divine, His glorification. It involved terrible conflicts, and a laying down of life more painful than the crucifixion, but He did not shrink from His duty. All this is expressed in

the saying that "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." And this meaning of the journey gives new interest to the last verses of the chapter about half-hearted followers. We must share the journey; we should steadfastly set our faces toward heaven. In everything we should set our faces toward what is right and be steadfast. (A. 2534 end, 3084, 4539)

Samaritans in a good sense (John 4; Luke 10:33) represent simple good people who desire to be taught. In a bad sense (Matthew 10:5; Luke 9:52) they mean those who no longer do good, and so reject the Lord and instruction. But He has no anger which could burn as fire, against them; His love does not in any violent way compel them. He shows His love by His gentleness in leaving them to their own way and going to those who are more ready to receive Him. (R. 599; E. 223)

In regard to foxes and birds, A. 778; R. 757.

The father who is dead means the old evil life of natural inheritance. If we realize that it is dead, that there is nothing heavenly in it, we should leave it promptly and completely. The request to bury the father expresses a lingering love for the things that we know are wrong. Moreover, burial suggests resurrection, and implies the hope that we may still find something satisfying in the old ways. (A. 6138)

Bidding farewell to those at the house contains a similar thought of lingering fondness for old evil habits, thoughts, and feelings. These are the household that must be hated. (Luke 14:26) They are our only real foes. (Matthew 10:36; E. 724; A. 6138)

Putting the hand to the plow and looking back suggests in a general way taking hold of the Lord's work in a half-hearted and inconstant way. More strictly, putting the hand to the plow means living from heavenly affection, stirring the soil of the honest and good heart; and the looking back means leaving good life and contenting oneself with mere intellectual belief. There is a similar meaning in the Lord's warning not to come down from the housetop, nor to return from the field. The Lord expects of every one the best that he can do, the most of love and strength that he is able to give. (A. 3652, 5895)

## **Lesson 55**

### **Luke 10:1-20: Sending Out the Seventy**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

The Lord was leaving Galilee for the last time, and turning toward Jerusalem through the country east of Jordan. The seventy disciples were sent into the cities and villages of this country, which He soon would visit on His journey. It was a region where many made Him welcome, to which He turned when rejected by the Jews in Jerusalem. (John 10:40-42)

The story of sending out the seventy is much like that of sending out the twelve, which we have read in chapter 9. Now there are seventy, then there were twelve. The twelve were sent into the towns of Galilee, these through the country east of Jordan. The Lord calls them laborers and their

work that of harvesting. It reminds us of parables which have likened the Lord's kingdom to a garden and a vineyard. See also John 4:35-38, where the Lord also speaks of the disciples as harvesting, gathering and reaping the fruits which others have sown.

There are nearly the same instructions for the journey as before, teaching the disciples not to trust in their own ability and strength but in the Lord. The charge to salute no man by the way expresses forcibly the duty of attending only to the Lord's business, not allowing themselves to be diverted from it. They are to bring peace where it will be received, and to shake off the dust of cities that give them no welcome. Several cities are named with a Woe! because they had given so little heed to the Lord's word. Chorazin was on the hills above Capernaum, Bethsaida and Capernaum were on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, where so many of the Lord's works had been done and so many of His words had been spoken. They were more guilty than Sodom and Tyre and Sidon, because their opportunities had been so much greater. It is impressive to look today upon the ruins of Chorazin, a waste of stones; and Capernaum has so completely disappeared that its exact place is uncertain.

The seventy returned again, as the twelve had done, this time rejoicing in the power which they had from the Lord. He gave them promise of further power, and bade them also to look forward to heaven.

1. Compare the sending out of the twelve and the seventy. What likenesses do you find? What differences?
2. To what did the Lord compare their work?
3. Where were Sodom, Tyre, Sidon?
4. Why were Bethsaida and Capernaum rebuked?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The-sending of the seventy represents a fuller reception of the Lord than the sending of the twelve. This is especially suggested by the numbers twelve and seventy. Twelve suggests fullness, but seventy what is peculiarly complete and holy. (A. 9404) Who can be called sheep? Who wolves? (A. 10132; E. 314)

The disciples were sent into every city and place where the Lord would come. Compare verse 16. It is a beautiful reminder that the Lord works with us in all that we do for Him. It is little that we can do for anyone, but it may give the Lord the opportunity He needs to do His Divine work.

The Lord's saying, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven," explains the power over the devils in which the disciples rejoiced. The Lord's victory over the hells gave the disciples their power and gives us all our power to resist evil. The power to tread on serpents and scorpions you know is the power to overcome temptations of sensual kinds and to put the pleasures of sense in their right subjection. The Lord bade the disciples to rejoice rather than that their names were written in heaven. The casting out of devils is the negative and lesser part of the work. We should rejoice rather in the development of heavenly life for which this opens the way. (E. 544; A. 2009)

## **Lesson 56**

### **Luke 10:21-42: The Good Samaritan**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The Lord and the disciples were journeying southward through the country beyond Jordan. By and by they would cross the river, pass through the gardens of Jericho and come up the steep road to Bethany and Jerusalem. In the country beyond Jordan many people welcomed the Lord and were glad to listen to His teaching. The seventy disciples had passed that way, telling the people that the Lord was coming. Now a question asked by a teacher of the Jewish law, led to a beautiful lesson. "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" the man asked, and the Lord helped him to remember the two Great Commandments. Can we say them? (We have learned them from Mark 12:29-31.)

Then the man asked another question, "Who is my neighbor?" The Lord answered this question by a story of a man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. This was the road which the Lord and the disciples would soon pass over on their way up from Jericho to Jerusalem. It led through desert country. It was lonely and travelers were sometimes attacked by thieves. So it was with the man in the story. Let us tell the story mostly in the Lord's very words; how the thieves stripped the poor man of his clothes, and wounded him, and left him half dead by the roadside. Now another traveler is coming down the road, a priest from the temple. Will he help the poor man in trouble? No, he saw him but went by on the other side. Now another man is coming, a Levite, one of the men who served with the priests in the temple. Will he help the poor man? No, he looked on him and passed by on the other side. But now came another traveler, a Samaritan, whom all the Jews despised. He stopped and helped, binding up the poor man's, wounds with oil and wine, setting him on his horse or donkey, and taking him to the inn, a shelter for travelers by the wayside; and there is one there today. There the Samaritan took care of the poor man and left money with the keeper of the inn to take care of him when he must leave. "Which now of these three thinkest thou," the Lord asked, "was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?" What should we say? The priest, the Levite, or the good Samaritan? And the Lord said, "Go and do thou likewise." There are people that we can help, old people on the street, children in school, the folks at home. "Go and do thou likewise."

Soon the Lord and the disciples were walking up this same road from Jericho, and they came to Bethany, the village on the Mount of Olives where Mary and Martha lived.

##### **Junior**

Show me on the map the country in which the Lord sent out the seventy disciples to towns that He soon would visit. They found simple kindly people, glad to receive the Lord. At this the Lord rejoiced. Read His words in verse 21. Read on to verses 23 and 24. How long the prophets had been promising the Lord's coming, and people had been expecting Him. Now He was here. The disciples were hearing His words and seeing His power.

Now the Lord's beautiful lesson in answer to the lawyer's question. Who is meant in the Gospels by a "lawyer"? What law did he study and teach? You can find the first Great Commandment in Deuteronomy 6:4, 5, and the second Great Commandment in Leviticus 19:18. The answer was right; but did the man stop to think what these laws mean and was he keeping them? Who is my neighbor? Someone tell the story of the Good Samaritan which the Lord told in answer to this question. Show on the map the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Tell about the priest; the Levite; the Samaritan. Remember how the Samaritans were despised by the Jews. (John 4:9) Someone sketch for us the inn: a yard with a wall about it, and at one end covered chambers. The penny (about fifteen cents) was a day's wages at that time. (Matthew 20:1-16) There could be only one answer to the question of which of the three was neighbor. (We keep the thought of kindness in our word "neighborly.") "Go and do thou likewise.". These few words make the whole lesson practical for the lawyer and for us. How can we do likewise, for we may never go over the road from Jerusalem to Jericho? But there are other roads and other places where people may be in trouble: in school, on the playground, even at home. Shall we hurry by or shall we help?

Traveling up the steep road from Jericho, before you come in sight of Jerusalem, you reach a little village on the slope of the Mount of Olives, where there are orchards of olive trees and figs. It was a quiet place, and the Lord often stayed there when He was in Jerusalem. There was a home in Bethany where they were glad to receive Him, the home of Martha and her sister Mary and their brother Lazarus. The Lord loved them all. He stopped at this home on the journey from Galilee. As I read the verses I seem to be standing at the open door and looking in. I see Martha making ready the supper and Mary sitting at the Lord's feet listening to His words. Both were showing their love for the Lord, but He told Martha that it is better to take a little time to listen quietly to Him; then when we do our work we shall not be anxious and troubled about it.

1. Who are the babes to whom things of heavenly wisdom are revealed?
2. Who is meant by the "lawyer" in verse 25; and what is meant by the "law" in verse 26?
3. What does the first Great Commandment tell us to do? What is the second Great Commandment?
4. What did the good Samaritan do? How can we do likewise? - We may never meet a poor man wounded by the wayside.
5. Who were the two sisters with whom the Lord stayed in Bethany? Who was their brother? What did the Lord do for him? What did Mary once do for the Lord?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Compare verse 21 with 1 Kings 3:7-12. (A. 3428, 8783)

You have the natural scene and story of the parable of the good Samaritan clearly in mind. We must think what it means in our lives. It tells of a journey, and a spiritual journey is a change, a progress from one state to another. What kind of state is meant by Jerusalem, and what by Jericho? Both were cities of the Holy Land, which represents in a general way heaven and a

heavenly life. Jerusalem was the great city of the land; it stood high on the hills, the Lord's temple was there, and the people went up to Jerusalem from all parts of the land to worship. It represents a state of special nearness to the Lord, such as we may come into at holy times. Jericho was low down in the Jordan valley; it was also near the border of the land, the first town which the people took when they came from Egypt. It does not necessarily represent an evil state because it is low, but one that is natural and external, having to do with outward life in the world. Do you see now what the journey from Jerusalem to Jericho means? We take the journey when we turn from worship to practical life, from a Sunday to a weekday state. It is a road beset with many dangers. (E. 444, 458)

Who are the thieves who are likely to attack us on this journey? The poor traveler was stripped of his raiment and wounded. Clothing represents the thoughts and words and acts which give expression to the affections which are our real life. We are stripped of our clothing if we lose the true and innocent thoughts with which we started out. We are wounded when our affections are injured, when our good purposes and resolutions are forgotten. Then our spiritual life is half dead. (E. 240, 295; A. 5433)

Many people fall discouraged by the wayside. The parable shows how we ought not to feel and how we ought to feel toward them. The priest was intended to lead the people in loving service of the Lord and He stood as a type of love for the Lord in our hearts. A Levite represented love for the neighbor, which is a companion of love to the Lord and like unto it. But with the Jews the priests had become proud and selfish and represented rather self-love which too often takes the place of love for the Lord in us; and the Levite represented the love for the world, which takes the place of love of the neighbor. The priest and Levite saw the poor man, but passed by on the other side. Selfishness does not reach out kindly to help others, but shrinks into itself, and grows harder and meaner every day. (Isaiah 65:5) But the spirit of charity is self-forgetful and reaches out to others with real sympathy. This is represented by the Samaritan's going to the poor man to help him. What are the oil and the wine which must enter into every kind service? (R. 316; E. 962)

Beasts of burden which work faithfully for men represent our own powers of mental work, of thought and understanding. These faculties bring this and that knowledge and experience together as the beasts of burden carry natural things to the place where they will be useful. The Samaritan's setting the poor man on his own beast means helping according to our understanding. Taking him to an inn, Swedenborg tells us, means taking one to those who are able to help him more than we. Most of all in trying to help anyone, we must remember the Lord's great power and entrust him to His care. (E. 375)

The host in the highest sense is the Lord. It must always be our effort to bring one who is in trouble to the Lord and help him to trust His loving care. It is beautiful to think of a church as a spiritual hospice, an inn by the Jericho road, and its members busy helping travelers fallen and in trouble by the way. The two pence like the widow's two mites represent our own little ability of thought and affection which we ask the Lord to make useful.

It is good for little children to have kind impulses and to want to help everyone in trouble. (T. 426) As we grow older we must feel no less kind toward everyone, but we must grow wise in our ways of helping. The command is to love our neighbor, and the parable shows that it is the goodness, the kindness, the usefulness in each one which makes him a neighbor. This is what we

must love in him and try to help, and we must help him to try to get rid of his idleness and other things that are bad. (T. 407, 428; N. 84-90; A. 6704-6712)

We recognize the two sisters Mary and Martha as types of love for the Lord - Martha more natural love and Mary more spiritual. Martha was full of service, but she was careful and troubled in her self-confident effort. The greater trustfulness and peace of Mary's love is represented by her sitting at the Lord's feet. If Martha could gain this trust it would take the care and trouble out of her service.

## Lesson 57

### Luke 11:1-26: Prayer: Casting Out Devils

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Every Sunday in church and Sunday school we say the Lord's Prayer, and we should say it at home every morning and every night, and at any other time when we need the Lord's help. It is the Lord's Prayer because the Lord taught it to His disciples and to us. When we say the prayer we must think what we are saying and what the words mean. "Our Father," the very first words, tell us that the Lord is our kind Father Who loves to hear our prayer and loves to help us. We say "our" Father because the Lord loves all children and all people, and we pray that He will help them all. "Who art in the heavens" reminds us that He is the Lord too of the angels in heaven. But that does not mean that He is far away, for heaven is all about us, very near. "Hallowed be Thy name." The Lord's name and everything belonging to the Lord, as His holy Bible and the Sabbath day, are holy and we must treat them so. "Thy kingdom come." The kingdom comes when the Lord's laws are obeyed, and if we obey the Lord's laws, gradually He helps us to love the good ways. It is so in heaven, and it may be so too in this world. "Give us this day our daily bread." We are asking for food and for all things that our bodies and our souls need to make them grow strong and beautiful. "Daily bread" means each day what is needed for the day. That is the way the manna came in the desert, each morning for the day. "And forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors." The Lord is always ready to help us to leave what has been wrong and to do better, and we too must forgive others. "And lead us not into temptation." It is a prayer that the Lord will help us to turn away quickly from things that are wrong and will protect us if temptations come. "But deliver us from evil." If some wrong things have taken hold of us, have become habits, we ask the Lord to make us strong to break them off. In our Bibles in Matthew 6:13 the prayer has this close: "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen." We must remember to be grateful to the Lord for all good things. The power is His, and we should give Him the praise. "Amen" means "It is all true." Now we will say the prayer, and remember as many of these thoughts as we can while we say it.

We do what we can for our friends. Fathers and mothers love to do the best that they can for their children. Much more does the Lord love to give what will be best for us.

## **Junior**

We should all be finding help in the Lord's Prayer. Say it reverently and earnestly and think what we say, for the mere sound of the words is not a prayer. The desire in our hearts is the real prayer which reaches to the Lord in heaven. Think over what has been said above to the little children. The parable about the friend at midnight teaches us not to be discouraged in prayer, for the Lord does love us, He does hear, and we shall have His help, though sometimes there seems to be delay till we come into a state more ready to be helped. Even selfish people answer the prayers of others. How much more the loving Lord! See Luke 18:1-8.

Ask, seek, knock. To ask is to desire something earnestly. To seek is to use our best thought for it. To knock is to work for it. Such earnest prayer is useful even if things do not happen exactly as we hope. It is right to tell the Lord our needs. He will help us to see them truly. It is right to ask the Lord for what to us seems best, at the same time wishing that if the Lord knows something else is better He will do the better thing. "Not my will, but Thine, be done." We can truly say that the Lord answers our prayer, giving us what we ask or what is better.

A little boy was playing in the long grass and suddenly noticed that he had lost a key which had been in his hand. It was important; he was distressed. He hunted in the long grass, but it was hopeless. The thought came to him that it might be useful to say the Lord's Prayer, and he shut his eyes and said the prayer, standing in the long grass in the field. He opened his eyes and there was the key at his feet. He knew that the prayer and the Lord had helped him.

A temptation came to a young man to do wrong. It seemed impossible to be master of himself and to drive away the evil thoughts. He said the Lord's Prayer and instantly was helped. It was almost startling that the help came so quickly, seemed so near. He told me that he then first felt sure that there is a Lord and that prayers are heard.

How fully the Lord came into our states of trial, that He also prayed! He was praying in a certain place; He continued all night in prayer. He prayed in Gethsemane so earnestly that His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. If even the Lord needed to pray and found help in prayer, how much more need have we to pray and to pray earnestly!

1. What is the meaning of the words, "Hallowed be thy name"?
2. When do we sincerely pray, "Thy kingdom come"?
3. Does the Lord hear our prayers? Even if they are spoken silently in our hearts?
4. Does the Lord desire to give us good things? Why does He seem sometimes to delay?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

Read in A. 6619 about the infinite meaning in the Lord's Prayer. Read of the heavenly influence of the prayer with little children. (A. 2290, 2291; H. 336) Mere formal piety, not of the heart, "penetrates no further than to the first threshold of heaven and is there dissipated." (A. 10177, 10143) "As the affection is, such is the prayer," R. 278; and a full treatment of prayer in E. 325.

Unspoken prayers if sincere are heard in heaven. (A. 9202) The prayers of little children are heard in heaven more fully than those of older people. (D.2435) Prayer in itself is talking with God, and there is then an enlightenment upon the subject of the prayer with him who prays. (A. 2535)

"Lead us not into temptation." This is one of the many expressions in the letter of the Word accommodated to people in natural states of mind. As the prayer is read by angels, the thought that the Lord could lead into temptation disappears and the petition is successively purified with higher angels. It is right for us to say the prayer as it stands in the letter, and our thought will be of the Lord's protection from all that might lead us astray. If we say this prayer sincerely, should we not be on guard ourselves not to go needlessly and willfully into temptation? (A. 1874, 1875)

The argument of the parables following the prayer and of the parable in Luke 18:1-8, is that if we, imperfect and selfish as we are, answer prayers, how much more the Lord. A parent wishes to give his child the best that the child can receive. How much more the Lord! Not merely natural knowledge and imperfect understanding, if one desires and is able to receive real wisdom. (R.951)

The charge of the Pharisees that the Lord cast out devils by Beelzebub was more serious than the rejection of Him by those who rejected Him ignorantly, for it meant that they felt the Divine Spirit in His words and works and hated it. Verse 19 seems to mean that even the power which they and their children had to restrain outward evils and to lead a proper life was from God. How much more the power to rebuke and cast out the roots of evil! (Matthew 12:31, 32; E. 778)

Let the emphasis of the lesson be upon the reason for prayer and the necessity for prayer, with testimony from experience of its practical power.

## **Lesson 58**

### **Luke 12:1-12: Our Hairs Numbered**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

Does it make any difference what our thoughts and feelings are? Can anybody see them? Does it make any difference what we do alone or in the dark? The Lord sees everything. (Psalm 139:11, 12) Soon after we go into the other world our real feelings and thoughts are plainly seen. Even if they are bad and unkind we cannot hide them. They show just as they are, and if there is any need of it everything is seen that we have ever done. (H. 507, 462) Even now what we do in secret is as plain in heaven as what is done in midday light. (A.7454) We often forget this, and the people to whom the Lord spoke knew nothing about it. Among them were Pharisees who cared only to appear well before men.

Who can tell about leaven? (Verse 1) It was a bit of old sour dough put into new dough to raise it. What does the leaven of the Pharisees mean in Matthew 16:6-12? Here it seems to mean the pride of the Pharisees in outward show of piety with a selfish heart.

When are the hidden things revealed? They are open now to the Lord, even our most secret thoughts (Psalm 139:1-4), and they come plainly to the view of all when we come into the other world. The flat housetops were much used in that country, and a voice from the housetop might be heard through all the village. Does it seem as if the Lord could not notice all our little thoughts and acts? He knows every little bird. He knows every hair, and the most trifling thing connected with our life. Much more does He know the little thoughts that flit through our minds.

Confession and denial of the Lord, mentioned in verses 8 and 9, are not only confession and denial in words. To be loyal to the Lord and to do right for His sake is to confess Him, and to be disloyal and do wrong is to deny Him. By loyal or disloyal conduct here, we are establishing our spiritual companionship which will remain in the other world.

How little the people who heard the Lord understood His words! Even while He was speaking, one asked His help to get money from his brother. Read verses 13-21. One is rich toward God whether he has much or little of natural good things, if his mind is full of kind and trustful feelings and true thoughts.

1. Where were the great multitude of people to whom the Lord was speaking?
2. When are all hidden things revealed?
3. By whom are they even now clearly seen?
4. In what way should we fear the Lord?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Consider the Lord's warning against the leaven of the Pharisees in Matthew 16:6-12, and in verse 1 of our present chapter. Their teaching and example of a merely external sanctity put a souring, spoiling influence into life. Because of such meanings of leaven, it was forbidden at the Passover season. (Exodus 12:15) When the kingdom of heaven is likened to leaven (Matthew 13:33; Luke 13:21) the reference is to temptation occasioned by the intrusion of evil things. If they are promptly resisted, the heart is left more pure. (P. 25, 284; A. 2342)

Verses 4 and 5 tell us not to fear outward trouble or suffering, but to fear wrong things within. We should fear the Lord with the holy fear which fears lest it disobey and grieve Him. Wrong is the thing, and the only thing, to be afraid of. (E. 696) Verse 6: consider the sparrows with the ravens in verse 24. Verse 7: the hairs mean the most external and least living things of our life. That they are numbered by the Lord means not only that He knows how many they are, but He knows the quality of each little thing and the use that it should serve. "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." (Psalm 90:12; A. 10217; E. 453)

Confessing or denying the Lord by reverence or irreverence, obedience or disobedience, in daily life, determines our spiritual companionship now and our home forever. It also opens or shuts our minds to Divine truths, which in a more abstract sense are angels or messengers of the Lord. If some who know only the natural side of the Lord's life and of His Word, ignorantly speak

against Him, they do not so cut themselves off from His help as if they knew His goodness and still denied Him. (E. 960, 778)

## Lesson 59

### Luke 12:13-40" Lilies of the Field

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Let us imagine a little picture. A mother is showing her little boy a flower and helping him to see how beautiful it is. Who makes the flowers? The Lord, and He makes them more beautiful than anything that any man or woman can make. What wonderful colors they have! What sweetness! They are so delicate and sparkling with beauty. The Lord said to the disciples, "Consider the lilies, how they grow." He meant all the bright flowers, which are plenty on the hills and in the meadows of the Holy Land. They do not spin and weave to make their clothes. The Heavenly Father makes them beautiful and takes care of them. If He takes such care of the flowers, so small and living but a very little while, how much more will He take care of people, His own dear children. The little plants are not anxious. They are busy growing and making flowers and fruits and some of them laying up food in stems and roots for next year. They are busy, but they are not anxious. And so we should be.

And the birds. The Lord said, "Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap." The ravens are blackbirds with harsh voices and not much beauty, yet the Lord cares for them and gives them food. The Lord also tells us to notice the little sparrows. (Verses 6 and 7 of this chapter.) They are so little, yet the Heavenly Father takes care of them. The little birds are busy, especially when they are building their nests and feeding the young birds, but they are not anxious, and we ought not to be. We can learn about the Lord and love Him, and ought to be more trustful than the birds and flowers.

##### Junior

A great deal of the worry and the trouble of the world is about money and the clothes and food and other things that are bought with money. And many quarrels between brothers and friends are about these things; each one is afraid that another is getting a larger share. It seems sometimes as if we should be happy if we had a fine house and plenty of money to buy what we liked. But it is not so; much money, a big house and every comfort do not make a happy home, nor make life worth living, but a loving contented spirit. (Psalm 37:16; Proverbs 15:16, 17) There may be real happiness in a large or a small house, with many things or few things; it is wherever the loving, contented spirit is. He is really rich who is contented with what he has. The Lord taught this lesson on the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. A man asked Him to speak to his brother to divide the inheritance with him. Getting the money or not getting it was not important in the Lord's sight; a contented spirit was the needful thing; with this he would be happy. (Verses 13-15)

There is another reason why the contented, trustful spirit is better than money or anything that money will buy. How long can we keep the natural good things? At the longest, while we live in this world. And how long is that? Perhaps a few years, perhaps a few days, a very short time. (Psalm 49:17) But nothing can rob us of our thoughts and feelings. The contented spirit is a part of ourselves; it goes with us into heaven and is ours forever. The Lord taught this lesson in the parable of the man who tried to keep his goods by building larger barns. (Verses 16-21)

The words, "Take no thought," mean, take no anxious thought, be not anxious. It is not wrong to think what we should do tomorrow or the next day. It is right to lay in provisions for the winter and to save money for something which we know we shall need; but we should not be anxious about these things as if everything depended on ourselves, for the Lord is taking care of us; He expects us to use the hands and the brains and all the faculties that He has given us, and He takes care of the rest. We may be sure that He will bring to pass what is really best for us. We should feel safe in the Lord's care, as a little child feels safe who has hold of a father's hand.

The Lord tells us to consider the ravens and the lilies. The birds are not idle; they are busy all day building their nests and finding food for themselves and the hungry little birds, but they are not anxious. The plants are busy too gathering food and preparing it with their roots and leaves and making flowers and fruits. Plants store up food and make ready their buds in the autumn for the next spring; but they are not anxious. The Lord takes care of them, and forms and colors them more beautifully than any man could do. They sparkle with a living beauty from within. Even the little shrubs and grass, which in Palestine were cut and dried and burned in the ovens to heat them for baking, are bright with wonderful beauty. When we see how the Lord remembers every blade of grass and every leaf and every little flower in the farthest corner in the woods, we should feel sure that He remembers us and cares for every least thing of our lives. He tells us that He does. (Verses 22-34)

The Lord tells us to be ready and watching, like men that wait for their lord when he will return from the wedding. He comes to call each one of us to the other world. We do not know when it will be. He comes to some as little children, to some as young men and women, and to some in old age. We should be always ready for His coming. We need not be anxious about it; we do not need to be always thinking about going to the other world; but we are ready if we trust the Lord and try to make good use of each day as it comes. If we live so, whenever the Lord comes it will be to take us to heaven, which is meant by the feast spread for the faithful servants. But if we are not making good use of the days, we are not ready. Then the Lord comes as a thief; for death takes away all the things of this world that we care for, and we have no heavenly good things in their place. (Verses 35-40; A. 9125)

1. What did the Lord teach us is worth more than money or anything that money will buy?
2. What things are left behind when we die? What things are taken with us to the heavenly home?
3. What kind of thought is it right to take about food and clothing? What kind is it wrong to take?
4. What lesson should we learn from the flowers?

5. How will the Lord come some day to each one of us? How may His coming be like the coming of a thief?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The whole chapter is given to help us to value rightly the things of natural and of spiritual life, and to trust the Lord in relation to them both. The Lord knows that we need food and clothing for our bodies, and He has a care for these. He cares still more for the needs of our spiritual life. His care for little thoughts of goodness in our minds is pictured in His feeding of the birds, and His care for little truths growing beautiful from Him is pictured in His giving beauty to the flowers. These are the Lord's care, while we live obediently and trustfully, sleeping and rising night and day. (A. 8478; E. 750)

Money and natural good things are left behind when we die. It is the same with knowledge if it is not made good use of; it goes from us when we die if not before. But money or learning that is used to do good is the means of developing a heavenly character; it is, as it were, transformed into heavenly treasure which endures forever. In heaven all good things are safe from natural moth and rust, and also from the moth and rust of selfish feelings and false thoughts, which in this world so persistently creep in whenever we are off our guard. (P. 217; A. 9331)

The mind has its birds and flowers. The birds are the affections for thinking of heavenly things. The black ravens mean such affections which are quite imperfect and ignorant; yet the Lord loves and cares for them. (Psalm 147:9; E. 650; A. 4967) The flowers are the growing intelligence and happy thoughts which the Lord makes beautiful beyond all human wisdom, even the wisdom of Solomon. (E. 507; A. 8480.)

The loins are girded when the affections are held firmly to their purpose; the lamps are burning when the thoughts are clear and bright. (E. 252)

Verses 35-40: to watch does not mean to be anxious about the time of death, nor to be always thinking about it. Watching means being awake to the spiritual use of our possessions and of all things of natural life. "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." (Mark 13:33-37)

Coming in the second or third watch means at any time of life, we know not when. For a deeper thought see E. 532.

## **Lesson 60**

### **Luke 13: In the Synagogue and by the Way**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The Lord taught the disciples and the people that gathered about Him outdoors, as they walked, taking lessons from the birds and flowers and from the fields and vineyards, and at times He taught in the synagogues where the people gathered on the Sabbath. He told them a story of a man who had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. A vineyard is where grapevines are growing, usually in rows trained on supports to keep them off the ground. A fig tree is a low irregular tree, with sweet fruits. We all know figs dried, and some of us live where they grow in our gardens and we can pick them and eat them fresh from the tree. The fig tree in the story was not bearing fruit; three years the owner had come looking for fruit, and found none. "Cut it down," he said. But the gardener begged to keep it one year more. He would dig about it and enrich the ground. If it did not bear fruit then, it should be cut down. The Lord is very patient in helping us to be good and kind and useful; but if we put off and off, we shall lose the power and the chance to bear good fruits.

Now the Lord was in the synagogue, a Jewish church, and it was the Sabbath day. There was a poor woman in the synagogue, bowed down for eighteen years and unable to stand up straight. What would the Lord do? He said to the woman, "Thou art loosed from thine infirmity," and He laid His hands on her and she was made straight and glorified God. The ruler of the synagogue said that the Lord should not heal on the Sabbath. The Pharisees at other times said the same. They thought that the commandment meant this, which begins, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." But the Lord showed them that it is right on the Sabbath to do works of kindness. They would loose their ox or ass from the stall on the Sabbath and lead him away to watering (see also verse 5 of the next chapter); how much more was it right to loose this woman who had been bound for eighteen years! By such words and by His own kind works the Lord taught that it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days.

The Lord thought of Jerusalem, the great city, to which He was going, where there were many Pharisees and others like them who were proud and thought themselves holy and would not listen to His words or let Him help them to be really good and happy. Read the last two verses of the chapter. They are full of love and sadness.

##### **Junior**

"And he went through the cities and villages teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem." It was in the country east of Jordan. If the Lord had already visited Mary and Martha He had gone away again to this beyond-Jordan country; and when He visited Bethany again to raise Lazarus from death, again He came back to this country where many simple people were glad to hear Him.

One day as they walked, one told Him of some pilgrims from Galilee who had been killed by some soldiers of Pilate the governor while they were sacrificing in the temple courts. They had heard,

too, of eighteen persons who were killed by a falling tower at Siloam near Jerusalem. Some may have thought that these were very wicked men, that such things should happen to them. The Lord told them that they themselves were perhaps as wicked, and that every wicked person would lose his heavenly life. They should take warning. Read verses 6-9.

What does the parable of the fig tree teach? Read with it Isaiah 5:4.

Read verses 10-17, and with this verses 1-6 of the next chapter. Do you remember other times when the Pharisees condemned the Lord for healing on the Sabbath? (Matthew 12:1-13; John 5:1-17 and John 9) Repeat the command about the Sabbath day. And there were other laws about the Sabbath, especially one which forbade making any fire on that day. (Exodus 35:2, 3) The Jews had multiplied such laws until they made the Sabbath a day of formal piety and little more. Even the Old Testament told them that this was not the keeping of the law which the Lord desired, but rather works of kindness. Read Isaiah 58:5-7. The Lord was showing and teaching, still more plainly, the love and mercy that make a real Sabbath. Even the strict Jews would show some kindness to the animals on the Sabbath. How much more should they be kind to people needing help! It is good to think of our Sunday as a day for church and Sunday school, and a day for doing kind things.

Notice the question, verse 23: "Are there few that be saved?" and the Lord's answer. He does not tell how many, but He tells the kind of life which saves and the kind that does not. One does not come into heaven by knocking at the door and demanding to be let in, if he is a worker of iniquity. The answer given here is the same that is given to the foolish virgins in Matthew 25:11, 12. Those who keep the Lord's commandments and do the works of kindness find the door open and can feel at home in heaven. Were there more such people among those who prided themselves on being holy, or among the simple and ignorant people who had no pride? How do you understand verse 30?

Read verses 34, 35. What was the Lord's feeling toward the proud people who would not let Him help them?

1. Who was Pilate? Who were Galileans? Where was Siloam?
2. What parable did the Lord speak about a fig tree? What did it mean?
3. How did the Pharisees keep the Sabbath? How did the Lord keep it?
4. How is the kingdom of heaven like a mustard seed? How is it like leaven?
5. Who will be received into heaven? How will last be first, and first last?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The first verses of the chapter teach the need of repentance and give warning of spiritual death if we do not repent. The manner of natural death may also represent the kind of spiritual death. The mingling of blood with the sacrifices seems to picture the defiling of sacred things with self. A

tower represents knowledge of interior things, and may stand for intellectual pride. Of both we must repent. (A.4599)

The vine and the vineyard are types of spiritual intelligence. The spreading fig tree with its sweet fruit represents knowledge of sweet uses of natural kindness. (A. 4231; E. 403) The vineyard with the barren fig tree in it is a church or a mind with abundant knowledge of heavenly things, but no good works of kindness. The pleading of the vine dresser is a beautiful expression of the Lord's patience in doing all that Divine love can do, giving us every possible chance to bear the fruits of good works. But the truth remains that if we do not bear them we cannot live in heaven. (Isaiah 5:4; Mark 11:12-14, 20)

The physical infirmities that the Lord healed were types also of spiritual infirmities. The woman represents especially the heavenly affection in the church or in any heart. Satan had bound her, which means that the affection is constrained and helpless on account of false teaching, for Satan means all that is false. The loosing of the ox and ass and leading them to watering means the freeing of simple natural affections for what is good and true, giving them refreshment and lifting them up if they have fallen. This is right on the Sabbath and a beautiful use of the day, but it is still more right to loose the spiritual affections represented by the woman. (E. 342, 537)

The two little parables of the mustard seed and the leaven, found also in Matthew 13:31-33, tell of the great expansion of life when from natural it becomes spiritual, and of the development of spiritual character through prompt and faithful meeting of temptations. The leaven in itself is a suggestion of evil, but good may result if it is promptly resisted. (T. 290; P. 25)

When we read of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God, we think of the elements of heavenly character which the patriarchs represented, heavenly affection, thought and life. We think also of the Lord as He is known to celestial, spiritual and natural angels. The east, west, north and south remind us of the gates of the holy city; what do the quarters represent? (A. 2187; H. 324)

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem." The last verses of the chapter express most tenderly the Lord's care for His church. Wings associated with the Lord are emblems of the power of His Divine truth watching over and protecting. "He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler." (Psalm 91:4) The eagle's wings (Deuteronomy 32:10-12) are grand emblems of providence. The sheltering wings of the hen suggest in an even tenderer way how the Lord's providence enters into all the common things of daily domestic life. (E. 281, 283)

## **Lesson 61**

### **Luke 14: The Great Supper**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

It was a Sabbath day in the country beyond Jordan. The Lord was eating at the table in a Pharisee's house. A sick man was there. Can we think what the Lord would do, what the Pharisees would say, and how the Lord would answer?

The Lord then spoke three parables. Often His parables were about things close at hand, the farmers in fields, the shepherds with their flocks. So now the parables were about feasts. He spoke first to the guests who were coming and were choosing the chief places at the table. Read verses 7 to 11. Next He spoke a parable to the one who made the feast, and asked the Lord and the other guests to come. When he made a dinner or a supper, who ought to be invited, just people who could ask him in return, or the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind? "Maimed" means disabled by some injury. Read verses 12 to 14.

One of those at the table said, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." And the Lord spoke the parable of the Great Supper. Listen to the story, verses 15 to 24. We think of the man making the best supper that he could and inviting beforehand many people so that they could be ready. When the time came he sent again to remind them, but they all began to make excuse. What were their excuses? What did the man do who had made ready the feast? The streets and lanes of the city were near to his house. The highways and hedges were in the borders of the town. So a company was gathered for the supper, but none of the people were there who had been asked and had made excuses. Who makes the great supper? Yes, the Lord. And when you know this, you know the meaning of the whole story.

##### **Junior**

Someone read us the first six verses of the chapter and compare with verses 11 to 17 in the previous chapter.

Find in our lesson the parables which the Lord spoke to the company with Him at meat in the Pharisee's house. How many parables do you find? They are about feasts, as the parables so often were about things nearby. Someone read us the first parable, verses 7 to 11. The "chief rooms" were the chief places at the table, probably nearest to the one who gave the feast. It seems a selfish reason given, for taking the lowest place, and selfish reasons may often bring about the appearance of good manners. But the Lord wishes us to be polite and kind from a real spirit of kindness, and there is a better happiness in being kind than in taking chief places.

Someone read us the second parable, verses 12 to 14. Should we do things for other people in the hope of return to ourselves, or in the hope of helping them? Should we invite people just because they give us a good time, or should we think rather who can be helped? Again, it seems to be a selfish motive suggested in verse 14, the hope of recompense at the resurrection of the just. The

Lord does not wish us to help others for the sake of a reward in heaven, but He wishes us to know that there is an inner happiness in doing good and being kind unselfishly.

The third parable is longer. Someone read it slowly, giving us time to talk about it as we read. Verse 14 seems to suggest the remark in verse 15, and this is the occasion of the parable and gives the key to its meaning. We all think that we wish to come into heaven and to have part in the life of heaven. But we may be making excuses to keep out of heaven. The excuses grow more and more positive. Had the parable an application to the Pharisees and to the poor people and sinners who listened to the Lord?

1. What did the Lord do on the Sabbath in the Pharisee's house? What other things did He do on Sabbath days?
2. What three parables did the Lord speak at the Pharisee's table? What place should one take at a feast? Whom should he ask to come?
3. In the parable of the great supper what excuses were made? What does the great supper mean?.
4. What is meant by counting the cost in following the Lord?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

This healing on the Sabbath day we thought of in connection with verses 11 to 17 of the previous chapter. (E. 537)

The Lord's eating with the people and His parables at meat relate spiritually to the receiving of gifts and abilities from the Lord and to the use we make of these endowments. To feel proud and self-sufficient is to choose a chief place. If we have this spirit the Lord may let some trial come to teach us humility. Humility must be learned, if we are to go up higher, if we are to increase in heavenly life.

The parable about inviting guests to the feast contrasts the motive of pleasing ourselves and the motive of helping others in the use of the Lord's gifts, natural and spiritual. Shall we use them to win praise or gain, or to help where help is needed? The spiritual reward mentioned is not a happiness to be sought for, but is found unsought in a life of helping others.

The three excuses in the parable of the great supper represent a successively stronger grip by natural and evil things, which makes it more and more difficult and finally impossible to leave them. "I have bought a piece of ground" well describes a youthful interest in opportunities of the world which may keep one from interest in spiritual things. The oxen represent affections for natural use and pleasure exerting a strong pull away from spiritual life and heaven. (Psalm 106:20; A. 9391; R. 242) The marriage which makes it impossible to come is the union of falsity and evil in a confirmed evil life.

Who are the family who must be left and who must be hated if we would follow the Lord? They are the family of natural evil thoughts and feelings, foes of our own household. (Luke 9:59-62;

Matthew 10:35, 36; E. 724) To bear the cross after the Lord is to be faithful in temptations, in giving up our natural way for His sake.

The tower which we build is that of heavenly understanding. (Luke 13:4) We lay the foundation as we gather natural knowledge. Anyone can do this. But it is impossible to rise to intelligent understanding and to real wisdom without doing what we know is right. This is the counting of the cost. (A. 4599) Our warfare is the conflict of what is good and true with what is evil and false. Twenty thousand suggests the apparent power of evil. It is also associated with self-confident strength, while ten thousand represents the strength of childlike innocence and of trust in the Lord. Which is the stronger? Salt here, as in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:13) stands for the necessity for union of truth with good, if it is to have power. Salt that has lost its savor means truth with no desire to put it in practice. It is of no use at all. (A. 9207)

## **Lesson 62**

### **Luke 15: The Lost Found**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Who cared most to come to the Lord and to listen to His teaching? Not the proud Pharisees, who thought that they were good, but the publicans, as the tax gatherers were called, and the sinners who knew that they needed help. Many of these poor people were one day with the Lord. The Pharisees complained that He received sinners and ate with them, but the Lord loved to have these poor people come and loved to help them. To show how He loved these poor people, the Lord spoke three parables.

The first was about a sheep that was lost and how the shepherd found it and brought it back. Tell me about the shepherds in that country. You have learned about them in the story of David and in the story of the Christmas shepherds. You know how they watched the sheep in the fields and how the sheep loved and trusted them. We will tell together the story of the lost sheep in the Bible words.

Another parable was about a silver piece which a woman lost, and she lighted her little lamp and swept the bare earth floor and found it. How glad the woman was, and her friends were happy with her.

There was one more parable. All listen while we read it. I hope you have the three pictures for the three parables.

##### **Junior**

Who were with the Lord listening to His teaching? The Pharisees and scribes objected. The Lord explained His love for these poor people in three beautiful parables.

Who will tell us the story about the sheep that was lost and was found by the shepherd?

Who will tell the story about the lost silver piece? Explain to us about the silver piece, the little lamp, and the bare earth floor.

Another parable was about a father with two sons. The younger son went far from home and got into great trouble. There was a famine in that land. He had spent all his money and was in want. A man sent him into his fields to feed swine and he was so hungry that he would have eaten the husks that the swine did eat. The husks were probably the thick hard pods of the carob tree, which were once found sometimes on fruit stands, called St. John's bread. Then the boy thought of his home and his father. He came to himself and was ashamed, and said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say, Make me as one of thy hired servants." He came and his father was looking for him and ran to meet him, and kissed him and brought him in, and gave him the best he had in the home. The older brother, when he came from the field, was angry that the father had treated the wanderer so, but the father said, "It was meet that we should make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." We must read this parable carefully and think how it explained the Lord's love for the poor people who came to Him, and for all people who have done wrong and are sorry and come back to Him for help. The answer of the father to the elder brother was the Lord's answer to the Pharisees who objected to His receiving sinners. Read verses 1, 2, 31, 32.

When He had finished, the Pharisees must have seen that they were like the elder brother, thinking themselves very good and unwilling that the Lord should show kindness to the publicans and sinners. The parables should teach us two things. We ought not to be proud like the elder brother and think ourselves better than other people. And if we have done wrong like the younger brother and wandered away from the Father's house and wasted His good gifts, we must never despair and think that it is too late to do better, that the Lord will not forgive and help us if we try. He is always ready when we are willing to try.

1. What three parables did the Lord speak about finding things that have been lost? Who can tell me about the first parable? The second? The third?
2. How are we like shepherds? What are the sheep that sometimes go astray? What must we do then? Who will rejoice with us?
3. When am I near the Heavenly Father's home? And when am I in a far country? Why does it speak of a famine in the far country?
4. What ought we to do when we feel that we have done wrong? Is it ever in this world too late to make a new beginning? Will the Lord ever fail to help us if we try to do better?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

We have spoken of the three parables as teaching the same lesson, that if we care so much for a sheep or a silver piece or a son, the Lord must care more for His children. Still the parables are not a repetition, but each one teaches about the Lord's care for some particular thing in human character. What do the sheep represent? Gentle, innocent affections of trust towards the Lord and love to one another. The Lord entrusts to each of us a hundred sheep when He gives us in

childhood a full measure of gentle, innocent affections. The Lord is the shepherd and we are lesser shepherds under Him. How apt the gentle affections are to be lost as we grow older! When we find that something of innocence and gentleness is missing, the parable shows us that we ought to make an earnest effort to bring it back. The Lord will help us if we try, and angels rejoice with us. (A. 5992, 9836)

What element of character is represented by the silver piece? There was a Golden Age when people lived in love, and a Silver Age when they were intelligent in heavenly wisdom. The bright white silver represents heavenly intelligence. Ten pieces, like the hundred sheep, mean the full measure of knowledge of what is right and of beautiful true thoughts which the Lord gives to us. But if we are not faithful to what we know is right we lose our intelligence and begin to grow stupid in heavenly things. We must light our lamp and sweep the house; that is, we must use what truth we have, to remove what is false and wrong from our minds, and to regain the heavenly intelligence; and angels will rejoice with us. (E. 675)

The parable of the sheep is about good affections. The parable of the silver is about true thought. The other parable completes the series: affection, thought, and deed. It describes our going astray in actual life and our return to heavenly ways by the Lord's help. "The far country" is a state very different from the good life which the Lord would have us live. The want and the famine in that land show how soon the pleasure in evil ways is gone and one is left miserable and unsatisfied. The young man in the parable became a servant; living in evil ways one soon finds that he is not free. Feeding swine and sharing their food is a last attempt to find happiness in self-indulgent pleasures. But there is no happiness until we look up to higher, better things and remember the Lord and the heavenly home, and are sorry for our wrongdoing and resolve to do right obediently like servants in our Father's house. Their life of duty is better than the life of self-indulgence. When we look up in this way and make a new beginning, the Lord comes to help us and gives unexpected blessings. It is right for the son to intend to be a servant, to do right because it is right; but the father does not let him say the word "servant," he gives him unexpected freedom and happiness. The best robe represents beautiful, heavenly thoughts; the fatted calf the earnest affection of the heavenly life; and the music and dancing the active pleasure of it. (E. 279; N. 159-161) The parable does not mean that one must do wrong before he can receive and appreciate the good things of heaven, but he must realize that without the Lord's help he is inclined to evil and far away from heaven. The elder brother of outwardly proper life must also know his evil tendencies and repent before he can receive and enjoy the deeper blessings. The joy of the shepherd, the joy of the woman, the joy of the loving father are only faint suggestions of the Lord's joy in helping everyone who feels his need and asks His help.

## **Lesson 63**

### **Luke 16:1-18: The Unjust Steward**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The story is about a steward who had charge of a rich man's property, renting his farms and selling his crops. He had many and valuable things to take care of and make use of, but they were his master's, not his own. The steward was to lose his position. The master was going to dismiss him because the steward had wasted his goods. What would the steward do? "I cannot dig," he said, "I am ashamed to beg." It would be very hard for him. What could he do? He thought, and he made a plan. He would do something which would make people feel friendly to him so that they would take him into their homes. His plan was dishonest. There were people owing wheat and oil and other things to his master, and the steward would let them change their accounts, which were perhaps scratched on a wax-covered tablet, and pay only a part of what was owed. This was not right. That is why he is called an unjust steward. But the people would be grateful to him and would be kind to him by and by and would take him into their houses. He did this, and the master learned what he had done. What would the master say? No doubt he condemned the dishonesty, but he praised the steward for his shrewdness in using the chance while he had it to make friends who would be kind to him by and by.

We can think of ourselves as stewards of the Lord's goods. Our homes and money and books and playthings, and knowledge, and all our powers are really the Lord's. He gives them to us to take care of and to use for Him. If we are faithful in using the things that the Lord has given us to use, angels in heaven will be our friends, and when we leave this world they will receive us into their homes. By using faithfully a little that we have, we are prepared to use much. So a boy or girl may rise from running errands for a store to managing and perhaps owning a business, from helping to set the table to taking the whole care of a home. By using faithfully the things of this world we are prepared to use the still better things of heaven.

##### **Junior**

Read the parable of the unjust steward, verses 1-12. What is a steward? Do you remember the steward of Joseph's house? (Genesis 44) Notice in Genesis 2:15 it is not said that the Lord gave the garden of Eden to the man, but that He put the man into the garden to dress it and to keep it. Read of the faithful and wise steward in Luke 12:42. In what way are we all stewards? In what way is the steward in the parable an example for us to follow? In what way is he not an example? We may think of the wheat and the oil as due in payment of rent. Both are large amounts, one measure of wheat being eleven bushels, and one measure of oil nine gallons. Who is the lord in verse 8, who commended the steward for his shrewdness? Our Lord compared this worldly prudence of the steward and of worldly men with the carelessness of religious people in not using the good things and the opportunities of this world in ways to prepare them for the larger blessings and responsibilities of heaven. If men like the steward in their way are prudent, why are religious people less prudent in using life in this world to prepare for the higher life? Faithfulness

in little things prepares us for greater things. Faithfulness in things of this world prepares us for heaven.

"Mammon" means riches, verse 9. Why are riches of this world called "mammon of unrighteousness"? Not because they are necessarily evil. They may be gained honestly and used well. They are called "mammon of unrighteousness" because they may so easily lead astray. What are the true riches?

Why are things of this world called "that which is another man's," verse 12? We have no permanent hold on them. They may be taken from us at any time. We cannot take them with us when we leave this world. But spiritual blessings are "your own." They are a part of yourself. No one can take them from you. They go with you to the heavenly world.

1. The parable is about a steward; what is a steward? How are we stewards?
2. In what way does the Lord wish us to make friends by means of the things of this world?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Develop the thought of stewardship in relation to our money, our education, our abilities of body and mind. Read of this in A. 1795.

Do not be troubled because the unjust steward is made our example. He is not our example in his dishonesty, but in using present opportunities so that they will result in future good. He was wise in his way. If we are wise in ours, we shall so use natural good things that we can be trusted with heavenly good things. Verse 9 in the Revised Version reads: "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when it shall fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

How is verse 13 consistent with the Lord's saying, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's"? We may seem to be serving many masters, but if one could look deeply into our minds he would see that we are serving inmost the Lord or ourselves. All other interests are subordinate to our central love. (N. 54-61; A. 2588; E. 409)

Read what is said in A. 6138 about the need of total surrender to the Lord and the resulting blessing. Living with divided mind, partly for ourselves and partly for the Lord, we destroy our true relation as servants of our Lord and Master (verse 13), and our possible relation with the Lord is so interior that it is called a marriage; this also we destroy by living for ourselves and for worldly gains. (Verse 18)

In a deeper meaning the steward's action in the parable represents exactly what is right for us to do. The debts of oil and wheat represent what we owe the Lord for His goodness and His truth. Writing a smaller number in both places suggests that we cannot fully confess how large the debt is, but we must confess it as fully as we can. Fifty measures of oil means as much gratitude for the Lord's goodness as we can give. Five and fifty are associated with what is complete, but at the same time little or few. (A. 2252) Eighty measures of wheat means such gratitude as we can give

for the Lord's truth, with the resolution to be faithful to what we know, through whatever trial or temptation. Eighty, like forty, is associated with temptation. (A. 1963, 4617) The steward said, "I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed." It expresses the impossibility of receiving heavenly life hereafter if we do not prepare for it now. "Cannot dig" expresses the impossibility of thinking truly, and "ashamed to beg" the impossibility of desiring what is good.

## Lesson 64

### Luke 16:19-31: The Rich Man and Lazarus

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

The story today is of a rich man who had clothes of fine white linen, and robes of purple, dyed with the rich color which the Tyreans knew how to make from a little shellfish. He had more than enough rich food and drink, and there was feasting every day in his house. And there was a poor beggar named Lazarus, who was brought each day to the gate, begging for crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. The poor man had many sores, and no one was kind and helped to heal them except the dogs which came and licked them. The dogs in the eastern cities have no home and no master, but live in the streets and find what they can to eat. They were sorry for poor Lazarus.

After a time the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. He reclined next to Abraham at the table, as John leaned upon Jesus' breast at the table of the last supper. The rich man also died and was buried. He awoke into the other world and found himself tormented by a flame, the flame that his own selfishness made. The man who had been rich was now in torment, not because he had been rich but because he had been selfish. And Lazarus who had suffered so much was now made happy. The rich man asked that Lazarus might come to him and dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue. This could not be, for a great gulf separated between them which could not be passed over. Then he asked that Lazarus might be sent to his five brethren in the world to warn them not to live selfishly, but that could not be. "They have Moses and the prophets," Abraham said, the commandments and the lessons which the Lord has given us in the Bible. "Let them hear them. If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." The Lord teaches in His Word what we need to know, and in the way that will help us best, so that when we die we can find our home in heaven.

##### Junior

The parable gives a strong picture of the rich selfish man having more than enough of everything but doing nothing to help the poor beggar at his gate, and of the poor man asking for crumbs, and no one but the dogs to treat him kindly. Both the beggar and the rich man died, and the parable gives another strong picture in the other world. Does it mean that everyone who has riches in this world will be poor in the other world, and that everyone who has suffered here will be comfortable and happy there? No, one's state in the other world does not depend upon what his conditions in this world have been, but upon the spirit in which he has lived here, whether he has

been proud and selfish, or humble, knowing that he needs the Lord's help. The Lord taught at another time that one who trusts in riches, who is proud and selfish and thinks he needs nothing, can hardly come into heaven, but "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The humble spirit, knowing its need of help, is represented by the beggar. Such persons the Lord called to Him in this world, and He calls them to Himself in heaven.

The beggar in the parable is called Lazarus. Do you remember another Lazarus in the Gospel who was a real man, whom the Lord loved? The same name is used for Lazarus of the parable and Lazarus of Bethany because they represent the same kind of spirit which the Lord can love, a humble spirit, knowing its need and willing to be helped and taught.

The parable tells us some things about the other world which are made more plain by the fuller teaching given in the doctrine of the New Church, especially in the book "Heaven and Hell." When people die they awaken in the spiritual world. The part of that world where they awaken is called the world of spirits. Here all are welcomed. Soon the inner character of all comes plainly out, and the good and evil separate, for they cannot live together. The evil must be restrained from hurting others, but their selfish feelings can never make them happy. These are meant by the tormenting fire. Those who are good at heart are kindly taught and prepared for heaven, and there each one finds his home, with those whom he loves, in doing a use which he can enjoy. Heaven in the parable and in other places in Scripture is pictured as a feast, for the Lord gives every day abundantly the strength and instruction and blessing for the day. The parable speaks of Abraham. In fact, it is the Lord Who receives and cares for each one in His great love.

Does it seem that it might have been useful for Lazarus to go to the rich man's brethren? Does it seem as if it often might be useful for an angel to come from heaven, or for the Lord to give some sign or miracle to make us give attention and obey? Such things might compel an outward obedience, but they would not reach and win men's hearts to the Lord and good life. The Lord knows what can best do this, and He gives the teaching and the help in the Bible for those who are willing to be taught and helped.

1. Who are the rich who cannot come into heaven? Who are the poor in spirit of whom the Lord says, "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven"?
2. Do we remember any other Lazarus? Who was he?
3. Where is the choice made between good and evil, in this world or the other?
4. By what means does the Lord warn us and teach us so that we can be ready for heaven?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Shall we study a little further some of the points taken up with the junior classes? Are we to think that riches in this world necessarily lead to unhappiness in the other world? Or that poverty here brings riches there? What are the riches which unfit one for heaven? and what is the poorness which prepares one for heaven? Read of the rich and the poor in heaven in H. 357-365.

We must think also of riches of knowledge, things good and true from the Word. In that thought the rich man represents the Jews and others who have precious knowledge from the Word but keep it selfishly to themselves. And the beggar at the gate represents the Gentile people ignorant but eager to be instructed. The purple and fine linen represent the knowledge of things good and true possessed by those who have the Word, and the sumptuous fare the hearing of much wisdom from the Word, but with all this they are the more proud and selfish. The beggar's sores are the many falsities which the Gentiles were in from ignorance. The dogs' licking of the sores represents the sympathy of simple good people like themselves and their effort to heal the errors as far as possible. Read full explanations of the parable in A. 9231, 10227; T. 215; E. 118.

Recall what you know of the separation of the good and evil in the other world, and of the state of each. Note in the parable the phrases "afar off," a "great gulf," "this flame."

In the Old Testament history Abraham, Isaac and Jacob represent the Lord in His human development, on the planes of love, understanding and life. To be with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God (Matthew 8:11) is to be near to the Lord in these ways. To be carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom would then mean to come in heaven into very loving nearness to the Lord, and into consciousness of His love. (A. 3305, 6960; E. 118)

Read in H. 456 and 1156, P. 134, 135, why it is not useful that people shall be compelled to faith in the Lord and to good life by miracles or signs or by one rising from the dead. The faith would not be real and lasting, and good and true things would be profaned. The Lord teaches us in His Word, where we can learn without compulsion and choose freely the good ways.

## Lesson 65

### Luke 17: Lepers Healed and Second Coming Foretold

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

The Lord was walking with the disciples from village to village, teaching them as they walked. Often sick people came to Him for healing. One day ten men who were lepers called to Him for help. The lepers were very pitiful. Their hands and feet were much deformed and their faces disfigured. They were not allowed to come into the towns, but must stay outside and must call, "Unclean, unclean," to warn people not to come near. (Leviticus 13:45, 46) Now there are hospitals for the lepers, but there were none in the Gospel days, and even many years after this story in the holy land outside the towns lepers sat begging by the roadside, as we see them in our little picture. The Pharisees and Jews would not touch a leper, but many times when they called out to the Lord for help He put His hands on them and healed them.

We read in verses 11-19 that as the Lord was coming into a village ten men that were lepers stood afar off and "lifted up their voices and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." We feel sure that the Lord would heal them, and He did. "When He saw them He said unto them, Go show yourselves to the priest, and as they went they were healed." It was the law with the Jews that when one was healed of leprosy he should go to the priest. The priest must examine him and say that he was

healed, and the man must give to the priest offerings for the altar. (Leviticus 14) But besides these offerings, would it not be still better to give thanks to the dear Friend Who spoke the word and healed them, the Heavenly Father come so near to them? Only one of the ten turned back to give thanks, and he was a Samaritan - just as it was a Samaritan in the parable who helped the poor man who fell among thieves. "Were there not ten cleansed?" the Lord asked. "But where are the nine?" Do we often forget to thank the person who helps us, and to thank the Lord for all that He does for us?

## Junior

The chapter divides into two paragraphs of teaching, connected by the short account, verses 11-19, of the healing of the ten lepers. Before the story of the lepers, listen to the Lord's teaching in verses 1-10. Verse 1: We shall necessarily meet evil in the world, but may the Lord help us not to choose it and make it ours. As we read verse 2 we recall many other sayings about little children and see that they teach the duty of protecting the little child of innocence in ourselves and in others. To "offend" means to cause to stumble. Reading verse 3, we think also of Matthew 8:15-17. Both passages teach the wisdom of going directly and kindly to our brother with any trouble, instead of speaking harshly of him to others or cherishing hard feeling toward him. With verse 4 read Matthew 18:21, 22, and think what the Lord means by forgiving seven times in a day. Read the little parable of the servant, verses 7-10. Does it seem to say that we do right to feel proud and to think ourselves deserving for work that we do or for keeping the Lord's commandments? It is our simple duty.

Here our attention is attracted by the cry of the ten lepers. This was at one of the times when the Lord, on His way to Jerusalem was passing along the border between Samaria and Galilee, perhaps turning to the beyond-Jordan road as in Luke 9:51-56. Learn the story of the lepers, and read a little about them in Leviticus 13:45, 46, and 14. Jews perhaps would go to a priest in Jerusalem, and the Samaritan perhaps to his place of worship on Mt. Gerizim, to make their offerings. (John 4:20) But the One to Whom they should give thanks was near at hand.

The last section of the chapter is the Lord's answer to the Pharisees who asked when the kingdom of God should come, the kingdom of which He was so often speaking. The Lord's answer shows how much they had misunderstood. It would not be a great earthly kingdom, but a kingdom in men's hearts. Still He would have them look forward to a time when He should be truly known and His kingdom should be glorious. The time is now. Revelation declares, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." (Revelation 11:15) The Lord comes to find people for His kingdom. All seem to be busy with their worldly cares and pleasures, but some in their hearts are living in the ways of the Lord's kingdom, and some are not. So it was in the days of Noah, and in Sodom in the days of Lot. So it is today. Two people may be living together, two people may be working together. We cannot surely know who is living for the Lord's kingdom and who is not; but the Lord knows, for He reads all hearts. The Lord did not tell the Pharisees when His kingdom should come, but He told them how the kingdom is formed in men's hearts, and that it will some day be known who are of His kingdom and who are not.

1. How many times should we forgive?
2. What does the Lord say that faith can do?

3. How many of the ten lepers gave thanks for his healing? Who was he?
4. Where is the Lord's kingdom?
5. Who was Noah? Who was Lot?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Verse 1: It is impossible to avoid contact with evil in the world; it will come up in us from our inherited nature; but we become guilty if we choose it and so give it a new start and a new existence in ourselves. Verse 2: Willful violence to things of innocence is very dangerous; far more so than by false teaching to be kept from ever knowing the things of heavenly life. This falsity is the millstone. Hanging about the neck suggests cutting off the life from interior and heavenly things. It is better to be so cut off than to receive and abuse them. (E. 1182) "Seven times in a day," or "seventy times seven," means "always and without number." (E.257) The mustard seed suggests the smallness of our faith; but little and imperfect as it is, to what may it not grow! Removing the tree is removing false thought; the mountain is the love of self and of the world. (E. 815)

The servant who simply did as he was commanded represents ourselves; we are called servants in the early stages of regeneration when we act obediently from duty. It is especially in this stage of regeneration that we are apt to be self-confident and feel deserving for what we do. Read an interesting explanation in E. 794.

The story of the ten lepers and the one who gave thanks reminds us how few are grateful to the Lord; how little the gratitude of any one is compared with what it ought to be. There is more gratitude in simple Gentile hearts, than among those who have better opportunity to know the Lord. (E. 375, 537)

The instruction about the Lord's second coming reminds us of similar instruction in Matthew 24. The words,, "The kingdom of God is within you," prepare us to learn that the signs of the Lord's coming are in the minds and hearts of men. (H. 33) The lightning shining from one part under heaven to the other, or out of the east unto the west (Matthew 24:27) is explained to mean the light of love and faith which began in brightness but would be quickly and wholly dissipated before the Lord's second coming. (A. 3900)

The carelessness in the days of Noah, when men were destroyed by a flood, suggests immersion in falsity; the carelessness in the days of Lot, when Sodom was destroyed by fire, suggests abandonment to evil. Particulars are explained in E..617. The safety on the housetop or in the field shows the duty if we have attained to something of charity of remaining in it, and not turning back to a state of mere faith or to evil. The danger of such looking back is shown in the story of Lot's wife. (A. 2454, 7857)

Two are together in one bed, grinding at the mill, in the field; one is taken and one left. The Lord's coming works a judgment, revealing opposite motives in lives outwardly alike. To be in one bed is to rest in one doctrine; to grind together is to search and reason in regard to truth; to be in the

field is to be busy about things good and true. The Lord knows who is inwardly in the life of heaven and who is not. (R. 137; E. 163) In the last verse of the chapter you see pictured a time when the church is dead, and consequently false reasonings are multiplied. (A.3901)

## Lesson 66

### Luke 18:1-17: Pharisees and Publican: Blessing Little Children

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

All the children have learned the Lord's Prayer, and I hope they remember to say it every morning and night, and whenever they feel that they need help to keep them from doing wrong. The Lord always hears us when we really want His help. We may not always have the answer that we hoped for, or we may not have it at once; but we must do our part and be patient. The Lord always helps us in the way that will be best for us, and as soon as will be best for us.

We find our lesson today in these verses that we are learning to say and in the picture of the Lord blessing the children. The Lord loved little children so much, He was so strong and kind, it is no wonder that children loved to come to Him. And I think they were better and happier children for having seen His face and heard His kind voice and received His blessing.

The disciples would have stopped the people who were bringing children to the Lord. Perhaps they thought they would be a trouble to Him. But the Lord said, No, He loved to have the children come, and He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them and blessed them. The Lord loves all little children, and He wants the mothers and fathers and friends of little children to tell them about Him and help them to know Him. This is one way of bringing the children to Him. That is one reason why parents and teachers tell the children about the Lord and read them the stories about Him in the Bible. It is a reason why they help them to see the Lord's love and wisdom in His care for the flowers and little birds and other things in the world around them. It is one reason why parents bring little children to the church to be baptized or have them baptized at home. It means that they want them to be the Lord's children always, and to grow up strong and beautiful for life in this world and in heaven. When children are brought to be baptized, the minister reads these verses about the Lord's love for little children, and we feel that the Lord and the angels are near.

With this lesson you will want to sing, "I think when I read that sweet story of old, When Jesus was here among men, How He called little children as lambs to His fold, I should like to have been with them then." Have some of you the little book "Children of Gospel Days," and in it the story called "The Children's Secret"? You may like to read the story after this lesson.

##### Junior

The Lord spoke a parable to teach us never to be discouraged, but always to ask His help and to feel sure that He will give it. The unjust judge answered the widow's prayer, for a selfish reason,

because she troubled him; how much more must the Lord answer, who loves us so much and wants so much to help us! "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him." (Matthew 7: 11) Read verses 1-8. It says that the Lord will help "speedily." Sometimes it seems to us that His help is long delayed, but never a moment longer than is best for us. What He wants us to remember is that His help is sure; and what does it matter, a little sooner or a little later, if it is sure? Knowing this, we can be patient. (R. 4, 949)

Do you think you are not interested in this story about the Lord and little children because it is about children long ago and in another country? Surely in blessing those children the Lord showed His love for all children in all countries and at all times. Do you think you are too old to have an interest in the story, for the story to mean you? As you read or say the verses you can see that the Lord is not speaking only of children young in years, but of all who are childlike in spirit, who are willing to love Him and to do as He asks them to do. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

The story of the little children helps us to understand the other story in our lesson about the Pharisee and the publican praying in the temple. (Verses 9-14) What do you know about Pharisees and about publicans? Picture the two men praying in the court of the temple, one so proud and boasting of his goodness, and the other knowing that he had done wrong in many ways and needed help if the Lord could have mercy on a poor man like him. Which of the two had more of the childlike spirit which the Lord can love and help? That the publican went to his house justified means that his prayer was a real prayer and pleasing to the Lord.

This parable is a part of a lesson about prayer. At other times the Lord Himself had prayed and had taught the disciples to pray, and had given them the Lord's Prayer. But something so important He must speak of many times. There is in our chapter another parable about prayer besides the one of the Pharisee and publican. (Verses 1-8) It is to teach that men ought always to pray and not to be discouraged and give up praying if the answer does not come at once, and just the answer that we hoped for. Even the unjust judge answered the widow's prayer, for a selfish reason, because she troubled him. How much more will the Lord answer, Who loves us so much and wants so much to help us! "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him." (Matthew 7:11) It says that the Lord will help "speedily." Sometimes it seems to us that help is long delayed, but not a moment longer than is best for us. His help is sure. Knowing this, we can be patient. Even if He cannot give what we ask, it is because He knows that something else will be better for us, will be a greater blessing.

1. What did the Lord teach us about prayer, in the Sermon on the Mount?
2. What parable did the Lord give to teach that we should not be discouraged if we do not, or do not at once, see the answer to our prayer?
3. What parable did the Lord give to show the spirit in which we ought to pray? What is the right spirit?
4. What beautiful lesson does this chapter have for little children? Is it for older persons too?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

We lately had a lesson upon prayer. (Vol. V, Lesson 57) Many helpful references were given at that time, and we had some earnest discussion of the subject. Two parables upon prayer are in today's chapter. Read verses 1-8. What is the special lesson of this parable? Not to be discouraged in prayer, nor to doubt that the Lord hears and that He will help. He may seem to delay to answer, as in the case of the Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:24-30) in the case of the father at the foot of the mountain of transfiguration (Mark 9:14-29) and in the case of the blind man at Jericho. (Mark 10:46-52) Always it was to bring the one who prayed into the best state to be helped. Our first prayer may be crude. It may be for what would not be really good for us. The Lord may be able to lead us to ask more wisely, with more of "Not my will but Thine be done." Remember passages of Scripture which teach the importance of continuance and patience. "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him." (Psalm. 37:7, 9) "It is good for a man that he should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." (Lamentations 3:26) "In your patience ye shall win your souls." (Luke 21:19) The spiritual thought in "speedily" is "surely." The Lord will surely answer, will surely help. "Behold, I come quickly," the Lord says in the Revelation, which means that He comes surely. "Surely" - that gives us strength and courage. A little sooner or later matters little. (R. 4, 85) It will not trouble you that the parable makes use of an unjust judge. That emphasizes the lesson, as in Matthew 7:11. How is the latter half of verse 8 related to the subject? The parable of the Pharisee and publican brings to mind other teachings about the poor in spirit, for whom is the kingdom of heaven. We had lately the lesson of the rich man who found no place in heaven and of the poor beggar Lazarus who was carried into Abraham's bosom. Later in this chapter we have the lesson of the rich man who must sell all that he had, and the Lord's warning that they that trust in riches cannot enter heaven. Do you find an example of the rich and the poor in spirit in the parable of the Pharisee and publican? (H.357)

The lesson of the little children and the Lord is for people of all ages, for the Lord is speaking also of the childlike heart which is prepared for heaven. He is speaking of the childlike states laid up in every soul in early years, which are the basis of all that is heavenly and the foundation for regeneration. He is speaking of innocence which is receptive of all blessings of heaven. Read in "Heaven and Hell" about little children in heaven, 332-341, and read also about the innocence of angels which makes them receptive of all blessings. (H. 281-283)

## **Lesson 67**

### **Luke 18:18-43: The Rich Ruler: Blind Man Healed**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Little children were brought to the Lord for His blessing. He was glad to have them come. And now a young man came running. He was a ruler, perhaps of a synagogue, and he was rich. He

came asking a question. "Good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The Lord told him to do two things, first to remember and keep the Commandments. "Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother." Are they the same Commandments that we learn to obey? The young man said, "All these have I kept from my youth up." He had been taught the Commandments as a child. He thought that he had always kept them. Probably he had kept them in an outward way, thinking that he was good, like the Pharisees in other stories. But nothing was hidden from the Lord. He could read the young man's heart. "Yet lackest thou one thing," the Lord said. What was the one thing? "Sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor, and come, follow me." He must not be proud and trust in riches, and he must have kinder thoughts toward other people. What two things must the young man do? Keep the Commandments, and sell all and give to the poor. Perhaps you have a picture of the young man, with a sad face, turning away from the Lord. Why was he sad?

We know now where the Lord and the disciples were, on their journey to Jerusalem. They had come to Jericho. Can we find Jericho on the map? And Jerusalem, to which they were going? Jericho was in the edge of the sunny plain of Jordan. There was plenty of water, and the gardens of Jericho were famous. The name means "the fragrant place," and it was known in the old days as the city of palm trees. The Lord and the disciples were passing among the gardens, the way shaded by over-hanging trees, and the sweetness of flowers in the air. Many people, too, had gathered and were going with them. Here a poor blind man sat by the wayside begging, as they used to do, and still did so often for many years after this story in that country. Hearing the multitude passing by, he asked what it meant, and they told him that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. Read the rest of the story to the end of the chapter. Some people rebuked the blind man and told him to be quiet, as the disciples once told people not to bring little children to the Lord. But the Lord stood still and told them to bring the blind man to Him. The Lord gave him his sight, and he joined the company following the Lord, and they all gave praise to God.

## **Junior**

If verses 15-17 are a story for little children, the next verses of the chapter are a story for older children and young people. Here was a rich young man with great possessions, as we learn, and also rich in his high opinion of himself, for he had kept the Commandments, in an outward way at least, and thought that he was good. He was not poor in spirit.

Note carefully the two parts of the Lord's answer. First, keep the Commandments. That is the way to begin to live rightly. And then, to sell all and to give to the poor and to follow the Lord. He must stop trusting in his wealth and be humble in spirit. He must trust in the Lord and think of helping other people. We are told, in Mark 10:21, that the Lord looking upon the young man loved him. When we see him going away very sorrowful we wish we knew whether he afterward did as the Lord told him to do with his riches.

"And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, He said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." Some who heard this found it hard to understand, and (Mark 10:24) the Lord said again, "How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God." It is not riches, but trust in riches, pride in having money or strength or learning or any other possession, that keeps one out of heaven. What a strong picture it is in verse 25, the camel and the needle's eye. Some people have thought that the needle's eye means a little gate which the

camel might squeeze through, but we do not think so. The figure seems rather to say in the strongest way that by his own powers one cannot come into heaven. With the Lord it is possible; He can help even a proud man who is willing, to get rid of his pride and to become ready for heaven.

Read verse 30. The Lord tells us that even in this world, if we use possessions in a heavenly way they are much more precious and give much truer enjoyment, and besides, the enjoyment will continue in heaven. (Psalm 37:16; Proverbs 15:16, 17; Proverbs 16:8)

Look at your map as you read verses 31 and 35 and see where the Lord and the disciples were on their journey. Did the Lord know the trials which were before Him? But even when He told the disciples, how little they understood or remembered.

Read now of the healing of the blind man by the wayside near Jericho. (Verses 35-43) Why was the Lord called Jesus of Nazareth? Why was He called the Son of David? Compare verse 39 with verses 15 and 16 of this chapter. What glorious words for the blind man to hear: "Receive thy sight. Thy faith hath saved thee."

1. What lesson does this chapter have for young men and women?
2. What did the ruler ask?
3. What did he say when the Lord told him to keep the Commandments?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

How often the Lord's first words touch the root of the matter, for He could read men's hearts. We have such a case in His first words to the rich young man: "Why callest thou Me good?" He called the Lord good in a careless way. He thought himself good; that was his trouble. He must become poor in spirit, which is represented in his getting rid of his riches. The young man showed a spirit which is present in many of our youthful efforts, a feeling that we know a good deal and are pretty strong. The Lord knows what is good in our efforts, and He loves us for them, but He wants us to gain the humility and dependence on Him, which is the secret of real strength. "To do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." (Micah 6:8; E. 934)

The camel and the needle's eye mean impossibility, but the figure is chosen because of correspondence. The camel, an unfriendly and willful animal, but strong and hardy for desert travel, represents a power of natural thought and reason; and the needle represents a spiritual penetration, a perception of spiritual truth. One cannot, by his own power of natural reasoning, become spiritual and wise; one cannot make himself heavenly. It is the Lord's work, as the man keeps the Commandments and accepts His help. (H. 365; A. 3048)

In connection with verses 31-34, recall the story of the Lord's trial and crucifixion, and see in what way each particular of the prophecy in this chapter was fulfilled.

"Jesus of Nazareth" is one of the tenderest names of the Lord. "Jesus" means His saving love, and the words "of Nazareth" remind us how near the Lord came to us in this world, how fully He

entered into the labors of the world. "The Son of David" is a kingly name. It acknowledges the power of the Lord's truth to conquer and to guide.

Why did the Lord ask the blind man "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" To know definitely our need and to confess it to the Lord prepares us for His help. There is this use in prayer. (N. 162) The blind man when he received sight followed Jesus in the way, the way up to Jerusalem. That journey pictures the Lord's advance into things Divine; and for those who follow, the advance into heavenly things. The Lord had been teaching the way to heaven in His words about little children, in His words to the young man. He had been teaching people to look up from things of earth to things of heaven. Were there some whose eyes were opened to see the way and to follow Jesus in it?

## Lesson 68

### Luke 19:1-27: Zaccheus: Parable of Pounds

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

We were with the Lord and the disciples among the gardens of Jericho when the blind man cried out to Him for help and the Lord healed his blindness. Perhaps they were then just coming to Jericho. Now they had entered and were passing through the city. A great crowd of people were following the Lord and pressing about Him. Zaccheus wanted to see Him. He was chief among the publicans, the tax collectors, and was rich, but he was a small man and could not see the Lord on account of the crowd. He saw what road the Lord was taking and ran before and climbed up into a sycamore tree by the roadside to see the Lord as He passed. The sycamore-figs are large spreading trees and are often planted by the roadsides for shade. They bear many little figs, but not good. When the Lord came to the place He looked up and saw Zaccheus, and said, "Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for today I must abide at thy house." Zaccheus made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. What would some of the people say when they saw the Lord a guest at the house of the publican? But the Lord was often with the publicans, and found many among them who were ready to hear Him and to be good men. Matthew was a publican in Capernaum, when the Lord called him to be a disciple. Zaccheus felt the Lord's spirit and resolved to be a better man. A half of his goods he would give to the poor, and if he had taken anything from any one unfairly, as the publicans often did, he would give back four times as much. And the Lord said, "This day is salvation come to this house."

Leaving Jericho the Lord with the disciples went up the road toward Jerusalem, and as they went He told them a parable, the story of a nobleman who went to a far country and left a pound (about \$2) with each of his ten servants. They were to trade with this money and make it useful and bring to the master when he came home what they had gained. We read the story to see how much they gained. One gained ten pounds, another five pounds, and the master was pleased with them. But one had gained nothing; he had kept his pound laid up in a napkin, and the master was not pleased. As we read the story we are thinking of money and strength and knowledge and other things which the Lord entrusts to us, that we ought to be making useful.

## **Junior**

The story of the blind man in the last verses of chapter 18 tells us where we are with the Lord and the disciples, at Jericho, passing through the gardens and the town. Pictures show us fine drives almost arched over by sycamore trees. You might easily climb into the spreading branches and watch one passing on the road.

What can you tell about the publicans? For Zaccheus was a publican, and rich. Who were the publicans, and why did the people despise them? What did John the Baptist say to the publicans who came asking, What shall we do? (Luke 3:12, 13) Which one of the Lord's disciples had been a publican? It would seem that Zaccheus had not got all his riches in honest ways, but what he said to the Lord (verse 8) shows that he was now resolved to be honest and kind. The Lord's answer, "This day is salvation come to this house," seems also to show that Zaccheus was with His help beginning a new and better life.

The parable of the pounds in this chapter is much like the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30, but there are important differences, and they are probably not the same but two different parables. As you read them both, what differences do you notice?

The nobleman going to a far country to receive a kingdom and to return, suggests Archelaus (the son of Herod) and others whom the people had seen set out for Rome to be appointed over some district. And in the case of Archelaus the people had sent messengers after him to beg that he might not be appointed. The nobleman left one pound (about \$2) with each of his ten servants. To "occupy" means to trade. The word is the same as the last word of verse 15. See also Ezekiel 27:16, 19, and on. Some of the servants used the pounds that their master left with them, one gained ten pounds, another five. When the nobleman came back he placed these servants over ten and five cities. But one servant was not faithful. He laid his pound away and it did not increase at all. His excuse seems to mean that he thought the master would take all the increase for himself, and he would not work if he was not to have the reward. The master's answer means that even if it were so (which it was not) that the servant should have no reward, still he ought faithfully to have used his pound for his master's sake. Not only was it not increased, but it was taken from him. Read verses 12-27. "Usury" today usually means excessive interest, but it means here fair interest, money paid for the use of money.

The verse that comes just before this parable (verse 11) shows one meaning of the story. The Lord was going to Jerusalem, and the disciples were full of hope that He would now make Himself a great king and would make them rulers in His kingdom. (Matthew 20:20-24) The parable meant that it would not be as they expected. The Lord had given them a little knowledge about heavenly life, and a little strength; now He would seem to leave them for a time and they must use faithfully what He had given them. By and by He would come to call them to the heavenly kingdom, and then each one would enjoy good things according to the use he had made of the little knowledge and strength that the Lord had given him. And it means us too. The Lord gives each of us some knowledge and strength to make use of for Him; it is our pound; and the use we make of the knowledge and strength that we have determines whether we shall be able to enjoy much or little or none at all of the life and happiness of heaven by and by.

1. Jericho. Where was it? What does the name mean? What other name did Jericho have in old days? Tell me one thing that the Lord did at Jericho?

2. Publicans. Who were they? How were they treated by the Jews? Tell me the names of two publicans?
3. What parable did the Lord speak about a nobleman and his servants and pounds? What did it mean about the kingdom which the disciples expected?
4. What does the parable mean for us? What is our pound? How does the Lord go away? How does He come to reckon with us? How does He wish us to use our pound? What will happen if we use it well? What will happen if we do not?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### **Intermediate**

Little of stature. Could these words be applied to our spiritual growth? Compare Luke 12:25. Would littleness of spiritual stature make it hard to see the Lord?

When Nathaniel sat under the fig tree, it was representative of his spiritual state. The fig tree represents the knowledge of uses of natural benevolence. The position of Zaccheus in the sycamore tree has a somewhat similar meaning. The sycamore-fig is larger than the orchard fig but with much poorer fruit. It represents an interest in kind uses, but as yet almost wholly natural and with much that is selfish in it. See 1 Kings 10: 2 7. Even this helps to prepare us for the Lord, when we are little in spiritual stature. (Verse 8; T. 537) The poorness of the fruit is so marked a characteristic of the sycamore-fig (Jeremiah 24:2; Amos 7:14) that it sometimes stands for schemes that are wholly selfish. (Luke 17:6; E. 815)

What does it mean spiritually to be a son or a daughter (Luke 13:16) of Abraham? (John 1:12, 13; John 3:1-8; A. 3373)

What is meant by the nobleman's going into a far country? It means the seeming absence of the Lord. He does not let us feel His presence too plainly, for He wants us to be faithful and use His good gifts of our own free will. Otherwise there is no real nobility or happiness in them. (P. 129)

In this parable the same amount of money, one pound, is given to each of the servants. In the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:15) five talents were given to one, two talents to another, and one to another, "to every man according to his several ability." Which seems to describe the manner of the Lord's giving talents or other means of usefulness to us? From one point of view the gifts are very various. From another point of view they are the same, to each one what the Lord knows will be most favorable for him in developing a heavenly life.

The pound that was not used was taken away. Even in this world, knowledge that is not used is soon forgotten and it is completely so when we go to the other world. No matter how learned one may have been in heavenly things, if his learning has not become a part of his life by faithfully doing it, it is forgotten and he becomes utterly stupid. (H. 501, and on.)

## **Lesson 69**

### **Luke 19:28-48: Riding into Jerusalem**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

When the Lord and the disciples passed through Jericho where the Lord healed the blind man by the wayside and where He stayed at Zaccheus' house, they were on their way up to Jerusalem. They have now come to the villages Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives, the Bethany where Mary and Martha and Lazarus lived. They were almost in sight of Jerusalem. A short walk further, and they would look down from the Mount of Olives upon the beautiful city. It was the time of the great Passover feast and many pilgrims were coming by all roads to the city. There were many on this road from Jericho. It was a gay festival time, and much rejoicing.

The disciples and the people with the Lord now felt a special joy when the Lord sent two to the neighboring village to bring a young ass. The owners asked, "Why loose ye the ass?" And they answered, as the Lord had told them to do, "The Lord hath need of him." Now some put their clothes upon the ass, and some spread their clothes as a carpet in the way. Others spread leafy branches and waved palm leaves. Kings and judges in old times used to ride on asses, and they thought that the Lord would now establish His Kingdom. They shouted joyfully: "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." Other people in the temple courts below heard the voices from the hill and took palms and came to join the glad company. Some of the Pharisees wished the Lord to rebuke the disciples, to tell them to be quiet, but He refused. As we have it in our song:

"Thou didst accept their praises,

Accept the prayers we bring,

Who in all good delightest,

Thou good and gracious King.

All glory, laud, and honor,

To Thee, Redeemer, King!

To whom the lips of children

Made sweet Hosannas ring."

Yet it was not all rejoicing. Looking down upon the city, the Lord wept over it. It was great and glorious, but the people were selfish and the priests were selfish. They were not really ready for His kingdom.

## **Junior**

Why is this Sunday, a week before Easter, called Palm Sunday? Do you know the story of the Lord's riding into Jerusalem? As the disciples and the company of people went with the Lord up the road from Jericho to Jerusalem "they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." The thought strengthened to enthusiasm when, approaching the city near Bethany on the Mount of Olives, the Lord sent for a young ass and rode as kings and judges used to ride. Read of the old custom in Judges 5:9, 10; and 12:14; 1 Kings 1:32-34. How did the disciples and others show their reverence and joy? What did they do? What did they shout? See also Mark 11:9, 10. The palm leaves that they waved were ancient emblems of victory. "Hosanna" means "Save now," and was an acknowledgment of the Lord as Savior. Why were the roads to Jerusalem and the courts of the temple thronged at this time with people? What great feast was being kept? That helps to account for the company who joined the disciples and the Lord coming to Jerusalem, and for the company who went up from the temple courts to meet Him. Why would the Lord not silence the people? He was truly a King, of a kingdom far grander than they were expecting. When they called Him King and Savior, it was truer than they knew. At least their honor and their cries pictured a real confession. As we read the story and join in the hosannas in our songs, we must try to do so with real acknowledgment, with praise for victory which the Lord has given us in times of temptation. Such acknowledgment and praise are our hosannas and palms.

Looking down upon Jerusalem, the Lord wept over the city, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." Compare His words, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," in Luke 13:34, 35. Forty years later the Roman army under Titus besieged and destroyed the city. The triumph is pictured on the arch of Titus at Rome.

If this chapter were the only record we should think that the Lord on the Palm Sunday drove out the people buying and selling and changing money in the temple courts, but Mark says definitely that it was on the following day when the Lord came again from Bethany. (Mark 11:11-19) Early in His ministry the Lord had driven out the traders (John 2:13-17) but they had gone back to their abuse of the temple.

There are these sad things connected with the story, and before the next Sunday still greater sadness, for the Lord was crucified. But the Lord's power and glory shine out in the gladness of Palm Sunday and of Easter.

1. What event of the Lord's life do we remember on Palm Sunday?
2. How did the Lord ride into Jerusalem that day? What did the disciples and the people with Him do?
3. What did Pharisees say? What did the Lord answer?
4. Why did the Lord weep over the city? What did He find in the temple?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Although there was with the Palm Sunday multitude little real appreciation of the Lord as King and of the real glory of His kingdom, escorting the Lord into Jerusalem with the shouting of hosannas and the waving of palms pictured a real welcome of the King and a real rejoicing in His saving power. Compare in Revelation 7:9-17 the great multitude seen by John before the throne, clothed in white robes and palms in their hands, who cried "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." And these had come out of great tribulation, in which they had learned the Lord's power. The hosannas of Palm Sunday and the "Salvation to our God" of the multitude in the Revelation are the acknowledgment which every young man and woman should be making for the Lord's help in temptation. He will not rebuke us; we owe Him praise. The palms in the hands of the multitudes are emblems of such praise to the Lord for His saving power. This is the meaning of the palm, the grand tree of the desert, which the wise ancients recognized as an emblem of victory. See the chapter on the palm in The Language of Parable [also titled God's Explanation of Bible Symbolism]. (E. 458; R. 367; A. 8369)

Do you see the significance of the Lord's riding on the ass, and of the custom of kings and judges to ride on mules and asses? Contrast the scene in Revelation 19:11-16, where the Lord rides on a white horse. See the chapter on the horse and ass in The Language of Parable. Both these animals correspond to powers of thinking and understanding, the horse to the power of spiritual understanding and the ass to careful attention to details of natural fact and circumstance and decision in relation to natural things. The Lord on the white horse represents the Lord in the power of spiritual truth, the inner truth of His Word. His riding on the ass expresses His coming to bring order into our natural thought and life. (A. 2781)

The Lord would not rebuke His disciples for their glad welcome, but said, "If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." Stones represent eternal truths. The fact that the Lord was King was such a truth, which could not be suppressed.

The prediction in verses 41-44 would have literal fulfillment, but it was the destruction of the spiritual Jerusalem, the church, for which the Lord wept, the lifeless condition of the Jewish Church at that day and the lifeless condition which the Lord saw would come in the Christian Church. It was for this that He wept. (A. 5480; E. 365)

What deeper work is pictured in the Lord's cleansing of the temple? (E. 840)

The enthusiasm of the Palm Sunday welcome shows that there is a right place for enthusiasm in religion and worship, in connection with our acknowledgment of the Lord as King. It is welcome to the Lord. The spreading of garments upon the ass and in the way expresses the utter subjection of ourselves, especially of our thoughts, to the Lord's rule and guidance. The experience here pictured may be youthful, but it is acceptable to the Lord; it is fundamental to all spiritual experience. (A. 9212)

## **Lesson 70**

### **Luke 20: Husbandmen: Tribute to Caesar**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

It is sad to follow the Lord on those last days of teaching in the temple, and to see the growing hostility of the Pharisees and leaders of the Jews. The chapter opens with the demand of the chief priests and scribes to know by what authority He did these things. It was especially the driving out of the traders that they meant, which was profitable to them. The Lord answered them by another question about John the Baptist. If they could answer that, they would know the answer to the question they had asked. John prepared the people for the Lord, and we have read before that those who rejected John rejected Him. (Luke 7:29, 30)

And now the Lord spoke a parable of a vineyard. It brings to mind the vineyards which they all knew on the hillsides of the country - the protecting hedge or wall, the wine press cut in the rock, the tower for the watchmen, the vines trained on rails or on walls. We know as we read, that the vineyard is the Lord's church, and that the husbandmen are the leaders of the church, to whose care it is entrusted. The owner goes into a far country for a long time, for the Lord allows it to seem as if He were far away, so that we can use His gifts in freedom. The servants sent for the fruit suggest the prophets and all the messengers and means that the Lord uses to teach us and remind us of our duty to give to Him the fruits of good life. The beloved son is the Lord Himself who came into the world. The vineyard would be taken from these wicked husbandmen and given to others. In rejecting Him, denying His Divinity, they were rejecting the one strong stone on which they could build securely, as the Lord had said to Peter. (Matthew 16:18) But, in truth, in rejecting Him they were only injuring themselves. (Verses 17, 18) They were the more angry, for they knew that He had spoken the parable against them.

We see them plotting together, and sending little groups of men to ask questions of the Lord, trying to entrap Him in His talk, and to find some excuse to deliver Him to the power and authority of the governor. There came some of the Pharisees, who, you remember, were very strict in the religious ceremonies and bitterly hated the Romans and the publicans who collected their taxes, saying that no tax should be paid except to the temple; and with them other men, Herodians, who were friendly to the Romans. They all asked, as if they really wanted to know what was right to do, "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar or not"? If the Lord said, Yes, the Pharisees would say that He was not faithful to their religion; if He said, No, the Herodians would accuse Him of opposing the rulers. But the Lord knew their wicked hearts and why they asked Him; and how wise His answer was! The penny we remember was a Roman silver coin, a little larger than a dime. When have we heard of pence before? (Luke 10:35; Matthew 20:2; John 12:5) The head and name of Tiberius Caesar were on one side of the coin. It was a sign that the Romans were rulers of the country. They protected it from enemies, and built roads and did other useful things. It was right that they should be paid for this service. But ought the people to forget the Lord their Heavenly King who did still more for them, with still greater love and power? "Render therefore unto Caesar," the Lord said, "the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things

which be God's." Then others came with other questions; and He answered them with equal wisdom. Until finally, it is said, "After that they durst not ask Him any question at all."

1. Who were attentive to hear the Lord as He taught in the temple? Who were angry, and tried to take Him?
2. Why did they not take Him openly? What means did they use? With what success?
3. Tell me a parable that the Lord spoke of husbandmen and a vineyard. Tell me of one attempt to entrap Him in His talk.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

How is the Lord's question about John the Baptist an answer to the question of the priests in regard to His own authority? Those who listened to John and repented were able to perceive the Divinity of the Lord, for repentance opens the mind and heart to know Him. Especially they would understand the cleansing of the temple, which represented a deep and thorough repentance. (Psalm 111:10; John 7:17; T. 688-690)

The Jews perceived that the parable of the vineyard and the husbandmen was spoken against them, and we must consider its meaning to us. Remembering that wine is a symbol of spiritual truth, we see that a vine and a vineyard represent the church with special relation to its spiritual intelligence, its power to understand the truth of heavenly life and to bring it forth in good uses of charity. The husbandmen who would not render the fruits in their season are we who have knowledge of heavenly truth but fail to bring forth the good uses of charity in their season -according to our opportunity. Still worse if we resent and reject the appeals of the Lord and His Word to render the fruits He desires. We know the inevitable result; the vineyard will be taken from us; the Lord's truth will be given to the care of others. (A. 1069; E. 315)

The cornerstone we know is the Lord Himself, or the fact of His Divinity, which Peter confessed. To fall upon the stone is to oppose it intellectually; it falls upon us if we oppose it in our hearts, which is more fatal. (A. 9163; E. 417)

Notice how the Lord in answering the Pharisees and Herodians did not take the part of either side against the other, but taught a higher principle, which showed what each must do. It was the same when brethren asked Him to divide the inheritance. He answered, Take heed and beware of covetousness. (Luke 12:13-15) The church should take this position in regard to civil and business questions. It is not for her to take sides with the capitalist or the laborer, but to teach the heavenly principles which should guide them both in mutual helpfulness.

The Sadducees were a sect opposed to the Pharisees. They taught that there is no resurrection (Acts 23:8), and rejected the traditions. The law referred to is found in Deuteronomy 25:5. Tell me the story of "the bush." (Exodus 3) There is in heaven no marrying and giving in marriage of the merely external kind, which the Jews knew. The deepest heavenly marriage is the union of each angel with the Lord. From this grows the marriage of good and truth in every one; and on these depend the marriages of the angels. Heavenly marriage being of this deep spiritual origin, no such

difficulty as the Sadducees proposed can ever arise. They erred, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. Moreover, heavenly marriages in all their degrees are really determined not in heaven, but upon earth, by the union with the Lord, and by the union of good and truth in the soul, in our life here. (M.41, 44; H. 366-386)

## Lesson 71

### Luke 21: The Widow's Mites: On the Mount of Olives

#### THE STORY

##### Junior

The priests and scribes had tried to entrap the Lord in His words. We learn now of one beautiful thing which He saw before He left the temple for the last time.

Recall the courts of the temple: that of the priests next about the altar, of the Israelites, of the women, of the Gentiles; each at a lower lever, reached by steps and beautiful gateways. It was in the court of the women, perhaps upon the steps, that the Lord sat after teaching the people, and watched those who came with gifts. For in this court was a chamber where costly presents that people brought to the temple were kept. And there were treasure chests into which they put offerings of money for different uses of the temple. Some came with great show and wished others to see them as they put in much. The Lord saw such people among the rest. And some came carelessly and put in what they could easily spare. Now there came one poor woman. All knew by her dress that she was a widow. She came timidly with two mites. They were little copper coins, the two together being worth less than half a cent. ("Farthing" stands in the Gospels for two different coins, one four times as much as the other. The smaller is named here and in Matthew 5: 26, the larger in Matthew 10 :29) It was the smallest gift allowed by law; it was all she had. She did not know that the Lord sat by watching her; but He saw her gift, and He saw the thoughts and feelings that went with it. These He values more than money, and He told the disciples that the poor widow put in more than all the rest. The Lord sees everything that we do, and the feelings with which we do it. What men think a great gift or action the Lord may count very little. But whatever is done with unselfish love He counts greatest. This beautiful picture closes the Lord's teaching in the temple. The last verses of the chapter seem to refer to the several last days, and do not mean that the Lord came again on the next day to the temple. "And every day He was teaching in the temple; and every night He went out, and lodged in the mount that is called Olivet."

Perhaps the afternoon shades were lengthening as the Lord with the disciples went out from the temple and across the Kidron to the Mount of Olives. Picture the city as it lay before them, above the shade of the Kidron; the palace and towers on Mount Zion, the white buildings of the temple, and the wall with its great stones, some, it is said, thirty and even forty feet in length. "Master," one of the disciples said, "see what manner of stones, and what buildings." "Seest thou these buildings?" the Lord answered, "there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." You remember how the Lord wept over the city and foretold its destruction on the Sunday when the people cried, Hosanna. (Luke 19: 41-44) His words were literally fulfilled in the

year 70, when the Roman general Titus destroyed Jerusalem. But the Lord spoke not so much of the natural city and temple, as of true ways of life and worship which were nearly at an end among the Jews.

As the shades of evening deepened the Lord sat on the slope of the Mount of Olives, over against the temple. Peter and James and John and Andrew, and perhaps other disciples, sat with Him and listened as He told them more of the sad days which should come. He told them of wars and famines and earthquakes, and days of trial. The sun and moon would be darkened and the stars would fall. But then would come brighter days, as when after winter the trees begin to bud and give promise of summer, for He Himself would come again to comfort His people. The disciples thought only of natural wars and natural darkness, but we know that the Lord spoke of wars and darkness in men's minds. And the coming again which He promised, was a new and more powerful sense of His presence, which has now taken place in the opening of the Lord's Word to the New Church.

1. Whose gift did the Lord say was most precious? What made it so?
2. What troubles did the Lord say were coming to Jerusalem? What brighter promise did He give?
3. Where did the Lord spend the nights after these last days of teaching in the temple?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The widow's mites. Who are the rich who cannot enter heaven? Who are the poor in spirit? The poor widow represents all who know their own weakness and helplessness and trustfully put all that they have at the service of the Lord. What two elements in worship and in life are represented by the two mites? (E. 118; A. 9198)

The stones of the temple. What did the Lord say is the stone on which His church is built? The sure, unchanging truth that He is the Christ the Son of the living God - God become man to dwell with us. (Matthew 16:16-18) This was the cornerstone which the builders rejected. (Luke 20:17) This and other holy truths about the Lord and heaven are represented by the beautiful stones in the walls and foundations of the Holy City. Jews and Christians have been proud of the holy truths in their possession; they have boasted of the great stones of their temple. But the stones have fallen apart and crumbled when the commandments of God have been made of none effect by disobedience and by the inventions of men. Read of the stones of Solomon's temple in 1 Kings 6:7. (E. 411; A. 8581)

As you read the predictions of the last days, keep in mind that they describe the time of spiritual distress, before the Lord's second coming through the opening of His Word to the New Church. Notice a few particulars. There have been wars between truth and falsity and between different false teachings in the church; there have been earthquakes, when all that was accepted as most sure has been overthrown; and famines, when souls have starved for some true knowledge of heavenly things. And why all this? Because they have rejected the Lord's apostles, His words of Divine truth. But the Lord provides that something of heavenly life shall survive the dark times.

When Jerusalem is encompassed with armies, when the teachings of the church are beset with false arguments, there is safety in the mountains, in states of love to the Lord; and in the countries, in the exercise of simple charity. Compare the housetop and the field, in Luke 17: 31. (A. 8505; E. 313)

The sun and moon and stars are darkened when all heavenly light is extinguished. Now the clouds of the Lord's Word open to bring Him again near to men. Trees of intelligence of every beautiful and useful kind, spring into life. We see them all about us, especially the fig tree of interest in good works of natural benevolence. It is the sign of the Lord's coming, and of brighter, happier days. (R. 331-334; E. 403)

The woe to those who are with child and who give suck in the troubled times means that in those evil days it is impossible to receive new gifts of heavenly life, or if they are received to preserve them. (E. 693, 710)

"This generation shall not pass away," is a promise that something of the simple Christianity of the disciples would endure through the evil days. Compare John 21: 18-23. The words had also a reference to the peculiar preservation of the Jewish nation. (A. 3479, 4231) Heaven and earth would pass, the internal and external things of the Jewish Church, but the Lord's Word would endure. Every finite, human state or attainment in earth or heaven passes by as men advance to higher states. The Lord and His Divine truth alone are perfect and unchanging.

## **Lesson 72**

### **Luke 22: 1-30: The Passover**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The Lord kept the Passover with His disciples. You remember that the Passover was first kept on the night of leaving Egypt, and it was kept now in Jerusalem every spring. People came to it from all parts of the country and from other lands. Jerusalem was full of rejoicing. One thing the people did not know, that Judas Iscariot, one of the Lord's disciples, had gone to the chief priests, the enemies of the Lord. They gave him money, thirty pieces of silver, and he agreed to let them know of some time when they could take the Lord.

The day for the Passover came. It was Thursday. The Lord and the disciples were in Bethany, and the Lord sent Peter and John to find the place and to make things ready for the feast. As they went into the city a man would meet them carrying a jar of water. They were to follow him to the house and there they would be shown a large upper room. They went, and it was as the Lord had said; they found the house and the room. Then Peter and John made things ready for the feast, the lamb and unleavened bread and bitter herbs and wine. Before evening all was ready, and the Lord and the disciples came from Bethany and gathered about the table. The Lord sadly told the disciples that one of them would betray Him to His enemies. In the picture He has just told them, and they are asking, "Lord, is it I?" The Lord also told the disciples that they should keep the Holy Supper

as the Christian Passover in remembrance of Him, and we still keep it in the churches. The feast closed with the singing of a Psalm.

## Junior

What great feast did the Jews keep in Jerusalem each spring, at our Easter time? The Passover. Who can tell me about the first Passover, where it was kept and how they kept it? Can you tell me about the time when the Lord came with Mary and Joseph to the Passover? Years had gone by and the season had come when the Lord would keep the Passover for the last time with His disciples.

What was the little town on the Mount of Olives over the hill from Jerusalem where the Lord often stayed? Who lived there who made the Lord welcome at their house? For a few nights He had been there spending the days in teaching in the temple. Now it was Thursday, the Passover day. In the morning the Lord sent two of the disciples over the hill to Jerusalem, to make ready for the feast; they were Peter and John who had been friends and fished together on the Sea of Galilee before the Lord called them to be disciples. The Lord told them how they would find the house. They would see a man carrying a jar of water, perhaps from the spring in the Kidron valley, up the steep path and in through the city gate; they should follow him to the house where he went. They did so and found a large upper room furnished and prepared. The low table was there with places about it where they could recline; for that was the way they did in those days. Perhaps the bread for the feast was ready on the table, thin cakes made without leaven or raising. Other things may have been ready too, bitter herbs and a preserve of fruits, and wine. We think of the two disciples going themselves to the temple to sacrifice the lamb, handing the blood and the fat to the priests to be carried to the altar, and taking away the lamb to be roasted carefully for the feast. Before evening everything was ready.

Toward evening the Lord came by the path over the Mount of Olives from Bethany, and went with them to the table in the large upper room. The Passover was kept with the singing of Psalms, and the story of the coming out from Egypt was recalled. While they were still at the table the Lord passed them the cup of wine, and took bread and blessed and gave it to them, and said, "This do in remembrance of Me." He was teaching them how to keep, a new feast, the Holy Supper, instead of the Passover. It is the feast which is kept still in all the Christian churches in remembrance of the Lord, and is the holiest act of worship.

There was sadness too at the table, for the Lord warned the disciples that one of them should betray Him. We know who it was, but the other disciples did not yet know, and they were startled and troubled. And there was a dispute among them who should be greatest. There had been such disputes before, and the Lord had told them that he who is most like a little child is greatest in heaven. But how easily they forgot; and now the last time that they were all together with the Lord the same dispute came up again. Perhaps it arose as they were taking their places at the table: who should be the nearest to the Lord and who next. The Lord taught them again about true greatness, that it is not to rule over others, but to serve others as He did Himself. He went on and spoke to the disciples many tender, loving words as they sat at the table, and afterwards when they left the house and went out by night through the narrow street and the city gate toward the Mount of Olives.

1. What name was given to the feast of unleavened bread? What is unleavened bread? At what time of the year was this feast kept?

2. What disciples were sent to prepare for the last Passover? How did they find the house? What kind of a room was ready?
3. What did the Lord hand to the disciples while they were at the table? How is His charge still kept: "This do in remembrance of Me"?
4. What did the Lord tell the disciples at the table which made them sad and made them question among themselves?
5. What dispute was there among them? Who did the Lord tell them is greatest?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The Lord gave the bread and wine, and told us to take them in the Holy Supper. It is not merely because He wishes to feed our bodies, but because the natural food and drink represent spiritual things which our souls need. What are the food and drink of our souls? What do we need that our spiritual faculties may grow strong and beautiful? We need interesting thoughts to occupy our minds, and we need good, earnest, and happy affections. If all such things were taken away the soul would languish and die, for they are its food and drink; the good affections are its food and the true thoughts are its drink. The bread and wine of the Holy Supper represent the heavenly love and heavenly thought which we all need to receive from the Lord - His own flesh and blood. (E. 329, 340; T. 702-710)

Eating at the table with the Lord means receiving good affection and thought from Him. We need to do something to make ready, and the preparation which we need is pictured by the preparation made by the disciples for the feast Peter and John were sent to make ready. These two disciples stand for faculties in ourselves; they are the understanding and will, the thought and love, which must work together to make ready for the Lord. The disciples followed a jar of water and found the place where the feast should be kept. We learned what water represents, when we found John baptizing at the Jordan. It means the plain teaching of right and wrong, such as the Ten Commandments give us. We follow the jar of water when we learn the Commandments and make them the guide of our life. They bring us to the state in which we can receive heavenly things from the Lord. The place is called the large upper room. There are higher states of life and lower; the upper room is a holy heavenly state, something like that represented by the mountain where the Lord spoke the Blessings. We should come into such a state to the Lord. (T.722; A. 3147, 7442)

The Lord said, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations." We know how little the disciples had understood of the Lord's trials, but even their little sympathy was precious to Him. The words suggest that we are with the Lord in all temptations; we meet no evil which He did not meet and overcome for us. The battle is really His, and we are safe as we continue faithfully with Him.

As the result of continuing with Him in temptation the Lord's disciples will eat and drink at His table in His kingdom; they will receive from Him the good affections and true thoughts which make heaven. They will also sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Sitting on thrones suggests the power which the Lord will give to bring the whole life into order. The twelve tribes of

Israel who occupied the different districts of the Holy Land represent all departments of a heavenly life. (Revelation 21:12, 14; R. 900, 903)

## Lesson 73

### Luke 22: 31-71: The Night of Trial

#### THE STORY

##### Junior

It was night, and the Passover moon was full, as the disciples went with the Lord from the large upper room through the narrow street, out by the city gate and across the Kidron bridge to Gethsemane. It was a garden on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives, where the Lord often went with the disciples. As they walked they listened to tender words of warning; for the Lord was telling them that the last sad prophecies were about to be fulfilled, and that Peter soon would deny Him.

When they came to the place, where no doubt there were olive trees, and perhaps presses cut in the rock, where the olives were crushed for the oil by a rolling stone, the Lord passed beyond the disciples and prayed that if it were possible the trial might pass from Him; "Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine, be done." An angel strengthened Him. Again He prayed so earnestly that His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. He was overcoming every selfish thought and feeling that He might be able to help us to overcome. How little our troubles are compared with this trial of the Lord's! And when we are in trouble we have friends and the Lord Himself to help and comfort us, but the Lord was all alone.

The disciples were awake, and saw a band of men coming with swords and staves and torches. It was Judas with soldiers and others from the temple, for he had agreed with the priests, to betray the Lord to them. He came to the Lord and kissed Him, as if to show his love, but it was the sign which he had given to show them the one to take. One of the disciples (it was Peter) drew a sword and struck a servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear; but the Lord told him to put up his sword, and He touched the servant's ear and healed him. The Lord's kingdom could not be established by force. It must be done by love and gentleness, greater love than any man or angel could understand.

They led the Lord to the high priest's palace. Peter followed afar off. We seem to see them entering from the street by an arched gateway in a high wall. They were in a court, the doors and windows of the palace opening upon it. Soldiers and servants were in the court, and Peter sat with some of them warming himself at a fire of glowing charcoal. There the Lord's warning to Peter came true; three times he declared that he did not know Him. Then the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter, and it all came back to him, how he had loved the Lord, how he had been sure that he would always be faithful, and how the Lord had said that he would deny Him: and he went out and wept bitterly.

The Lord had been led before the priests in a hall above the court. They hated Him, and were resolved to find some excuse to accuse Him to the governor. For a time He was left standing with

the guards, who mocked Him and struck Him. In the early morning the priests gathered their council to take action against Him. They had proved nothing by witnesses, but when in answer to their question He told the simple truth that He was "the Son of God," they said, "What need we any further witness?" They would make it appear to Pilate that the Lord claimed to be a King and disputed Caesar's rule.

1. Where was Gethsemane? What was it? What does the name mean? Had the disciples been there before?
2. Who came with Judas to Gethsemane? Why did they come? What did Peter do?
3. To what house did they take the Lord? Who were there? What did the priests wish to do? Why?
4. Which disciples followed to the palace? What did Peter do that made him weep bitterly?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The Lord had before sent the disciples out without scrip or money, representing constant dependence upon Him. Now they were to take purse and scrip and to procure a sword. The time was at hand when they would seem to lose His presence, and they must find strength in His words which they had laid up in memory. The sword is the truth they would need to meet and combat falsity and evil. (E. 840) Presently Peter was rebuked for smiting the high priest's servant with a sword. Truth must not be harshly used. Men are not gained by accusing and condemning. Their attention and obedience are not gained so. Remember that the ear (especially the right ear) represents willingness to listen and obey. (A. 2799)

An angel strengthened the Lord in His trial. It was beyond the power of any man or angel to strengthen the Lord in the extremity of His trial. In the fullest sense the angel means the Divine from within which strengthened the weak humanity. It was at that time that the Lord said, "The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak." (A. 2821, 10528)

It was night when the Lord was taken and condemned; what deeper thought does this contain? It was cold, even Peter was cold; what does that suggest? (A. 6000; E. 820) Peter denied the Lord three times. (The Lord also prayed three times.) The number suggests completeness, what is done in all degrees, in feeling, thought, and act. Have we never denied the Lord so? And when the wrong was done, was it not as if the Lord turned and looked upon us and made us feel how unfaithful we had been? (T. 211; S. 29)

The cruel treatment of the Lord by the guards who blindfolded Him and struck Him, was all representative of the deepest cruelty with which the Jews were treating Him and His Word. The whole sad picture comes to us as a warning of cruelty of which we may ourselves be guilty. (E. 412)

## **Lesson 74**

### **Luke 23: 1-25: The Lord Condemned**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

Early in the morning the priests took the Lord from the palace of the high priest to Pilate's palace. It was probably the great palace which the old king Herod had built on Mount Zion. They made their charge against Him. What was it? That the Lord claimed to be a king and forbade giving tribute to Caesar. Look back to chapter 20:21-25, and see exactly what He said. The Lord was a King, and when He answered, "Thou sayest it," to Pilate's question, it meant that it was true. But did the Lord's kingdom interfere with Caesar's? Pilate knew that the Lord had done nothing wrong, but he was afraid of the angry priests and what report they might send to Caesar about him.

Herod was in Jerusalem at the time, and Pilate sent the Lord to him. Who was this Herod? Not the old king Herod who had died long before, but the younger Herod who was ruler of Galilee and of the country east of the Jordan. His home was in Tiberias, the city which he had built by the Sea of Galilee. What have we learned about Herod, in connection with John the Baptist? (Matthew 14:3-11) Had Herod heard of the Lord? (Matthew 14:1, 2) But we do not read of the Lord's ever going to Tiberias, or of Herod's ever seeing Him in Galilee. He had wanted to see the Lord; he did not want to learn from Him; but was curious to see some miracle. So Herod was glad when the Lord was sent to him by Pilate. But would the Lord speak and do signs for one who did not want to learn and to do better? How sad it sounds that Pilate and Herod were made friends that day, when they had been at enmity before! They agreed in one thing, in despising the Lord.

The Lord was brought back to Pilate's palace and the priests came together again. Pilate made another feeble attempt to let the Lord go, for it was the custom to release some person at the Passover, but they chose Barabbas who was a robber and murderer, and cried out that the Lord should be crucified. The priests urged the people on. So Pilate weakly yielded to their will and the Lord was led away. It had been said long before by the prophet, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not his mouth." (Isaiah 53:7.)

1. Who was Pilate? Who was Herod? Who was Barabbas?
2. What accusation did the priests make against the Lord? What had the Lord said about paying tribute to Caesar ?
3. When am I a king? How was the Lord a King?
4. Who were most to blame, the people or the priests or Pilate?
5. When do we choose Barabbas, and say that the Lord shall be crucified?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

The Lord is a King. May we be subjects of the Lord's kingdom while we live in this world? We say in the prayer "Thy kingdom come"; when does it come? It comes when we recognize our obligation to the Lord and keep His laws. Who was most truly a king, the priests who were carried away by angry passion, Pilate who was afraid to do right, or the Lord who conquered every selfish feeling and stood before them in perfect strength? The Lord will give us something of this same strength if we make His commandments our laws of life, and rule all our acts and words and thoughts and feelings by them. Everyone may be a king. (John 18:37; E. 31; R. 20)

Pilate and Herod. The Holy Land represents heaven and a heavenly state of life. The two kingdoms of Judah and Israel into which the land was divided after the days of Solomon, represent the two kingdoms of the mind, the will and the understanding, Judah the will, and Israel the understanding. Nearly the same were represented by Judea and Galilee in Gospel days. Pilate and Herod as rulers of these districts represent these faculties in a wicked mind. Herod imprisoned and killed John the Baptist who stands for the literal Divine truth of right and wrong. The Lord also called Herod a fox (Luke 13:32), which suggests deceit. Evil and false things may quarrel among themselves, but they unite in opposing the Lord and His kingdom of truth and love. (A. 4292, 4750; E. 433; R. 96)

The Lord and Barabbas. Every choice that we have to make between right and wrong is a choice between the Lord and Barabbas; for all good things are the Lord's and Barabbas a robber and murderer stands for all that is evil. Remember that if we are not faithful to conscience, but choose what is wrong, it is as if we were shouting with the crowd for Barabbas, asking to have him set free to do his evil deeds. And what then becomes of the Lord who stands patiently by? We are saying, "Let him be crucified"; for we are destroying His presence from our hearts.

## **Lesson 75**

### **Luke 23: 26-56: The Crucifixion**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

They led the Lord from Pilate's palace through the narrow streets and out by the north gate of the city. They met a man named Simon from an African city, and made him carry the cross. So they came to a low, bare-topped hill, called from its shape "the place of a skull," Golgotha in Hebrew, Calvary in Latin. There they crucified the Lord, and two thieves with Him, on the right and left. One joined with those who mocked, one asked His blessing. Notice the tender words which the Lord spoke to those who followed Him weeping (verse 28), and His prayer for those who crucified Him. (Verse 34)

It was about noon when the Lord was crucified, and darkness was over all the land until three o'clock. Then the Lord cried aloud, and the conflict was over, the victory was gained. The veil that hung between the holy and most holy chambers of the temple was torn from top to bottom. Even the centurion who commanded the guard of Roman soldiers said, "Certainly this was a righteous man"; others beholding, smote their breasts and returned. Faithful women were watching from afar off.

As it drew near sunset the women saw two men, Joseph from a town near by, and Nicodemus, both of them leaders of the Jews, who loved the Lord, but secretly. These men, with leave from Pilate, took down the body of the Lord and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in a new tomb cut out in the rocky hillside. The women saw where the body of the Lord was laid, and perhaps they saw too when some of the Pharisees came and put a seal of wax where it would be broken if the great stone should be moved from its place before the door, and set a watch so that no one might come and steal the body of the Lord away. "And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested on the Sabbath day according to the commandments."

1. What writing was put upon the cross? In what languages was it written?
2. What did the Lord say to those who followed Him weeping? What was His prayer for those who crucified Him?
3. Who laid the Lord's body in the sepulchre? 4. Who else were there who loved the Lord?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The crucifixion, and all the sad and dreadful things that were done to Jesus before it, and His terrible agony in Gethsemane, are called the passion of the cross, the word "passion" meaning "suffering." While men heard and saw the things that are described in the literal sense of the Gospel, there was going on in the human mind of the Lord a terrible conflict with the hells, which is described in the spiritual sense. It was the last of His life-long battles with the hells. It was the fiercest conflict of them all, and the terror of it was what caused Him to sweat blood in the garden of Gethsemane. We can have little conception of what He then suffered, for He loved all men, and wanted to save them, and the hells fought against this great love. All that the cunning of the hells could devise, all the malignant power they knew how to exercise, was directed against the Lord. They wanted to cause Him to despair of ever attaining His end of redeeming and saving men from the wickedness of loving themselves and the world better than God and the neighbor. They thought that they succeeded in their attacks on Jesus when they led the Jews to crucify Him. But they were mistaken. By the passion of the cross He fully conquered the hells, and putting off mortality glorified His Human. He arose from the tomb in His Divine Human, with His very body made Divine. He no longer had anything left of the mortal humanity which He had put on through Mary, but now all, down to His very flesh and bones, was Divine. And in this Divine Human He can be very near to us, nearer than ever before in the history of the human race.

It was the eternal truth which Pilate was led to write upon the cross. It could not be changed, any more than the cries of the disciples on Palm Sunday could be suppressed. (Luke 19:40) The three

languages in which it was written suggest the completeness of the truth, the all-inclusiveness of the Lord's kingdom.

The crucifixion of the two thieves with the Lord reminds us of the prophecy in Isaiah 53:12: "And He was numbered with the transgressors." Indeed, the Lord Himself on the night of trial referred to this prophecy as about to be fulfilled. (Luke 22:37) The words of Isaiah, especially when read in connection with the whole chapter of which they are a part, express very tenderly the humility with which the Lord entered into all human states and trials, that He might bring to men complete victory and protection. With this understanding of the prophecy, the thieves crucified with the Lord in a manner represent mankind whose trials and temptations the Lord shares. One thief represents those who are not humbled by temptation and do not receive the Lord's help so mercifully offered; the other thief represents those who do receive His help, and through Him find victory and peace. This is consistent with the statement, in E. 600, that by the two thieves crucified with the Lord the same is meant as by the sheep and goats on the King's right and left. (Matthew 25:33)

What deeper meaning was there in the darkness over all the land at the time that the Lord was crucified? (E. 401) The rending of the temple veil suggests that the Jewish Church was at an end; the Christian Church had now begun. In this church the Lord's presence would not be veiled in representatives, but would be clearly seen and felt. (E. 400) Remembering that garments represent any external thing which clothes a more internal. The Lord's garments represent especially His Word, which clothes His love to us. How do soldiers even today part His garments? What is the inner garment which they cannot rend? (A. 9093; E. 64)

When burial is mentioned in the Word, angels think of resurrection. The provisions for the safety of the body were to the wise ancients all representative of eternal life in heaven. The burial of the Lord is representative of His glorification and Divine continuance. The ointments associated with His burial are emblems of the eternity of His love, and the linen of the eternity of His truth. We may notice that in all the Gospels the ointments are especially associated with the women, who stand for those who love the Lord and who know His love. (A. 10252)

## **Lesson 76**

### **Luke 24: 1-35: Easter Gladness**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Easter is one of the very happy days. Do you know why? Because on Easter Day the Lord arose. When the disciples thought that He was dead He came to them again and they knew that He was alive.

Our story is about two disciples, and how they walked from Jerusalem into the country to Emmaus, among the hills a few miles from Jerusalem. In that country Easter is a season of sunshine and bright flowers. It was a lovely walk for a Sunday afternoon. But the two disciples were talking earnestly as they walked and were sad. They were talking of things that had

happened. Do you know what they were? No? Then listen, for some one also walking along this way is drawing near to walk with them. He is asking them what they are talking about as they walk and are sad. Hear what they say. They thought he must be a stranger in Jerusalem or he would know, for things had happened so important and so sad that everybody must know. What things? he asked. It was about Jesus of Nazareth, their dear Lord whom they loved. They had followed Him as He taught the people and healed the sick and blessed the little children, and they trusted that He was the Savior who had been long promised by the prophets. But the priests had hated Him, and the governor had been afraid to refuse them, and the Lord had been crucified.

That was on Friday, and now it was Sunday. Other things had happened which they could not understand. Women from the company of those who loved the Lord had gone early to the sepulchre with spices to anoint His body. But the stone was rolled back from the sepulchre and the Lord was not there, and angels were there who told them that the Lord was alive and risen. They had brought the word to the disciples in Jerusalem, and two of them ran to the sepulchre and found it so as the women had said. The Lord was not there.

So the two disciples answered the One who joined them in their walk. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" He asked; and He showed them how in Moses and the prophets and all the Scriptures these things had been foretold. Their hearts burned within them as they walked with Him and listened.

They were now near to the village where they were going, and it was toward evening. They begged the Friend to come in and stay with them who had given them such comfort by the way. He went in with them, and at the table He blessed and brake the bread and gave them to eat. "Their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight." Who was the Friend? Late as it was, they must go at once to tell the glad news to the apostles in Jerusalem. Now you will understand the story as we read. (Luke 24:13-35)

## **Junior**

The first Easter Day was a day of glad surprises to the disciples and those who loved the Lord, for on that day they were learning that the Lord was still alive and with them. One of the glad surprises came to two disciples as they walked and went into the country. (Mark 16:12) They were going from Jerusalem to a village called Emmaus. The name means "hot spring," and the place was probably in a valley southwest from Jerusalem, where there is a spring and a ruin, and where the name Khamasa is still found. This place is about eight miles from Jerusalem; about three score furlongs, our story says. Reading on to the 18th verse we learn the name of one of the two disciples, Cleopas. Was this the name of one of the twelve who were called disciples and who were nearest to the Lord? Neither of these two seem to have been of the twelve (verse 33), but there were many more who were called disciples because they were learners and followers of the Lord.

As they told the stranger who joined them in their walk what they were talking of which made them sad, the story of the last days comes back to our minds, as we have read it more fully in the Gospels. Verse 19: Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. It brings back the story of the Lord's life in Nazareth and of His going out from that little town, teaching and healing in Galilee and in Jerusalem. Verse 20: The chief priests delivered Him to be condemned to death. You remember how Judas made his bargain with the priests, and how

when the Lord was taken in Gethsemane He was led before the council in the high priest's palace, where they sought excuse to bring Him before the governor. Do you remember the name of the high priest at the time? The "rulers" would seem to mean the Roman governor and his servants who carried out the wish of the priests and crucified the Lord. Do you remember the governor's name? Passing on from the high priest's palace and from the Roman governor, we think of the crucifixion on the hill outside the city, and how as it drew toward evening they took down the body of the Lord and laid it in a new sepulchre cut in the rock in a garden near at hand.

These things they sadly remembered which happened on the Friday. Now it was Sunday, and early this same morning there had been glad but perplexing reports from some who had visited the sepulchre. In verse 22 it is said that certain women were early there. You remember about these women, how Mary Magdalene and others who loved the Lord had made ready spices and were taking them at daybreak to the sepulchre. You remember too how they found not the Lord, but angels who spoke to comfort them and tell them that the Lord had risen. Verse 24 tells of "certain of them which were with us" who went to the sepulchre and found it true as the women had said. You remember which of the disciples went, Peter and John (verse 12; John 20:2-10), and how they ran together and found the empty sepulchre and the linen clothes; but Him they saw not. As you read the words of the disciples to the stranger who joined them in their walk, the story of the last sad days and of the Easter morning comes back to us with all the details which are told us in the Gospels. We can think how all these things must have filled their minds, and how earnestly and sadly they were talking.

Now came their glad surprise. He called them "fools (or foolish men) and slow of heart" that they did not believe the Scriptures, and did not see that these sad things were preparing the way for what was great and glorious. He began to teach them from the Scriptures and to show them that such things were written there. What part of the Scriptures is meant in verse 27 by Moses? What part by the prophets? These all are about the Lord and tell of the trials and the victories by which He was glorified and made fully God with us. This was new to the disciples and we can imagine the comfort and delight which came to them as they listened to these things. They said to one another afterward, "did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?"

The close of the story is beautiful, how the Lord went in to tarry with the two disciples, but not until they asked Him. Then it was in blessing and breaking the bread that the Lord was known to them. We can believe that it was something which they had seen Him do so many times in just this way. We can imagine how happy the recognition was, and how eagerly the two hastened back to Jerusalem to tell the rest. In verse 33 the eleven are mentioned, for Judas was not there. Verse 34 speaks of an appearance of the Lord to Simon. We seem to have no other mention of this appearance in the Gospels. It may be the same which is referred to in 1 Corinthians 15:5.

So on Easter Day the Lord was teaching the disciples and they were slowly learning that He was not dead, but that He was risen and still with them. He is with us as we walk into the country, or as we are busy in any useful work. He is with us in the house, and when we are at the table. He is with us in bright times, and in darker times when it is spiritually evening. Especially He gives us guidance and help through His Word, teaching us to see in it everywhere lessons of our own life and of Him.

1. "They came unto the sepulchre." Who came? "Two men stood by them." Who were they? "To the eleven." Who are meant?
2. Who were the first at the sepulchre Easter morning? What apostles were first there?
3. How did the Lord come to the two who walked to Emmaus? What did He tell them by the way? How did they know Him?
4. What is all the Scripture about in its deepest meaning, even Moses and the prophets and the Psalms?
5. What great lesson did the disciples learn on Easter day? Is it still true?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Do you see a beautiful lesson in the Lord's coming to the two disciples as they walked and went into the country? Walking, spiritually, is living. The country around a city stands for the field of application or exercise of the principles which the city represents. Villages are also said to represent external things of the church because they are outside the cities. We walk into the country from Jerusalem when we take up our life in the effort to put the holy principles of our religion into practice. Is it not true that the Lord can be with us more fully and help us more when we are at work than when we are sitting idle? Is it not especially true that in a time of sorrow or affliction He can come to us with His comfort more fully if we take up the duties of life and busy ourselves in useful work? The Lord can come near and comfort us as we walk. (R. 167; A. 3270)

The Lord expounded to the disciples in Moses and all the prophets and in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. A similar statement is made in verses 44 and 45 of the same chapter where the Psalms are added to the list of Scriptures which are about the Lord. We might know that the Scriptures everywhere do tell us of the Lord, for they are the truth of life. Have they ever been fulfilled in the life of any man? Never perfectly except in the Lord's own life. Therefore everywhere in their deepest meaning they tell of Him. This also is declared in other places in the Bible. "Search the Scriptures," the Lord said to the Jews; "they are they which testify of Me.... Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me." (John 5:39, 46) It is many times said in the Gospels that the Lord was fulfilling the Scripture. So completely was this true that John declares of the Lord's coming, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1:14) In the Revelation it is declared, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Revelation 19:10; L. 1-7)

There is another beautiful lesson in the fact of the Lord's becoming known to the two disciples in the blessing and breaking of bread as He sat with them at their evening meal. An interior relation with the Lord is suggested by His coming into the house with the disciples. The bread which He blesses and breaks is His own good love which He imparts. It is in this that He is fully and truly known. It may often be toward the close of life's journey that one reaches this interior state; it may often be through experiences of trial which bring us into the shade of evening and compel a fuller and deeper trust. When this union comes and the eyes of our perception are opened we shall know Him and shall have a glad message to tell to others. (E. 617)

## **Lesson 77**

### **Luke 24: 36-53: The Disciples Made Sure**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

The disciples were together in Jerusalem and the doors were shut for fear of the Jews. The Lord had appeared to Simon. The two from Emmaus had come in and told how He had walked with them. And as they thus spoke, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, "Peace be unto you." At first they were terrified and frightened and supposed that they had seen a spirit. But He said, "Why are ye troubled?" And He showed them His hands and His feet to make them sure that it was really Himself. "Have ye here anything to eat?" He asked. And they gave Him a piece of broiled fish and of a honey-comb, and He took it and did eat before them.

Then He talked with them as He had talked with the two on the way to Emmaus, and reminded them how He had told them before that these things should be. Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures, and showed them how Moses and the prophets and the Psalms all told of Him. One Psalm, the twenty-second, tells so plainly of the sad day when the Lord was crucified: "They pierced My hands and My feet." "They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture." (See verses 1, 7, 8, 16, 18.) Read on to the peaceful Psalm that follows: "The Lord is my shepherd"; and to the next grand Psalm of triumph: "Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory." Perhaps these were among the words which the disciples began to understand as the Lord talked with them that Easter night. We must sometime learn to read in all the Psalms the story of the Lord's life.

Turn also to Isaiah 53. "He is despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief... Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." No Scripture speaks more plainly of the Lord's trials. But at its close the chapter is triumphant. We may wonder whether this Psalm and this chapter of Isaiah were among the Scriptures which the Lord opened to the disciples on Easter Day, and brought them comfort. In truth the whole Scripture is about the Lord, His victories and His redeeming work.

Nor was this all the joy that came to them that day, for as they were telling the disciples in the room in Jerusalem of their experience, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said, "Peace be unto you." And again He showed them how His trials and His glorious victory had been foretold in Moses and the prophets and the Psalms. He lived; He was with them still, and He would be with them as He sent them out into all the world to call all people to repent and to tell them about the Lord. It was a glad day for the disciples, and it is a glad day for us, when we know that the Lord is with us in our trials, our work, our joys.

Forty days had passed since the Easter morning (Acts 1:3), and the Lord had appeared many times to the disciples, to take away their fears, and to teach them surely that He was still alive and with them. Once more the disciples were in Jerusalem, and the Lord appeared to them for the last time. He bade them tarry in Jerusalem until they received power from on high. And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. How many the disciples had

gone with the Lord out to the Mount of Olives, and over the hill to the little town, the home of Mary and Martha. It was beautiful that this should be the last walk on earth with the disciples, and that He should be with them again in Bethany where He had been so dearly loved. "And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

1. Who saw the Lord on Easter Day?
2. When and where did He come to the company disciples?
3. How did He make them sure that it was He?
4. What last walk did they take with Him? Was it the last? (Matthew 28:20; Mark 16:20)

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The great lesson for the disciples to learn on Easter Day and for us to learn from our study of the story is that the Lord did not leave the world at His crucifixion and resurrection, but is with us always according to His promise in the last words of the Gospel of Matthew. He did not leave us even in the sense that our friends leave us when they die. They do leave the natural plane of life and are present with us inwardly. The Lord did not leave the natural plane of life, but glorified it in Himself. His glorification consisted in the casting out of what was finite and imperfect, and the bringing down of the Divine in all fullness. This process of glorification extended, we are taught, to His very body, so that He is present with us forever even on the plane of physical life. This is meant by His saying to the disciples, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." (L. 3 5; E. 513) Several passages helpful to a careful study of the subject are brought together in "Correspondence School Notes" to T. 109.

He showed them His hands and His feet. Do our hands and feet represent our interior, secret thoughts, or our outward acts? The Lord's hands and feet represent His natural life in which He is with us in this world. When the Lord was crucified and rose, the fear of the disciples that they should lose this close natural presence is represented by the women lovingly holding the Lord by the feet. (Matthew 28:9) And to teach us that He would not leave us, but is with us still in our natural life, He showed His hands and His feet. (R. 49; E. 513)

The Lord also ate before the disciples as another proof that He was really present. Fishes, the birds of the water, represent our interest in natural thought and knowledge, and honey represents the pleasantness of good natural affections. The Lord shares with us these things of natural life. (E. 513; A. 5620)

We share the Easter story and the Easter gladness with the children, and for study we may think further of the relation of the Old Testament Scriptures to the Lord and to His glorification and His redeeming work. Every part of the Divine Word in its deepest sense is about the Lord. His coming and His redemption are foretold in the Old Testament more fully than we know. This was a strength to angels and men during the long years before the Lord came. It was also a necessary help to Him in living the perfect life; and it makes the Old Testament for us a storehouse of deeper knowledge of the Lord's life which does not appear in the letter of the Gospels. Remember the

lesson of the Transfiguration when Moses and Elias appeared with the Lord in glory and spoke of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. (Luke 9:30, 31) The whole Old Testament history and prophecy is about the Lord and His glorification.

At another time the Lord said, "Search the Scriptures.... They are they which testify of me.... Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me." (John 5:39-47) Where did Moses write of the Lord? You will think at once of the story of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which is opened in the "Arcana" in its relation to the Lord especially to His development in childhood. This gives us knowledge of the deeper experiences of the silent years of the Lord's life in Nazareth and of experiences which could not be revealed to the disciples. Other passages of Moses come to mind. The earliest prediction of the Lord's coming is the saying that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. Both victory and suffering are suggested, for it is added, "Thou shalt bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:15) The brazen serpent the Lord Himself declared to be prophetic of His victory and saving power. (Numbers 21:9)

Swedenborg's "Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms" indicates the relation of these Scriptures to the Lord's life. The Psalms, the Divine songs, reveal affections of the Lord's heart in states the Lord's coming in the prophets. You will recall many predictions of the Lord's coming in the prophets. (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6, 7; Malachi 3:1; 4:2) Notice how many of the prophecies join with the Lord's triumph mention of His suffering through which the triumph would be gained. The meek Sufferer, Isaiah 50:6. Bearing our griefs, Isaiah 53. See also many Old Testament passages cited in Doctrine of the Lord 11.

The Old Testament supplements the Gospel and gives us deeper knowledge of the Lord's life and of His love than can be given in literal teaching. The effect of this deeper opening of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms should be a burning in our hearts of deeper love for the Lord and of firmer purpose and courage to do His will in loyal Christian life. (A. 5620, 7933)

The Lord's ascension into the cloud reminds us of the bright cloud which overshadowed the disciples when He was transfigured. They could not bear the fullness of His Divine glory, but it must be veiled and interpreted to them by simple forms of thought, such as those of the letter of the Word. But as we become able to understand something of the spiritual truth within the letter of the Word, which is all about the Lord, the cloud opens and reveals Him. The Lord Himself meant this, which is fulfilled in the opening of His Word to the New Church, when He predicted that He would come in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. (Mark 13:26; 14:62; R. 642, 820)

## **Lesson 1**

### **John 1: 1-18: One Lord Creates and Saves**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

You know there are four Gospels. That is, the Lord chose four people to write the story of His life in the world. They were Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. No two of the stories are told in quite the

same way, nor for quite the same purpose. Matthew especially shows how the Scriptures are fulfilled in the Lord's life, and gives the Christian law. Mark tells most simply and briefly the story of the Lord's ministry. Luke gives at length the Lord's teaching as He journeyed with His disciples. John tells especially of the ministry in Judea, and reveals most fully the Lord's love.

Now we are to study the story as John tells it. You remember, perhaps, that John was a fisherman, and that the Lord called him and his brother James as they were in a boat with their father Zebedee on the Sea of Galilee, and from this time on John was with the Lord until the end. How precious this nearness to the Lord was to John, you can see as you read the first verses of his First Epistle: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." (John 1:1) He had seen all the wonderful things the Lord had done. He had heard His words of love and kindness, His parables and His stern reproofs; and he wrote the story with the sense of the infiniteness of His life, which is expressed in the last chapter of John's Gospel; "and there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." (John 21:25; 20:30)

John knew that people would learn from the other Gospels much of the history of the Lord's life, and so for his story the Lord led him to choose those things which tell of the Lord's loving care of us, that we may believe in Him as our Lord and Master.

John seems to have been bold and strong in fighting against evil, for he and his brother James were called "the sons of thunder." He was also "the disciple whom Jesus loved." And he and his brother James were (with Peter) the ones chosen to be nearest the Lord in some of the most holy times, showing that they were able to understand more than the others the lessons of His life. It was John who leaned on Jesus' breast at the Last Supper, and it was John who at the last was asked by the Lord to care for Mary His mother, as he stood sorrowing with her at the cross, faithful to the end. Strong and tempestuous in his love at first, John's last words to his friends were the gentle command, "Little children, love one another." It was this same John who wrote the Book of Revelation at the end of our Bible.

John begins his Gospel by telling us that the same Lord had lived always; He had made the world and men, and had given them life, and He came into His world to help men to live good, happy lives. Many of the people He had made did not know Him and would not listen to Him; but those who did know Him and believe Him were saved from their evil enemies and could be happy children of the Heavenly Father.

The Heavenly Father came to the earth a little child, as other little children, and grew up with all the temptations to do wrong that other children have; but He never once did the wrong thing, and so gave us an example of a perfect child. And having thus lived the life of a little child, and having met all our trials, He can help us when we ask His help in our temptations - that is to do right and feel right when it is very hard to do it. So He came to show us the way we should live, as a light in the dark shows us the path we should walk in.

The Lord not only made us, and made the beautiful world we live in and our fathers and mothers and our homes; not only told us what not to do because those things would make us and other people unhappy, and what to do to make our lives and other people's happy; but He came and

lived with us, showing us the way by walking in it Himself. A few walked with Him and followed Him. Many went their own ways and did not care. And others made His life and His path as hard as they could. Do you ever think whether you are walking the path with Him? Or whether you are going off into other paths of your own, not caring much what you do? Or worse still, do you ever do things that grieve Him? For we can walk with Him every day of our lives more truly than the children long ago walked with Him over the hills of Palestine.

The way was prepared for the Lord's coming by John the Baptist, who told the people of the coming of the everlasting Father who would show them how to live perfect, happy lives. Although no one had ever seen the Heavenly Father before they would now see Him in Jesus Christ.

1. What can you tell me about the John who wrote this Gospel? What else have we that was written by the same disciple?
2. Who is the John mentioned in verses 6 and 15?
3. What verses in this lesson plainly teach that the same Lord who made men came into the world to save them?
4. What is "the Word" which was in the beginning?
5. How was the Word made flesh in the Lord's life with men?
6. How is it true in our experience, that John the Baptist must go before the true Light?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Note that the three Gospels, Matthew, Luke, and John, testify to the Divine birth of the Lord. They do not repeat the same account; they give different accounts, yet agree in declaring the Divine birth. They are independent witnesses to this fact, fundamental to true knowledge of the Lord.

The introduction to John's Gospel (John 1: 1-14) shows the purpose of the Gospel, to prove to us the truth of the Divine birth and of the Divine nature of the Lord. The purpose is again asserted in John 20:30, 31, which was probably originally the close of the Gospel. There is no mistaking the purpose to identify the Lord who came into the world with Him who made the world. See verses 1 and 10. The term "Word," in Greek "Logos," is applied to the Lord in His work of creation and in His coming into the world. The term meant first of all an activity of mind, and then of speech. The term in our doctrines is "the Divine truth" in which Divine love takes form and by which it becomes effective. When we read "In the beginning was the Word" and that by the Word all things were made, we think of the Divine truth which indeed was later given expression in the Scriptures, but which from the beginning and always is the means of expression of the Divine love in all its works. Notice in the account of creation in the first chapter of Genesis the similar thought expressed in the words "And God said, Let there be light," etc. Every reaching-out of the Divine in a Divine work for men is by the Divine truth, the Word. The fact that the Word means the Divine truth is confirmed by calling the Lord in His coming the light. (Verses 4-9) "Divine truth has such power that by it all things in the universe were created. . . . It is commonly believed that it is only

speech from Jehovah, or a command, whereas it is the very essential from which and by which are all things." (A. 7678)

If the world and all things were made by the Word, or the Divine truth, truth must be a very real and powerful thing. It is more than a spoken or written sentence, it is more than an idea in the mind. Truth itself is the activity of love, and the Divine truth is the activity of the Divine love in carrying out its purpose. If we see how Divine love is working in the silent moving of the stars, in the growth of plants, or in the life of a man or of the human race, we see so much of truth; if we tell it, we tell the truth; but the truth itself is the Divine activity untiring in its operation and infinite in its power. This is the Word, the truth, which was in the beginning with God, and by which all things were made. And this same Divine truth is in wonderful ways expressed and embodied in the Scriptures giving them a power above every other power on earth. (T. 224)

In the Lord's coming the Word was made flesh. The Lord fulfilled the prophecies of Scripture; He said that Moses wrote of Him (John 5:39, 46) and He expounded to the disciples in Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms, and in all the Scriptures, the things concerning Himself. (Luke 24:27, 44) By fulfilling the Scripture the Lord made His Humanity the embodiment of all Divine truth, and this made Him able to receive also the Divine love. We learn how to do some use, and in doing it we love it. In general, we must learn the truth of life and live it before we love it. So with the Lord: by compelling Himself to think the truth of perfect life and to live it, He could also love it and so could bring forth the Divine love in all its tenderness and power into the world. John's Gospel is especially the revelation and expression of the Divine love in the Lord's life with men. But we need to know that this great love was the result of patient, faithful thinking and doing of the Divine truth, even in the most outward things of life in the world. And so the Gospel of love first tells us that "in the beginning was the Word," and that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." The Lord's love is more wonderful when we know the labor and the patience with which He brought it into the world. We can be patient with the learning of truth and the obedience which must be the beginning of heavenly life with us. (L. 1, 2; A. 10076)

In keeping the Word, we must keep it first in the letter, with its stern thou-shalt-nots and its calls to repentance. This literal truth is John the Baptist who is not the Light, but is sent to bear witness of it. Obedience to this truth prepares the way for more spiritual understanding and obedience, and for loving and happy life from the Lord. (A. 9372)

We must all take away from this chapter the truth that is expressed in the title of our lesson: One Lord creates and saves. Even if we do not understand every word of the chapter, we see that it emphasizes this truth: The same Lord who made the world to be the home of men, where they could live useful, happy lives and prepare for heaven, came into the world to save men when they had come under the power of evil, and to lead them back into good ways. How plainly John tells us that it was the same Lord, when he says, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." The words are wonderfully pathetic. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." This is the story which is expanded in the Gospel we are to study. The great love and patience of the Lord! The indifference and ingratitude of men! Our opportunity to find the Lord's great love and the blessing of it! (L. 1)

## **Lesson 2**

### **John 1: 19-34: Witness of John the Baptist**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

In our last lesson we learned a little about John, "Saint John" he is often called, who was one of the Lord's twelve disciples, and who wrote the Gospel which we are studying and also the Book of Revelation. Before the Lord called him to be one of His disciples he had been a follower of another John called "John the Baptist." It is of this John that we learn today.

John the Baptist was born and lived for one great purpose, to prepare a way for the Lord's coming into the world. His whole life was different from the lives of other men, from the time when an angel from heaven told that he was to be born, to the sad end of his life in King Herod's dungeon.

For very many years it had been known - foretold by the prophets - not only that the Lord was coming into the world, but that someone would come to prepare the way before Him. "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me." (Malachi 3:1) "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." (Isaiah 40:3; Mark 1:2, 3) It was also said that he would come in the spirit and power of the great prophet Elijah. (Malachi 4:5; Luke 1:17.) And now the time had come for the prophecies to be fulfilled. John was born to the good priest Zacharias and his wife Elisabeth, in their home in the hill country of Judea. "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." (You read the story in Luke 1.) Then he began his work, preaching repentance and baptizing.

Great crowds of people came to hear John, and the Jews at Jerusalem wondered who he could really be; so they sent priests and others to ask him who he really was. They asked him if he were the Christ; and he said he was not. They asked him if he were Elias or "that prophet" (see Deuteronomy 18:15, 18) but he answered, "No." Then they asked him who he was, and he said he was the one whom the prophet Isaiah meant when he spoke of the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord. Then they asked him why he baptized if he were not the Christ, and he said that he baptized the people with water as a sign of their being washed from their sins, but that another and greater One had already come among them, whose shoe he was not worthy to unloose, that He would baptize them with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Which meant that after his baptism when people had repented and were washed from their sins, the Lord would give them the beautiful, happy love of doing good.

Mark tells us how the Lord Himself came to John to be baptized in the Jordan, and how John knew Him, for "he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon Him; and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased." After this John preached for more than a year in and about the wilderness of Judea, while the Lord was beginning His teaching, for the most part in the northern part of the land.

You read the rest of the story of John in Luke 3:19, 20; Matthew 14:1-12 - how he was imprisoned and killed by Herod. This was the sad end of the earthly life of John the Baptist. He did faithfully what he had been sent to do, "to prepare the way for the Lord." But he died without being much with the Lord, and only hearing through others of the wonderful works that He did, and of the Divine power and love that had come into the world.

1. What prophecies can you show me in the Old Testament that foretell the coming of John the Baptist?
2. What did the angel say of him, who foretold his birth to Zacharias?
3. How is it true that John was Elias, and that he was not Elias? Read Luke 1:17.
4. Where and how did John the Baptist live? Where did he baptize? What did he preach? What led to his death?
5. What did John say of the Lord as he pointed Him out to his disciples? By what sign did John know that it was the Lord?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

John the Baptist preached repentance in preparation for the Lord. From the account of his preaching in Luke 3:2-18 we learn some of the plain instruction of right and wrong which John gave to publicans and soldiers and others. We may believe that many among the multitude who heard John took his words to heart and repented. But beyond this, John and all that is told us in the Gospels about him represented the Divine truth of the letter of the Word and perfect repentance in obedience to this truth. We are taught that a wonderful use was served by this representative of repentance, not unlike that which was served by the Jewish sacrifices which represented heavenly worship. It was the means of bringing angels near to men, surrounding them with a heavenly protection. Without this men could not have endured the Lord's presence. This helps us to understand the prophecy of John's coming, which closes the Old Testament: "Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (E. 724)

Notice that the same John who taught repentance pointed out the Lord to his disciples, and called Him "the Lamb of God." It is by repenting of evil ways that our minds are opened to heaven and the Lord - to perceive His innocence and to love it. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." See also Luke 7:29, 30. The dove which was given to John as the sign by which he should know the Lord, is, like the lamb, an emblem of the spirit of Divine holiness and innocence in the Lord, which one is prepared by repentance to perceive and acknowledge. Innocent thought is especially represented by the dove, and innocent affection by the lamb. (A.3994; T. 144)

We wish that we could know the Lord and enter at once upon the enjoyment of good, heavenly life. That will all come in time, but John the Baptist must come before the Lord; the baptism with water before the baptism with the Holy Spirit and with fire. We must learn the Divine laws and repent in obedience to them. We must do it bravely in the spirit of John the Baptist. In proportion to the faithfulness of our repentance, we shall be prepared for all good and happy things. (E. 475)

## **Lesson 3**

### **John 1: 35-51: First Followers of the Lord**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

It seems that John who wrote the Gospel and a man named Andrew were both disciples of John the Baptist, and that one day sometime after the Lord was baptized they all three were standing together reverently watching the Lord as He walked. Just think for a moment. John the Baptist knew that he had been sent to prepare the way for the Lord. And now He actually stood before him. "Behold the Lamb of God!" One of the two who heard John speak was Andrew; the other was probably the disciple John. They left John the Baptist to follow Jesus; and would they not also be eager to call their friends to share their gladness in having found the Messiah? Andrew called his brother Simon, and the Lord called him Cephas or Peter, which both mean "a stone."

John was baptizing in the Jordan, near Bethabara, which is thought to be a ford on the Jordan a little south of the Sea of Galilee. They journeyed from Bethabara into Galilee, the Lord and a little company of those who were beginning to believe in Him. The company grew, as the Lord called Philip, and Philip called Nathaniel. Philip was from Bethsaida on the Sea of Galilee, the city of Andrew and Peter, and Nathaniel's home was Cana, the little town near Nazareth, to which the Lord and the disciples were going. (John 21:2) Nathaniel wondered that the Lord saw him under the fig tree before Philip called him, but the Lord said that he should see greater things than these. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." By this the Lord meant that He was opening the way of heaven to men. They could ascend toward heaven by learning and obeying what He taught them, and a new life would descend into their hearts from Him. (A.3701)

1. By what name did John the Baptist describe the Lord? What did it mean?
2. Who was called to the Lord by Andrew? Who by Philip?
3. In what city did Andrew and Peter and Philip live? What was Nathaniel's home?
4. What does the name Peter mean? Why did the Lord give the name to Simon?
5. Of what story in the Old Testament does verse 51 remind you? What is the meaning of the picture?

#### **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

##### **Intermediate**

This account of the gathering of the first disciples suggests the privilege and duty of helping one another to know the Lord. We ask, "Where dwellest Thou?" when we desire to know the quality of the Lord's life and of heaven, and we abide with Him for a day when we begin to receive of that life from Him.

The twelve apostles also, like the twelve tribes of Israel, represent various elements of Christian character that are gradually awakened and led to the Lord. We are most familiar with the meaning of Peter and John. We associate Peter with his declaration of the Lord's Divinity, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:16) He stands for a strong, living faith in the Lord. It was on account of his representative character that the Lord gave Peter his name, for Peter means a "stone" or "rock," and a rock is a type of fixed, unchanging truth. (A. 3750; E. 411) John was "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and his writings are full of the tenderest expressions of the Lord's love. We shall find this the quality of John's Gospel. See also the first Epistle of John, 4:7-11. John stands for a deep love for the Lord. (R. 879) Each of these disciples had a brother who also became the Lord's disciple. In each case the brother represents a related faculty. James the brother of John represents a love of the neighbor which is like unto love for the Lord. Andrew, Peter's brother, represents obedience to what one knows of the Lord. (A. preface to chapter 18)

One of the two who heard John the Baptist speak and followed the Lord was Andrew, and the other who is not named was without doubt the disciple John. The first turning of the understanding to the Lord is not with a full and living faith, but with obedience. This leads to faith, as Andrew called his brother Simon. The name Simon also means "hearkening," reminding us that obedience is always a part of living faith. (E. 411) It is also in keeping with the hidden nature of love, that the disciple who represents this element of character remains unnamed. It is felt, but cannot be definitely described.

Another disciple was found as they went from the Jordan into Galilee. It was Philip. He is a type of intelligence. The fact that he was from the city of Andrew and Peter suggests that the faculty which he represents belongs to the understanding. Philip is also associated with Andrew in other places. See John 6:7-9 and 12:20-22. The name Philip means "lover of a horse," and the horse is a type of spiritual understanding. The relation of Philip to intelligence appears in his saying, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us" (John 14:8), and in this very lesson in his words to Nathaniel, "Come and see."

The element of character for which Nathaniel stands is indicated both by the Lord's description of him, "an Israelite in whom is no guile," and by his sitting under the fig tree. He is a type of a state of simple goodness. The spreading fig with its sweet fruit corresponds to such simple goodness. We know that one who is in such goodness is ready to be instructed by the Lord. (E. 866)

Notice the different expressions used in describing the Lord to Peter and to Nathaniel, for each one knows the Lord according to his own ability to know Him. To Peter He was called the Messiah or Christ. The words mean "anointed," and describe the Lord in the kingly power of His truth. It is so that Peter knows Him. To Nathaniel He was called "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." The name seems especially to emphasize the bringing of the Divine power into the practical, natural life of the world. (E. 684)

## **Lesson 4**

### **John 2: 1-11: The Beginning of Miracles**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Some of those who heard John the Baptist speak began to follow Jesus. There were Andrew and his brother Peter, and John who writes the story. And as they went from the Jordan back into Galilee, there were Philip who was a neighbor of Andrew and Peter, and Nathaniel who was called as he sat under a fig tree, a man of Cana, the town to which the Lord and the disciples were going.

The next day there was a marriage in Cana, and the mother Mary was there, and Jesus and His disciples. A part of the marriage celebration was a feast given by the bridegroom. There was great care to provide all that the guests could need, and among other things wine for the feast. Mary learned that the wine had failed and she said to Jesus, "They have no wine." She believed that in some way He would help, and the Lord did help. He bade the servants to fill with water the six large stone jars from which water was taken for the many washings of hands and of dishes. The servants filled the jars, no doubt from the village spring which still is there, just outside the town. They filled them to the brim. "Draw out now," the Lord said, "and bear unto the governor of the feast." They did so, and the wine was better than what they had had before. The ruler of the feast did not know, but the servants knew that the wine had been made by the power of the Lord changing the water into wine. This was the first miracle in which the people saw the Lord's power. As the days went on, He did many other miracles, but this was remembered as the first, the turning of water into wine.

##### **Junior**

The Lord had begun His public ministry. The quiet years in Nazareth were past; the Lord had gone to John to be baptized, and now came back with five or six followers or disciples whom He had begun to teach, and who believed Him to be the long looked for Messiah. He came back to the village of Cana not far from Nazareth. There was to be a marriage in Cana among people who must have been friends of the Lord's family, for His mother was at the marriage, and Jesus and His disciples were also asked.

The marriage ceremonies were different from those we know about. On the evening of the marriage a procession went with the bride from her home to the home of the bridegroom. First in the procession came people who played music, then those who gave wine and oil to the people and nuts to the children. Then came the bride covered with a long veil, surrounded by her friends, and about them were people carrying torches and myrtle branches and wreaths of flowers. Everyone rose to salute the procession as it passed, or followed it on its way. When it came to the house of the bridegroom the bride was led to him, and the words were said and the papers signed that made them husband and wife, and they would be crowned with garlands. Then, after the washing of hands, the feast began, the bridal blessing being spoken over the first cup of wine. The feasting often lasted for days. The bride herself did not join in it, but stayed apart with her women friends, still covered with her veil. There was often music and dancing at the feast. The feast was

furnished by the bridegroom or his father, and everything depended upon having a plenty for all, for in those Eastern countries hospitality to guests was a most sacred duty, and if one failed in it he would be forever disgraced.

We think of the house in Cana as built about a court, where possibly were shrubs and flowers. The rooms of the house opened upon this court, the doors and windows perhaps protected by a porch or gallery. Here, near the door of the banquet room, we may think of the six great "waterpots of stone, containing two or three firkins apiece," which may have been from eighteen to twenty-eight gallons each (and you know a gallon is four quarts). The water used in Cana was drawn at the village spring which you may still see at the foot of the hill below the village. Much water would be needed by a company like this. In the first place, water would be wanted to wash the feet of the guests, for they wore sandals and these had to be taken off and left outside so that only the bare feet of the guests should touch the floor of the host. Then the hands must be washed according to the numberless Jewish rules - a whole book of their law containing one hundred and twenty-six chapters; is devoted to purification. Then water must be had for washing the dishes in this long feast, etc., etc.

We can think of the guests sitting or reclining about the table in the brightly lighted dining-room, "the ruler of the feast" having a care that everyone was served, the mild wine of the country being passed around in generous fashion.

In the midst of all this, came word that the wine had given out, the greatest disgrace to the bridegroom. Mary, Jesus' mother, heard it and told Jesus, as if hoping that in some way He could help. But if the Lord helped, it would be by His Divine power, in which Mary had no part. So when she told Him that the wine had given out, He said, "Woman," a gentle, respectful word in His language, "what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." But she said to the servants, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." And the Lord said to them, "Fill the water pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And He said unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the ruler of the feast. And they bare it"; for it was not water that they drew, but the most perfect wine. Read verses 9-11.

The Lord is always making wine by the grape vine. The vine takes up water from the earth and it is changed in the leaves by His sunshine, and then it fills the grapes with juice which sweetens as they ripen. This is most wonderful, but as it happens every day we become used to it. But at this feast He changed the water into wine without using the grape vine at all, and His disciples saw His great power and "believed on Him." This way of showing His power was called a miracle. The Lord used miracles not to compel men to believe in Him, for that would not be useful, but to confirm the faith of those who did believe. "His disciples believed on Him." We shall learn of many miracles done by the Lord. You will like to have a page for miracles in your notebook and keep a list of those that we learn about.

1. "The third day"- after what? (See John .1:43.)
2. Where was Cana? Which of the disciples lived there?
3. What did the Lord do at the feast? What did He first require the servants to do?
4. What is the purifying spoken of in verse 6?

5. Had the Lord done other miracles before this?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The outward circumstances of the Lord's life in the world and the outward events in which He took part (so far as the Gospels describe them to us) were all representative of spiritual experiences of His life and our lives. A feast is a type of the heavenly life in which there is abundant reception of true thought and good affection which make the spirit strong. The heavenly feast is also a marriage feast because in that life and in every particular of it there is a marriage of truth and goodness, and a still more interior marriage of the soul with the Lord. The marriage in Cana was a type of the heavenly marriage as it was beginning in simple hearts. Cana was Nathaniel's town (John 21:2) and we may associate with it the simple goodness of the disciple who was called as he sat under the fig tree. (John 1:47, 48) That the blessed state represented by this marriage belonged not only to the Lord's own life, but was beginning to exist from Him in the church and in the Lord's disciples, is suggested by the saying that "the mother of Jesus was there: and both Jesus was called and His disciples, to the marriage." (E. 252,-376, 617)

What is the wine of the heavenly feast? And how may it fail? Wine represents a perception of the ways of heavenly life, not a mere cold knowledge that certain ways are right, but a knowledge made sweet by a happy perception of the goodness and blessedness of those ways. There may be something of this happy perception in the beginning of a good work which we undertake, in the beginning of some relation upon which we enter, in the beginning of married life, in the beginning of our relation to the church and the Lord, but too often it fails when the first interest is gone; the inspiration of life is lost. The story of the marriage in Cana tells us that the Lord can give a still sweeter happiness than was enjoyed at first, and it tells what we must do to enable Him to give it. (A. 1069, 5113, 9139)

The water pots were filled with cleansing water in preparation for the giving of the wine. It means the necessity, in a time when inspiration fails, of learning what is right, of repenting of evil and doing good as a duty to the Lord. There were six water pots. Six is associated with the working days of the week, and means all states of dutiful life. They were filled to the brim, which means thoroughness in repenting and in doing right. This is what we must do, before the Lord can give again the perception of the happiness of good life. Now He can give it, and better than before. (R. 378; E. 376, 475)

This was the beginning of miracles, when the Lord was about thirty years old. (Luke 3 :23) It is a wonderful indication of the long and patient labor by which the Lord brought the Divine power and blessing into the world. Through all these years He had been removing each weak and imperfect thing of the nature which He had inherited from men, and bringing down the Divine in its place. So He was "glorified," and the miracles "manifested forth His glory." The Lord's answer to Mary, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" meant that the power to do the miracle, and the power to give the spiritual blessing represented by the wine did not belong to the earthly nature with which Mary was related and which the Lord had been putting off, but to the Divine nature which He had been bringing down in its stead. Because of this change taking place as the Lord

was glorified, He nowhere called Mary His mother. "That the Lord was the Son of Mary is true, but that He is so still is not true." (T. 102, A. 2649)

The miracles of the Lord cannot produce faith in His Divineness, but they serve in a subordinate way to confirm faith with those who feel His Divineness in their hearts.

## Lesson 5

### John 2: 12-25: The Lord and the Temple

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

We are again in Jerusalem, and it is a much larger, grander city than it was in the time of David. The temple is much larger and grander than the temple that Solomon built. There were open courts about the temple, and in the outer courts many people gathered, especially at the three great feasts of the year: the feast of the Passover in the spring, at the time that we celebrate Easter; the feast of first fruits fifty days later; and the feast of tabernacles, a thanksgiving feast in the autumn. There was only one temple and the people came to the feasts from all parts of the land and from distant lands. The Lord's visits to Jerusalem were usually at the feast times, when He could teach and heal many people.

It was now the time for the Passover, and the Lord came from Galilee. Many people were coming, and as they neared Jerusalem the roads were full of joyful pilgrims. When the Lord came to the temple, what did He find? In the large outer court many men were selling oxen and sheep and doves, which people would need for their offerings. At the Passover every family would need a lamb for the sacred feast, and there were money-changers there to change other kinds of money that people brought and give them the special coin, the half-shekel, which each one should pay to the temple. It was like a noisy market. They were charging large prices, much more than was right. At another time the Lord said that they made the temple a den of thieves. The Lord drove them out of the temple. The priests were angry because the Lord did this and told them that they should not use the temple so.

##### Junior

It would be a good plan to look at a map today. Do you see Nazareth, and Cana, and Capernaum? It was to Capernaum that the Lord and His disciples, His mother and His brethren, came after the marriage in Cana. But they did not stay many days, for it was near the time for the feast of the Passover, and for this feast everyone who could must go up to Jerusalem, and Jerusalem you see is far away in Judea.

The Jerusalem which we read of in the Gospels is the same which we learned of in the days of David and Solomon, but now a very much larger, grander city. Where Solomon's temple, had stood was now the great temple built by Herod for the Jews, shining with gold and marble. In our lesson it says, "Forty and six years was this temple in building," and it was not yet finished.

Many years ago, when the Lord was twelve years old, we learn of His going to Jerusalem to the feast of the Passover with His parents. (Luke 2:41-50) It was in the spring, in the month corresponding to the latter part of March and the first part of April, that this feast was held in memory of the night that the angel passed over the houses of the Israelites, when the firstborn in each house of the Egyptians died. Can you tell about it? (Much of interest might be told the children from Exodus 13:1-32. Read verses 26 and 27.) It was a most beautiful time of the year; the hillsides were covered with flowers, the wheat was just coming into ear, the birds were singing in the glad spring sunshine, and everyone who could was traveling to Jerusalem. For Jerusalem was the largest city of the land, and here the wonderful temple stood. It is a beautiful picture as we can think of it, the people in their gay colored clothes all winding their way along the narrow paths over the flower-covered hills to Jerusalem. They had no carriages or trains, but either walked or rode on the backs of horses, donkeys, mules, or camels. They were joyous companies, for it was a joyous festival.

There were many flocks of sheep and lambs driven along these paths, for every family must have its burnt offering; and it is said that one hundred thousand lambs alone were needed besides thousands of sheep and oxen. (Geikie, Vol. 1, p. 469) All the roads to Jerusalem were made ready for the hosts of pilgrims; the bridges rebuilt, the tombs by the road side were whitewashed, the springs and wells made clean. The Lord and His disciples came over one of these roads. All these many pilgrims felt a great pride in their beautiful temple, and how strong the Lord's feeling for it must have been; for He knew it to be His Father's house!

We can look with the disciples at the city Jerusalem as they came near. It was built on hills which sloped steeply down to the valleys below. The city was surrounded by a high wall, above which many fine buildings could be seen, and the beautiful temple built of glistening white marble and gold. The House of the Lord! On they came, down into the valley, up the steep hill, and through one of the gates in the wall, and through the streets to the temple itself. But what did they see? The courts of this holy temple filled with a noisy crowd buying and selling the animals for sacrifice, the pens for which were built in the court itself! Other men were sitting at tables exchanging money for the people, that each one might have the half-shekel which was required from everyone for the support of the temple. There was also other changing of foreign money, with much dishonesty too. Many doves were needed for humbler sacrifices, and these the high priest himself had raised and sold, making much money thereby. Besides all this there was much coming and going across the temple court by people who would thus cut off a corner and save a moment's walk.

The Lord and His disciples saw this confusion as they came to the holy temple. It was His Father's house, and it was He who must make it clean again; so making a scourge of small cords, we are told, He drove out the sheep and the oxen and poured out the money of the money changers, and told those who sold doves to take them away (they were probably in cages), and said, "Make not My Father's house a house of merchandise." And the disciples remembered that it was written, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten Me up." (Psalm 69:9)

But the Jews were very angry, and wanted to know who this was who came and interfered with what they were doing; and they asked Him to show them a sign, that they might know that He had a Divine right to drive the traders out. And He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." By the "temple" He meant the temple of His body, and when we learn more of the

story we shall see how it came true. And when it did come true, His disciples remembered this that the Lord had said. But the Jews thought He meant their great marble and gold temple which had been forty and six years in building, and was not then finished.

It seems from the last verses of this chapter that the Lord must have done many miracles at the feast, of which none of the Gospels tell us. But though many "believed on His name, when they saw the miracles which He did," He did not trust them, for He knew their hearts.

1. What was the Passover? Where was it kept?
2. Do you remember another time when the Lord was present at that feast?
3. What did the Lord drive out of the temple? Why did He drive them out?
4. Of what temple did the Lord speak when He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The Lord spoke of the temple of His body. The sacred building at Jerusalem where the Divine presence was felt was a type of more living temples of the Lord's presence. It was a type of heaven. It was a type of a heavenly man in whom the Lord finds a dwelling. And in the fullest sense it was a type of the Lord's own Divine Humanity in which God dwells with men in all the fullness of His power. Jesus said, "In this place is one greater than the temple" (Matthew 12:6), for He was what the temple represented. For the same reason when the Holy City was shown to John in the Revelation, he "saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." (Revelation 21:22) In the same chapter of the Revelation (verse 3) it is said of the fullness of the Divine presence in the Lord's Divine Humanity, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." (E. 220; R. 585; A. 414)

Knowing that the temple was a type of the Lord Himself in whom the Divine love and power were present in the world, we see a significance in many things that are said of the temple both in the Old Testament and in the Gospels. "The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him." (Habakkuk 2:20) "And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple; and He healed them." (Matthew 21:14)

Following this line of thought, what work which the Lord was doing in Himself was represented by His driving the traders from the temple? It pictures the purifying work that He was doing, in putting out from His Humanity all selfish and evil things which hindered the full reception of the Divine life. Especially it pictures the overcoming of every thought or wish to use holy things for selfish advantage. "He drove them all out of the temple." When they asked the meaning of what the Lord did in the temple, He explained it by telling them of this work of purification and glorification in Himself which the cleansing of the temple represented. Men who were living evil lives were destroying the temple of the Divine presence in the world. The Lord was raising it up.

The cleansing of the temple pictured the purifying work that we should do to make ourselves temples of the Lord; and it contains the assurance of success in the Lord's strength. (E. 840.)

"He knew what was in man." So He knows our hearts and all our thoughts. (Psalm 139) The belief which is caused by miracles is an external belief which is not deep and genuine. (E. 129-133)

## Lesson 6

### John 3: 1-17: The Lesson to Nicodemus

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

It was at that same visit to Jerusalem that the Lord talked with Nicodemus, a man in high position among the Jews, a teacher and a member of their high council. Nicodemus came to the Lord by night, for he feared to have others know that he was interested in Jesus, with whom the priests were angry because He interfered with their trading in the temple, and because He was followed by the common people. But Nicodemus saw the miracles that Jesus did and believed that He was a teacher come from God. Later we hear more of Nicodemus and find him bolder in his love for the Lord. On this night in Jerusalem the Lord spoke words which you often hear read in church when a person is baptized. Read verses 5-8. Then come the words which some of us are learning. (Verses 14-17)

This visit of the Lord in Jerusalem began at the Passover in the spring, and after the feast the Lord and the disciples stayed in Judea, the country near Jerusalem, through the summer and autumn, teaching and baptizing. This was a long visit in Judea.

##### Junior

You remember that it was said in the last lesson that He did miracles while He was in Jerusalem, and that many seeing Him, believed on Him. One of these was a man named Nicodemus, one of the "rulers of the Jews." He seems to have been one of the three officers of the great council of the church, the Sanhedrin. For him, the master or teacher of Israel, to be willing to come to learn of the Lord meant a great deal. The other rulers and great men of the church were angry with the Lord for cleansing the temple. They were angry and jealous of Him because many believed on Him, and because He taught from His own authority, or what He knew Himself to be true, and not what they had taught Him. They would have been very angry with Nicodemus if they had known that he believed on Him.

So Nicodemus came to the Lord by night, and told Him of his belief in Him. But the Lord said that a man must be born again or from above, before he could see the kingdom of God. This Nicodemus did not understand. He did not see how a grown man could be born again. The Lord did not mean that a man's body must be born again, but that as we learn to do right as the Heavenly Father has taught us, He will give us a new and heavenly spirit with which we can enter the kingdom of God. Read, or better still repeat the first eight verses of this chapter. "Born of

water and of the spirit." Have you ever heard these words before? Do you know when? Yes, when anyone is baptized; when your minister takes a little baby up in his arms, dips his hand in the water, and touches the baby's head. In that same holy service he reads these verses, and this touching the head with water is a sign that the parents and the angels will help the baby to lead a heavenly life. Or if it is a grown person that is baptized, that he will try and put away his wrong habits, and with the Lord's help do right as He has taught him. Then the Lord's spirit comes and helps him, and makes him happy, though he may not realize where the strength and gladness come from.

Nicodemus found it hard to understand this. The Lord had told Nicodemus only simple things concerning a life here in this world, and he found it hard to believe. "How shall ye believe," He asked, "if I tell you of heavenly things?"

Then the Lord spoke of the time when the children of Israel were traveling in the wilderness (this Nicodemus knew about), and they complained against the Lord and against Moses, and of what the Lord was doing for them. Then came poisonous serpents into their camp and bit the people and many of them died. And the Lord told Moses to make a fiery serpent and to set it upon a pole, and as many as were bitten and looked upon the serpent of brass lived. (Numbers 21:5-9) So now Jesus likened Himself to this brazen serpent, but said that as many as believed on Him should have eternal life. For the Heavenly Father loved the world so much that He Himself had come into it in a body such as ours, not to show us how evil we are, but to help us to lead a heavenly and everlasting life.

The Lord probably said many more things to Nicodemus at this time, but by the Lord's guidance these only have been recorded by John to help us live the heavenly life.

We learn of Nicodemus twice after this: John 7:50-51 and 19:39.

1. Who was Nicodemus? What three things are told us about him in the Gospels?
2. To what processes of the natural world and natural life is the spiritual process of regeneration compared?
3. Why is the influence of the Lord and heaven likened to the wind?
4. What is the story of the serpent in the wilderness?
5. What has God done for men because He loves them?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

In Genesis the process of regeneration is described as a process of creation, accomplished in a series of steps by the power of the Lord. Now we have a still more wonderful lesson about regeneration. It is a re-birth, a gradual process, and involving all the wonderful stages of development which belong to natural birth. We shall not think of regeneration as some change which makes us heavenly in a moment. It is not the transforming of the old selfishness into

heavenliness. It is the gift of a new life from above, which develops and is born and grows by processes as wonderful as those of natural development. (A. 8043, 9042)

Often in the Scriptures the wind is a symbol of powerful but unseen spiritual influences, either good or bad. Remember the stormy winds which the Lord rebuked and calmed on the Sea of Galilee, types of the exciting evil influences of hell. On the other hand the strong east wind which opened a way for the children of Israel through the Red Sea was a type of the protecting influence of heaven. The Lord even made a breath a type of His own Divine Spirit, for He breathed on the disciples and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." What influences are likened to the wind in this lesson to Nicodemus? The influence of heaven and of the Lord's own Spirit which accomplish the work of regeneration in us. We may perceive a very little of their present operation, but we cannot know the Divine and heavenly sources from which they come, and we cannot know the Divinely wise and loving purposes that they are working to accomplish for us in this world and in the eternity of heaven. We hear the sound of the wind, but cannot tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. (N. 173-182; A. 10240)

"Born of water and of the spirit." The words remind us of what John the Baptist said about his baptism and the Lord's. Water is the type of repentance in obedience to the Lord's commandments. This more external and negative work of reformation must come before the more internal and positive work of regeneration, the birth and development of the new life from the Lord. (T. 571; P. 83)

That we cannot make ourselves heavenly, but that the new life is only from the Lord, is taught by the words, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." (Compare Psalm 33:6 and Luke 12:25.) There is absolutely nothing in us that is heavenly, but what is from the Lord - first His truth in our minds, then His strength in our lives and His love in our hearts. (T.576)

You know that the serpent lying full length on the ground corresponds to that part of a man's life which is nearest to the world, which has to do with his senses and the pleasures and temptations of the senses. The biting of the people of Israel by the fiery serpents in the wilderness represented the temptations of sense and appetite which, if yielded to, are so numbing and fatal to spiritual life. The lifting up of the serpent of brass represented the overcoming of all such temptations by the Lord, and the glorification of this plane of life in Him. The healing of the people as they looked upon the serpent of brass represented victory over such temptations in the Lord's strength, and the gift of a strong, pure life from Him. (E. 581; A. 8624; R. 49)

Do verses 16 and 17 gain or lose in tenderness and power, when we know that the "only begotten Son" who came into the world to live with men, was not a Being distinct from God, but was God Himself who came in a human nature all His own, and glorified it that He might be near to men forever with His saving power? (T. 23; A. 3161)

## **Lesson 7**

### **John 4: 1-42: At Jacob's Well**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The Lord and the disciples were leaving Judea after some months in this southern country to go again into Galilee. Their way was through Samaria, by Shechem and Jacob's well. This old well which Jacob dug was in the edge of the beautiful meadow where Abram and Jacob loved to live, where Joseph came looking for his brethren, which Jacob before his death gave to Joseph. Mount Gerizim rose just above the well, and the road passed around the mountain to the city Shechem.

The people of this district were among those who were taken away by the Assyrians to live in distant places, and strangers were brought to live in the towns of Israel. Do you remember the story? How the newcomers suffered from the lions, and how the king of Assyria sent back one of the priests of Israel to teach them how to worship the God of the land? But they still also worshiped their own gods. The Samaritans had their worship in Mount Gerizim, and they still continued to do so for many years, and they were never recognized as brethren by the Jews, who lived and worshiped in Jerusalem. (2 Kings 17:24-34, 41)

The Lord was now at Jacob's well in the country of the Samaritans, the beautiful meadow stretching before Him, Mount Gerizim rising above. We will read, or tell, the story and the Lord's words to the woman. The Samaritans were glad to listen to the Lord and believed in Him, first from the saying of the woman, then from hearing Him themselves. They asked Him to stay, and He stayed with them two days, and then went on His way to Galilee, to Cana near Nazareth.

##### **Junior**

We have learned of John's baptizing, and how the suspicious Jews at Jerusalem sent "priests and Levites" to the Jordan to find out about him. We have also learned that these same Jews at Jerusalem were even more angry with the Lord for His cleansing of the temple and because "many believed on Him." And today we learn that the Lord's disciples also baptized, and that more people came to be baptized by them than came to John. When this became known to the Pharisees the Lord and His disciples left Judea to go to Galilee, and they "must needs go through Samaria."

Now you will look at your map again. The straightest and quickest way you see to go from Judea to Galilee would be to go right across Samaria. We will think a moment about Samaria before we go on with the story of the Lord's journey there. It was a most beautiful country, in the very heart of the land.

Long, long before, Jacob was journeying through the land which the Lord had promised to his fathers, and he came to Shechem, and he bought a piece of land there for a hundred pieces of money. (Genesis 33:19) Here Jacob dug a well some hundred and fifty feet deep in the limestone rock. Afterward Jacob gave this piece of land to his son Joseph. Then, you remember, Joseph died

in Egypt, and when the children of Israel came out of Egypt to take possession of the promised land, they brought up the bones of Joseph and buried them in this piece of ground. (Joshua 24:32) Then the land was settled by the children of Israel, each tribe having its share, and the part that was later called Samaria fell mostly to the tribe of Manasseh. After many years the king of Assyria came and conquered this part of the country, and to keep it more completely in subjection he took away the Jews who lived there and carried them captives to districts near to Nineveh, and brought people from distant places to live here in Samaria. You read the story in 2 Kings 17. These people did not worship the Lord, but idols of their own; and it is said that lions came and killed some of them, and they thought it was because they did not worship the God of the land. So the king sent back one of the priests of the Lord whom he had taken prisoner, and he taught the strangers about the Lord and His laws. But the people only thought of the Lord as one of many gods, and they still went on worshiping their idols. They learned something of the Word of the Lord and believed in the books of Moses, which contain His laws. But they were very much looked down upon by the Jews of Judea who would have nothing whatever to do with the Samaritans, and the Samaritans hated the Jews in return. The Jews made Jerusalem the central place for their worship. And the Samaritans worshiped in Mount Gerizim, which stands by Jacob's well, and there they built their altar to the Lord.

And now in our story the Lord journeyed through this beautiful land, its fertile plains covered with the ripening spring wheat. He was tired as He came to the well about noon (or, as some understand, toward evening), and He rested there while His disciples went away to buy food. And while He was sitting by the well a Samaritan woman came to draw water. She would do this by letting down her jar by a long rope into the deep well. This Samaritan woman came to the well to draw water in this way, and the Lord said to her, "Give Me to drink. She was surprised that a Jew should speak to her, because she was a Samaritan. She would know by His dress as well as by His speech that He was a Jew.

The Lord talked much with her, and told her of a living water, different from the water that could be drawn from this or any other well. As she listened, she knew that He must be a prophet; and said, "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ; when He is come He will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He." Then she went into the town - Sychar, across the fields, near by, or Shechem, not far away - and called the people to come and see Jesus, saying "He told me all things that ever I did." They came, and many believed on Him, some from what the woman had told them, and some from what they themselves heard and saw. They begged Him to stay with them, and He stayed two days.

It is a long story of unfriendliness between the Samaritans and the Jews, of which we are reminded in our lesson. But we see a good spirit in these simple people and a willingness to hear the Lord. Do you remember another "good Samaritan"? Such a friendly feeling these simple, despised strangers showed, compared with the anger of His own people, who were so proud because they felt themselves the Lord's chosen people, and they did not even know Him when He came to them! Now, as then, the Lord can come nearer to people who are humble and gentle, than to those who are proud and well satisfied with themselves.

As we read the Lord's words at Jacob's well, notice how He turned the thoughts upward from natural to heavenly water, and from natural to heavenly food.

1. Where was Samaria - the city? The district?

2. Who were the Samaritans in the Gospel days? How were they regarded by the Jews?
3. What was the character of the Samaritan in a parable which the Lord once spoke? Were the Samaritans glad to listen to the Lord?
4. Of what other water did the Lord tell the woman?
5. Of what other food did He speak to the disciples?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The Samaritans are a type of Gentile people, sometimes of those who are in very false and evil states, but sometimes of Gentile people who are in simple goodness and have an earnest desire to be instructed. (A. 2702; E. 391, 483, 587) Note the position of Samaria, between Judea and Galilee. Judea has relation to heavenly affection, and Galilee to the plane of outward thought and life. Passing from a good affection to good life, one must needs go through the Samaria of instruction, and should receive instruction from the Lord. Shechem is associated with first instruction in heavenly things, as Abram's first camp and Jacob's first camp and the place where Joshua read the law to the tribes soon after entering the land. And now, how plainly the well where the Lord talked with the woman of Samaria is a type of the abundant instruction in good life from Him. (A. 8568; E. 71)

The Lord turned the thought of the woman from the water that refreshed the body to that which cleanses and refreshes the soul, and taught us to look to Him for this instruction, this water of life. Find help in studying the meaning of water, in God's Explanation of Bible Symbolism [originally titled The Language of Parable]: Water. (A. 8568; E. 71)

The Lord told the woman to call her husband, and she said she had no husband; and this was preparatory to revealing Himself to her as the Christ. The woman who has lost her husband is the type of a good affection without the understanding of truth which should be its support and guide. The state here pictured is one which feels and confesses that it is utterly without the guiding truth it needs. This confession prepares one for instruction, and to recognize the Lord as the perfect guide. (A. 9198)

The Jews had been commanded not to make offerings in every place, but in the place which the Lord should choose. (Deuteronomy 12:5-14) The chosen place was Jerusalem, and the temple. In the Christian Church place is less important, and instead, we think of what? Of the state of mind and heart which brings us near to the Lord. The Lord's words to the woman point to this difference between the worship which had been representative of heavenly things, and the worship in which we should in some degree be entering into the heavenly things themselves. (A. 1604, etc.)

As the Lord turned the thoughts of the woman from natural water to the water of true instruction, so also He turned the thought of the disciples from natural food to the satisfaction and strength which are found in doing the Lord's will and finishing His work. The spiritual drink satisfies the longing of the understanding, the spiritual food the longing of the heart. (A. 5147, 5293)

In the enjoyment of the good things of natural life, how largely we are dependent upon others, and upon those who have lived and worked before us! Still more are we dependent for natural and spiritual benefits upon the silent, unseen labor of the Lord and angels. They sow and we reap, and we are together in our rejoicing. (E. 911)

## Lesson 8

### John 4: 43-54: The Nobleman's Son Healed

#### THE STORY

##### Primary and Junior

We are at Cana, a little town of Galilee, near to Nazareth. Cana: what does the name bring to your mind? We have learned of the Lord's going from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John; of His coming back again with some disciples and attending a marriage feast - yes, it was at Cana; of His going to Jerusalem and cleansing the temple and doing miracles, so that many believed on Him and the Pharisees were displeased. We learned then that He left Judea, and came back again to Galilee by the way of Samaria. You remember the journey when He rested at Jacob's well.

Many months had gone by, perhaps nine or ten. Many people from Galilee had been in Jerusalem at the Passover, and had heard and seen His miracles, and had come home to tell of His great power. So when He came to Cana it is not strange that people all about should hear of it, and that even an officer of King Herod's court living in Capernaum should know of it. The son of "the nobleman," was very sick with the fever, so sick they thought he was dying; but hearing that Jesus was come to Cana, the father started out to find Him and beg Him to come and heal his son.

But the Lord's miracles were done always to teach lessons of a deeper kind. He was not just a healer of men's bodies, but of their souls. The healing of the bodies was done to help people in their dullness to believe in His power to heal their souls - to strengthen a feeble faith. So the Lord said to this officer, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." And the officer begged Him to come down before his son died, not knowing that the Lord had power to raise the boy from the dead; not knowing that His power was with Him to heal him however far away He might seem to be. But it seems that the father was learning the lesson of faith in the Lord and His power, for when He said, "Go thy way; thy son liveth," he believed the Lord's word and hastened back to his home.

Think how eagerly he must have hurried home. But before he got there he saw some of his servants coming to meet him, and they said, "Thy son liveth." Then he enquired when it was that he began to get better, and he found that it was at the very same time that the Lord said, "Thy son liveth," that the fever left him, and he and his whole household believed on the Lord.

This is a lesson to each little child, as well as to King Herod's officer, a lesson to us now as well as in the time when the Lord lived upon the earth; that He is always near to help us in our troubles if only we will ask His help and will trust Him. We do not always know what is wise to ask for our bodies, so if we ask for things that will not be best for us the Lord does not give them; but He will help us to bear the disappointment bravely. We do know when we need the Lord's help to save us

from bad thoughts and feelings, and to give good, kind thoughts and feelings. This is the healing of our souls, and this is the help that He, longs to give us, and it is really and truly much more important than anything we can ask for our bodies. If we ask for this kind of help from Him it will always come. It will come so sure and strong that we shall know that He is near us, loving us and caring for us. And we shall go even further; we shall learn to feel sure that if we cannot have everything that we want in this world it is because the Lord loves us too much to give us what will not be best for us.

1. "Thence," verse 43 from what place? "At the feast," verse 45: what feast? "Second miracle," verse 54: what first miracle is referred to?
2. Where was Cana? Who lived there? What are we told of the Lord's first visit to Cana? Of His second visit?
3. Where was Capernaum? For what do we chiefly remember the place?
4. In what other event of the Lord's life, and in what events of the Old Testament story, is the truth of the saying about a prophet in his own country shown? (Luke 4:24)
5. Do time and distance separate us from the Lord?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Much difficulty has been found in understanding verse 44 in connection with this going of the Lord from Judea into Galilee. Possibly, as some suppose, the saying refers to the fact that the Lord must first become known through His miracles done in Jerusalem, before He could find a welcome in Galilee. It is true that Galilee, and especially Nazareth, are called the Lord's country in the other Gospels. (Matthew 13:54, 57; Mark 6: 1, 4) But John's Gospel differs from the others in describing with much greater fullness the Lord's works and teachings in Judea and Jerusalem. It seems as if in this Gospel Judea and Jerusalem were regarded as the Lord's home, and Galilee was thought of as comparatively a strange country. The fact that John's Gospel dwells at such length upon the incidents in Judea, is significant when we remember that this Gospel especially expresses the deep things of the Divine love, and that Judea is the part of the Holy Land which has relation to interior states of love, while Samaria has relation to instruction, and Galilee to outward life. Commenting on the words in the first chapter, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not," Swedenborg says: "By His own are meant those who were at that time of the church, where the Word was." (L. 18; E. 745) They were especially the priests and Pharisees at Jerusalem.

The practical lesson is plain: the danger of becoming careless and indifferent about holy things from very familiarity; of neglecting our religious duties and opportunities because they are made easy for us. Compare our opportunities and advantages with those which many others enjoy. We must not on that account become careless.

Read verses 46 and 54. This coming into Galilee is compared with the former coming into Galilee, when the Lord came from John's baptism at the Jordan. On both occasions He came to Cana. Each coming was also marked by a miracle; the first by making the water wine, the second by healing

the nobleman's son. The healing in this second miracle was not, however, in Cana, but in Capernaum, at some distance, down by the Sea of Galilee. Comparing the two miracles, if the first represents the gift of sweet perceptions of the ways of good life, the second represents a further step of progress, the bringing down of the perceptions into the conduct of the world, giving it new life. (E. 447)

Compare this account of the healing of the nobleman's son, with the healing of the centurion's servant. (Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7: 1-10) There are resemblances, but important differences, which seem to mark them clearly as two miracles.

What is the nature of faith which rests only on "signs and wonders"? In what way are the Lord's miracles helpful to a true faith? (P. 130, 133)

The healing of the nobleman's son, in a distant place, but at the same hour in which Jesus said, "Thy son liveth," brings home to us the fact of the immediateness of the Lord's presence with us all - His knowledge of our needs, and His power to help as soon as we are ready to be helped. (Isaiah 65:24) The hour of healing, suggests spiritually the quality and degree of the help received from the Lord. It was the seventh hour, the number associated with heavenly states, especially with states of peace after faithfulness in temptation when the Lord's comfort is received; it is always, in a sense, the seventh hour. (A. 716, 10360)

## Lesson 9

### John 5: 1-18: At the Pool of Bethesda

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

The Lord came again to Jerusalem at the time of a feast, and He went among the people at the pool of Bethesda. There were sick people there, for it was a pool to which people came for healing. I must show you a picture of a pool that is still in Jerusalem, called the pool of Hezekiah. We can still see the pools of Siloam. There was at times a moving of the water in the pool of Bethesda, and there was a beautiful belief about it, that "an angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water. Whosoever then first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." There were by the pool porches with steps going down to the water, where sick people were lying, waiting for the moving of the water, hoping to be healed. The Lord saw among these people a man who had been sick thirty-eight years, lying helpless on his mat. The Lord asked him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" He had no one to help him into the water when it was troubled. "Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk." We feel very glad for the poor man that he was healed. But it was the Sabbath day. What would some of the Jews say, who were so strict that not the least work should be done on the Sabbath? They thought little about the wonderful healing of the poor man, but were angry that the Lord had done this work and also had told the man to carry his mat on the Sabbath day. The Lord on the Sabbath did many works of healing and of kindness.

## **Junior**

There was a feast of the Jews and the Lord came again from Galilee to Jerusalem. The Gospel does not say that it was a Passover, and it may have been a lesser feast kept earlier in the spring. The Lord was among the people at the pool of Bethesda. The name is usually understood to mean "house of mercy." The pools were little reservoirs of water, sometimes right among the buildings of the city. If you can, see pictures of the pool of Hezekiah and of the pools of Siloam. When we read the story of Hezekiah we shall learn of interesting work that he did for the water supply of Jerusalem. The only living spring at Jerusalem, the Virgin's Fountain, is in the Kidron valley, under the temple hill. The spring is intermittent, alternately flowing and resting. Perhaps the pool of Bethesda was supplied by this spring. But read the beautiful belief in regard to the healing power of the water in verse 4 of our chapter. The Crusaders at a later time built a chapel where they believed the pool of Bethesda to have been, and painted on the wall a picture of the angel troubling the water. What can you learn from our chapter about the structure of the pool, when the Lord came among the sick people there?

The Lord came among these sick people, and He saw one man who had been sick thirty-eight years. Of course the Lord knew all about him, but He said to him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Then the man told the Lord that he had no friend to help him down to the water when it was "troubled," but someone else who was not so helpless always got down to the pool first, and then it was too late for him. Thirty-eight years this poor man had been helpless; we can hardly imagine his surprise when the Lord said to him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." Think of his joy, as he felt that he was well and obeyed the Lord. Folding up his bed or mat, upon which he lay, he walked out from among all those sick people.

It would seem that this healing of the sick man was done so quietly that the people about did not realize what was going on, and that even the man himself did not know who it was who had healed him.

You remember that this was the Jews' Sabbath, and this man went out into the city carrying his bed (or mat)! This was contrary to their laws, contrary even to the laws that the Lord had given to their fathers. But He had come to give them new laws for His day; to teach men that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day. The Jews however did not rejoice with the sick man that he was made well. They did not praise the Lord's power which was able to do so great a miracle. They only found fault with the man for carrying his bed on the Sabbath day, and when they knew that it was Jesus who had healed him and told him to carry his bed, they were so angry that they tried to kill Him for doing these things on the Sabbath day.

The laws given to the Jews respecting the observance of the Sabbath were very strict. (Exodus 23:12; 31:14; 35:2, 3; Numbers 15:32; Nehemiah 13:15; Jeremiah 17:21) But their own laws were far more oppressive. Their Sabbath was from sunset of our Friday to sunset of our Saturday. During that time they might only carry of food something less than a dried fig. There were some kinds of knots that it was lawful to tie on the Sabbath, and by tying others they broke the Sabbath. They must not write two letters of the alphabet that could be read together, and it was a question among the Rabbis whether a man who wrote one letter in the morning, and forgetting wrote another in the evening, had not broken the law. Such laws were not the Lord's laws for keeping His day. (See Geikie, "The Life and Words of Christ," Vol. 2, p. 90.)

The Lord told them that the Divine love that was in Him, "the Father," which was His life, was always working, and that He must do Its will. This made the Jews all the more angry, for they had refused to believe Him to be their Messiah, and it made them doubly angry when He claimed to be of the same Spirit as the Heavenly Father. This note of sadness keeps coming into the story from now until the end; this hatred of the leaders of the Jews towards the Lord; this determination of theirs to destroy Him. He must keep out of their way till His work on earth was done. But we can think how anxious His disciples must have been for His safety.

1. What is the meaning of "Bethesda"? What was it? Where was it?
2. What did the Lord ask the sick man at Bethesda? What did He tell him to do?
3. What warning did He afterwards give him?
4. Why did the Jews object to the man's carrying his bed?
5. What difference was there between the Jews' keeping of the Sabbath and the Lord's?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The name "Bethesda" means "house of mercy." Can you mention several other names of places which begin with Beth, house?

This whole chapter teaches very strongly that the Lord was one with the Father. The love and power of His works was the Divine love, and the wisdom of His words the Divine truth. We find the same lesson in the Lord's words, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30); and in His words to Philip (John 14:8-11). Much help on this subject is given in a long number of the Arcana, 3704.

Washing was at other times a means of cure. Naaman dipped seven times in Jordan. (2 Kings 5) The blind man washed in the pool of Siloam. (John 9) Washing represented the cleansing of the life from evil by the help of the Lord's commandments. By the moving of the water of Bethesda, as by shaking or moving in many places in Scripture, is represented vivifying by spiritual power, here the vivifying of repentance by influx from the Lord and heaven, when it is performed with acknowledgment and faith. There was this meaning in the waving or shaking of certain offerings before the Lord. (Exodus 29:24) Spiritual diseases are evil conditions of the soul, and the washing of repentance is an important means of cure. Here the healing power of the water was attributed to the moving of the pool by an angel. It is the presence of the Lord and the angels in the commandments and in all the letter of the Word, which vivifies the letter and makes it powerful to help us. (E. 239; A. 10083)

Do you remember other cases in which the Lord required persons to say what they desired Him to do, before He gave His help? (Mark 10:51) We must know that we are in need, and must desire the Lord's help, before He can spiritually help us. The more definite our sense of what we need, and the more earnest our desire, the more full can be His help. It is one use of prayer, that it makes the thought definite in regard to what we need, and makes the desire earnest. (R. 376)

Were there other times when those whom the Lord healed were bidden to arise? (Mark 10:49) Was there at least one other time when one was told to arise and take up his bed? (Mark 2:11) What spiritual effort is represented by this arising, which must often be needed before the diseases of evil, with their weakness and suffering, can be removed? It represents the effort to look up to better things, and not only to look up to them, but actually to leave the low, evil ways, and to live a better life. Compare the resolve of the prodigal son: "I will arise, and go to my father." (A. 2401, 4881)

With this consider also the phrase which occurs in the first verse of the chapter, and very often in the Bible: going up to Jerusalem. The city did stand high upon its hills, but the natural going up represents the coming into an elevated state of nearness to the Lord. (A. 3084, 4539)

The curing of physical diseases by the Lord besides being in itself a work of Divine mercy, also showed the Lord's desire and power to heal men's souls. "That ye may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins, then saith He to the sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thine house." (Matthew 9:6) In some cases the disease was an effect of the evil state of the one afflicted. The Lord's words to the man healed at Bethesda, Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee," imply that it was so in his case. Perhaps the Lord's first words to the sick man, as in so many cases, touch at once the root of his trouble, "Wilt thou be made whole?" How many diseases of mind and body would be cured if we really desired to be made whole! We partly wish to be healed, but partly prefer the evil way. We do not desire the healing enough to do our part and accept the Lord's help. Are we weak-willed in desiring to be whole? It is a trouble with us all, which the Lord points out by His searching question.

What deeper meaning is there in the charge to the sick man to take up his bed and walk? A bed on which one lies sick when sick or tired represents principles or beliefs upon which the mind falls back and finds support when it is feeble and discouraged. For example, if one is almost paralyzed by sudden grief, he cannot reason, he can only cling to the truths that he surely knows: that there is a God; that His love and providence are over all. Such truths or doctrines are as a bed on which the mind rests and finds support and comfort. But we must not remain inactive. We must go on with the work of life, and in so doing must apply in a more active way the doctrines on which we have leaned in our helpless state. As we do this we take up our bed, and as we go forward with the duties of life we walk. It is in the effort to do this, that the strength to do it is given by the Lord. Compare the healing of a withered hand, as the man stretched it forth. (Matthew 12:13; A. 10360; E. 163)

"On the same day was the Sabbath." It is a Sabbath, a heavenly state, when the effort has been made obediently to put our doctrines into life, and the Lord has blessed our effort. Compare the healing of the nobleman's son "at the seventh hour." (John 4:52) The Jews objected to the carrying of the bed on the Sabbath. Their ideal of religion and of heaven was of technical knowledge and formal piety, and not of carrying doctrine into practical good life. (A. 10360, 8495)

The thirty and eight years of the man's infirmity must be descriptive of the spiritual state which he represents. The thirty seems to mean the fullness of the experience of trial; and the eight, which is a full week and one more, suggests the readiness to make a new beginning and to enter upon a happier state. (A. 2044)

"Sin no more." This charge and warning given to the man who was healed, teach the greater blame and greater harm if we choose evil after we have knowledge and power to do better. See Matthew 12:45, and P. 231, seventh kind of profanation.

The Lord did not reveal Himself to the man before the multitude and at the time of healing his body, but when He met him in the temple and charged him to sin no more. The Lord desired and now desires men to know Him as the healer of their souls, as the one who strengthens them to sin no more. Compare Mark 2:10. Until we know the Lord so, we really do not know Him.

## **Lesson 10**

### **John 5: 30-47: The Scriptures Testify of the Lord**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me." "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me." (Verses 39, 46) What did the Lord mean by the "scriptures"? Yes, the Scriptures are the Bible, or, strictly, those books of the Bible which are the Lord's Word. And of course at the time the Lord was speaking, before the New Testament was written, the Scriptures were the Old Testament. The New Testament you know tells of the Lord's life in the world, but did you know that that is really what the Old Testament is about also? It tells us things about Him which not even Mary and Joseph knew. It tells us of His very thoughts and feelings when He lived in Bethlehem and Nazareth. Even the wisest people in this world can only read a little of this sacred meaning, and the wisest angels of heaven can never come to the end of all that it tells of the Lord, and of His life in the world. Let me read more from a Helper.

"You want to know what part of the Bible tells about the Lord when He was a little child. The first part, especially the story of the garden of Eden, of Noah, Abraham, and Jacob, and Joseph. I feel like speaking softly when I think of the little Child lying in the manger and know that His heart was filled with such gentle holiness as we feel a little of when we read of the garden of Eden.

"When He grew older He began to know what His work would be; then He was very eager to learn. It was little that Mary and Joseph could teach Him, but He learned from the stars and the flowers, and from the Bible. We read all this from the story of Abraham and his journeys, and the famine when he went down into Egypt. It is all so holy because it tells us of the Lord, who when a little child went down into Egypt too.

"The story tells us that there were trials, terrible struggles, in the Lord's heart when only a child. At first His life was peaceful, but soon evil things arose and He fought so hard with them even when a child in Nazareth; and the angels helped Him. We read this in the story of kings who rebelled, and how at first the good suffered with the evil, but Abraham fought and brought peace, and his kind friends helped him as the angels helped the Lord.

"And the story goes on to tell how the Lord looked about and saw how wicked people were, how unkind, how dishonest, how disobedient, and a fear came to His mind that perhaps they could not be saved; but He felt so sorry for them and He would try so hard to help them, and He felt that He should succeed. We read this where Abraham prayed so earnestly that if there were any good in Sodom it might be saved.

"Afterwards the Lord saw plainly what He must do; He must live in the world like other people, and work with them and share their troubles; and He saw that as He did so a way would be opened from heaven into the world, and good things could come down to men, and the way would be opened for them to look up to the Lord and go to heaven. This is told in the beautiful vision of Jacob's ladder. Do you wonder that these stories are so holy?

"And now the beautiful story of Joseph. We all have cried as we have read of the lad sent out by his father to find his brethren; how his father loved him and made him a coat of many colors; how he hunted for his brethren, and when at last he found them, how they stripped him of his coat, his coat of many colors, and sent it stained with blood to his father; and how they cast Joseph into a pit and afterwards sold him to the traders who were going down into Egypt. Why do little children love this story so? Why does it bring tears to our eyes as we remember it? It is because it is really the story of our Lord: and you remember how they rent His garments, too, and sold Him, too, for money.

"The Lord came to seek His brethren, but they hated Him and would not hear what He had to say; and still He loved them and did everything He could for them. He stored up good, gentle things in every little child's heart. He taught men in simple words that they would know the real meaning and value of by and by. They did not know that the Lord was doing this for them, but He was, just as Joseph in Egypt was storing up corn and feeding his brethren in the years of famine, although they did not know him.

"You remember how Joseph loved his brethren; how he longed to tell them who he was, and that he forgave them and would have them love him too. He could not stop his tears, but had to leave them and find where he might weep alone. So the Lord longed to make Himself known to people: He loved them so, there was nothing He would not do for them. But He must be very patient and do only what would be best for them.

"Further on we find the story of David, how he was called from the care of the sheep in Bethlehem and became the king, 'a man after God's own heart,' a soldier from his boyhood who fought with enemies on every side and conquered them. We all know that this history tells us about the Lord who was born in perfect innocence in Bethlehem and who became the King of kings. He was the man after God's own heart. He was the faithful soldier who fought with all the evil powers which attack men, and overcame them."

And we learn that after the land was freed of the enemies of Israel, Solomon built the beautiful temple. So after laboring and conquering all the evil, the Divine love and power came to dwell with men in "the temple of His body." You begin to see what the Lord means when He bids us to search the Scriptures, and says, "They are they which testify of Me."

1. Where was the Lord when He spoke the words of our lesson today? What miracle and what answer of the Lord had aroused the opposition of the Jews?

2. What books of the Bible did Moses write?
3. What do the Scriptures everywhere tell about in their deepest meaning?
4. Mention a Psalm and an Old Testament story which plainly are about the Lord.

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

In the talk with the children a number of the Old Testament stories have been referred to, with a suggestion of how in their deeper meaning they describe the life of the Lord. You will be able to suggest other parts of the Old Testament where the reference to the Lord is plain, for example, Psalm 22; 23; 24. These are illustrations of the truth which the Lord taught in this chapter of John, that all the Scriptures speak of Him. He taught the same after His resurrection, when He opened to the disciples in all the Scriptures - in Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms - the things concerning Himself. (Luke 24:27, 44) The same truth is taught in the first chapter of John, where the Lord is called the Word made flesh. If the Scriptures are the Lord's Word teaching the true order of human life, then in their deepest meaning they must describe the life of the Lord Himself in whom alone the true order has been perfectly fulfilled. You find a new and wonderful interest in the histories and Psalms when you remember, as you read them, that they are about the Lord. (A. 1401 and many pages following)

At a later time the Lord said to the Jews, "It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me." (John 8:17, 18) The law, which you find in Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15, was based upon and represented the truth that both understanding and heart must be appealed to before one is convinced; that both the outward form of what one has done and also its intention must be known before the deed can be judged. The two witnesses of a right action are its goodness and its truth; the two which condemn a wrong action are its evilness and its falsity. We see now the meaning of the Lord's application of the law of witnesses to Himself. In His human life He was the embodiment of the Divine truth, as He faithfully lived the Word; but to be convinced of His Divinity men must also feel in Him the Divine love (the Father), which was the motive of all His words and works. The Lord said, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." (John 6:44) Those who were evil and selfish refused to bear the inner witness of the Divine love, and therefore the witness of truth was not received and was not convincing, either as expressed in the Lord's life or in the Scriptures. It will always be found that an evil life leads to denial of the Lord and of the Scriptures, and that a good life leads to belief in both. It is because the good life opens the heart to the witness of the Divine love, which is needed to make the witness of truth convincing. (A. 4197)

## **Lesson 11**

### **John 6: 1-14: Feeding the Multitude**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

Nearly a year has passed since our last lesson, the healing of the sick man at the pool of Bethesda, and what followed. We are again with the Lord, and this time by the Sea of Galilee.

The other Gospels tell us of very many things which have happened in the year. One thing which must have meant so much to the twelve disciples: they had been sent out by themselves two and two, the Lord giving them power to teach and to heal and to cast out devils. A wonderful experience to these men, who a few short months ago had been as other men. How strong their feeling of His presence with them must have been, and how they must have learned to trust in His help! Just before our lesson begins they had all come back to the Lord at Capernaum to tell Him what they had taught and what they had done. How much they must have had to say to Him and to each other of the wonderful things that had come to pass.

One sad thing had happened since they had been away. John the Baptist had been killed in prison by Herod. Now the Lord was the only leader the rulers had to fear, the only leader the people had to follow. The excitement must have been great among the people as again they began their journeys up to Jerusalem to another Passover.

The Lord and His disciples, wanting to be alone and in a place of safety beyond King Herod's power, took a boat to go to a quiet place near to Bethsaida on the other side of the Sea of Galilee. But the people watched the boat and saw where it was going, and ran along the shore, and were waiting for them when they landed. (You can see on your maps how they would go.) The Lord and the disciples went up on the slope of the mountain, and He sat down and taught the many people who came crowding about to see and hear Him, and healed those that were sick.

The day was passing, and the Lord asked Philip where they could buy bread to feed so many people; there were about five thousand men besides women and children. Philip did not see how it could be done, and answered, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little." Two hundred pennies would be about thirty dollars, and twice that, at that time, in its power to buy bread. But Andrew came and told the Lord that a lad was there who had five barley loaves and two small fishes. The loaves were thin round cakes, not thick loaves like ours, and were made of the simplest and coarsest flour. The fishes were little ones, and were used as we might use sardines, as a relish with the bread. The Lord bade them make the people sit down on the grass. Then giving thanks He broke and blessed the bread and the fishes, handing the pieces to His disciples, and they gave them to the people; and ever as they came back for more there was more to give until the five thousand people had had all they wanted, and they filled twelve baskets with the fragments. The baskets were the little wicker baskets such as every Jewish traveler carried over his shoulder to hold his lunch, so that he need not eat what had been touched by Gentile hands.

They saw the Lord's wonderful power, and they wanted to take Him at once and make Him a king. This must have been almost more than the disciples could bear; for if the Lord was to be made King the disciples would share His glory. But this was not what the Lord wanted; He sent His disciples back to the boat while He sent the multitude away, and went alone into a mountain to pray.

1. Where did the Lord feed the five thousand? At what season was it?
2. What is said of Philip in connection with this miracle? What of Andrew?
3. How do you distinguish this from another similar miracle?
4. How does the Lord show every year the same power which He showed in feeding the multitude?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The place of this miracle was probably the upland pastures rising from the Sea of Galilee at its northeastern shore. Luke speaks of it as in the neighborhood of Bethsaida. Matthew and Mark speak of crossing the sea to Gennesaret after the miracle, indicating the Bethsaida east of Jordan. In the old days this was a part of the land of Bashan, famous for its oaks and its cattle. This eastern land was desired by some of the tribes of Israel who had many cattle, and Bashan was given to the half-tribe of Manasseh. In the Gospel days it was a country of much grass and of few towns. When the land of Canaan is a type of heaven and of a spiritual life, this land beyond the border represents states of natural activity and pleasure, which are good if they are made helpful to the spiritual life. The Lord's taking the disciples from the scene of their labors to this eastern land for rest (Mark 6:31) pictures the rest that even the angels find in turning from states of interior activity to innocent pleasures of external kinds. The Lord's meeting the multitude on that further shore and feeding them there, represents His entering into the natural interests and pleasures of men, making it possible to enjoy these innocently and to find in them abundant satisfaction. Read A. 8487.

Why did the Lord ask the disciples how food should be found for the multitude? Was it for the same reason that He asked the woman of Samaria for water; to lead them to realize their inability to provide, and their need to ask of Him?

Special mention is made of Philip and Andrew. We have learned that each of the twelve apostles represents some element of character: Philip intelligence, and Andrew obedience. (John 1:40-44; E. 821) Philip and Andrew are associated at another time when certain Greeks came to Philip, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip told Andrew, and Andrew and Philip told Jesus. (John 12:20-22) It means that intelligence alone does not bring one near to the Lord, but intelligence joined with obedience. So in our present lesson, Philip could not answer the Lord's question about the feeding of the people, but Andrew found the few loaves and fishes which the Lord blessed and multiplied to satisfy their hunger. Intelligence alone, even intelligence in heavenly truth, is not satisfying and strengthening to the soul, but obedience to the truth we know. So Andrew finds the loaves, not Philip.

In studying the spiritual meaning of this miracle, look forward to verses 27-35; 48-58, in which the Lord contrasts the meat which perisheth and that which endureth. Our spiritual meat or food is the satisfaction that we find in life. But there are many kinds of satisfaction which men live for and labor for. One labors to grow rich or for some kind of natural luxury which money will buy. Another lives for the pleasure of some art; another for political power or for social distinction. All these satisfactions are meat that perisheth, because they are external, of the body and the world. Even if they do not sooner fail, they are left behind at death. But it is possible to find a higher satisfaction in life; the satisfaction of doing right, of being useful for the Lord's sake. This is meat that endureth, for it is not destroyed by changes of outward fortune, nor by death, but continues and grows more perfect and satisfying in the life of heaven. Compare Isaiah 55:1, 2. (A. 5147, 5293)

Consider the Lord's definition of "belief" in verses 28, 29. It is a work. "To believe in the Lord is not only to think that He is, but also to do His words." (Life 48) "To believe in God is to know, to will, and to do." (E. 349)

The people asked for a sign of the Lord's power to give the "meat which endureth unto everlasting life." He had indeed just given such a sign in the feeding of the multitude. The manna in the desert had also been a sign of His power to give heavenly bread. But it was time to turn from the thought of natural bread to the heavenly bread which the signs had represented, and which the Lord now actually brought within their reach. The Lord would give the true thought and love of use that make life really satisfying. He was that truth and love, and the only source of them. In giving these He was giving of Himself. He called them His flesh and blood: the good love is His flesh, and the true thought is His blood. Remember how the Lord said of the bread and wine of the Holy Supper, "This is My body"; "This is My blood." (Matthew 26:26, 28) The bread and wine of the Holy Supper represent the love and truth which are from the Lord and are the Lord. (T. 709; A. 680; E. 329)

The Jews had eaten the manna and were dead. We all are dead if we live only for things of the world, but if we learn to find satisfaction in doing what is right and useful from the Lord, we are raised up to a life that is truly living and that has no end. "At the last day" means especially the end of earthly life. Then the deadness of a merely natural life appears, and the living quality of the life that is from the Lord. (A. 5078 near end)

## **Lesson 12**

### **John 6: 15-21: Walking on the Sea**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

After the feeding of the multitude, when the people wished to make the Lord a King, He had sent the disciples in the boat without Him back toward Capernaum. It was night and they were rowing hard against the wind and waves. The Sea of Galilee is deeply sunk among the hills, with valleys

running down to the water. Through these valleys the wind often comes sweeping down, and without any warning at all the waves rise.

Such a storm as this came down upon the sea after the disciples had started for the other side. The Lord was alone upon the mountain praying, and He saw the disciples' little boat struggling with the tempest. And then a most wonderful thing happened. The tired disciples looking out anxiously into the night, the fierce wind blowing, and the angry waves tossing them about, saw what seemed to them a spirit walking on the water, and they were frightened and cried out. But the well-loved voice came to them over the water, "It is I; be not afraid." The disciples knew that it was the Lord who had come to help them in their trouble, and they gladly received Him into their ship. Then two more wonderful things happened: the wind immediately stopped blowing, and when they looked out, the boat was at the shore just where they wanted to land.

That night on the sea showed the disciples the Lord's great power, and His loving care of them. And He is just as near to each one of us to help us in our troubles. He is just as near and just as powerful, and cares just as much to help us, as He did to help the, twelve disciples. If only we will hear His voice and take Him into our hearts.

1. Where do we go if we follow the Lord after the feeding of the five thousand? Where do we go if we follow the disciples?
2. What trouble were the disciples in when they were without the Lord?
3. What help did His coming bring?
4. To what land did the ship come? (See Matthew and Mark.)

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

We may connect the Lord's praying in the mountain with the excitement of the people and the hopes of a great earthly kingdom, which followed the feeding of the multitude. The thought of the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them had been one of the Lord's temptations after His baptism. It must have been one purpose of His prayer to quiet these excited thoughts and the natural desire for power. He must do this in Himself, then He could have power to overcome the same excited natural ambitions in the minds of men. Why did the Lord choose a mountain for His prayer? It pictures His effort to rise above natural, worldly thoughts to the perfect humility of Divine love and service. The Lord's praying always expresses the effort of His human nature to come into harmony and union with the Divine. (A. 2535, 2580)

Meantime the disciples were on the sea, toiling in the darkness and the storm, trying to come again to the shore where they had shared so many blessed labors with the Lord. So they needed to return to the state of willing and modest disciples and helpers of the Lord; but the excited thoughts of a kingdom and worldly greatness kept them from it. The darkness about them pictured the darkness in their minds. The storm pictured the storm of excited thought and feeling. The sea represents the lower atmosphere of worldly thought, and the stormy sea represents such thought excited and threatening destruction to the spiritual life. The winds which raise the waves

are the influences of hell which arouse the commotion in the mind. You find a state of temptation described as a storm of wind and waves in Psalm 107:23-30, and in Jonah 1; also in Matthew 7:24-28; 8:23-27. (E. 419, 518)

And now the point of greatest interest in the story: the Lord came to the disciples walking on the sea; they received Him into the ship, and immediately the wind ceased and the ship was at the land whither they went. The Lord walking on the sea! Did it not picture exactly what He had accomplished in His prayer on the mountain - the overcoming of excited worldly thoughts, and the hells from which they come, putting them under His feet? And did not His help to the disciples in the storm represent His power to deliver them and us in all times of temptation from worldly thoughts? The twenty-five or thirty furlongs which the disciples had rowed seems to represent a degree of effort in temptation, which makes it possible for the Lord to help. His coming in the fourth watch, which is the dawn, means that with His coming the darkness ends. (Notice the close connection of the words, "It was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.")

"Immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." It represented the return of the disciples to the state of willing and modest service, in which they could keep near to the Lord and help Him in His work. In a broader sense this coming to the land may be thought of as representing the Lord's deliverance from all the storms of natural life, and the safe coming to the heavenly home. Notice the very similar ending to the storm in the Psalm: "He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so He bringeth them to their desired haven." (Psalm 107:29, 30) Find much help in E. 514; T. 123.

## Lesson 13

### John 7: 1-18: At the Feast of Tabernacles

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

We learn about another feast in Jerusalem, to which the Lord came. It was the feast of Tabernacles, the thanksgiving feast which was kept in the autumn after the fruits and harvests were gathered in. It was called the feast of Tabernacles because, for the week of the feast, the people lived in booths or huts of branches in memory of the desert journey from Egypt. The booths were built everywhere, in the streets and on the housetops. After the first day they could move their booths outside the city walls. They must have been a pretty sight, spread over the hillsides, and the people in their bright costumes about their temporary homes or moving in and out and back and forth to the city gates and the temple. The feast was kept with pretty ceremonies, among them the wreathing of the altar with willow branches and the bringing of water to the altar from the pool of Siloam in a golden pitcher.

The Lord was in Galilee when the time for the feast of Tabernacles came, for it says, "He would not walk in the Jews' country because the Jews sought to kill Him." You remember how angry they were with the Lord when He healed the man at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath day. Brethren of the Lord were going with friends and neighbors to the feast. They thought that Jesus should go

with them and become known among the people at the feast. The Lord answered that it was not yet time for Him to go. But when His brethren had gone He also went secretly.

The people at the feast were wondering whether Jesus would come. But they did not have long to wait, for about the middle of the feast He went up into the temple and taught. The common people heard Him gladly, and many believed in Him. The Pharisees and priests sent officers to take the Lord, but they came back without Him. To the question, "Why have ye not brought him?" the officers answered, "Never man spake like this man." They felt a power in His words. Nicodemus was one of the council. Do you remember Nicodemus, who once came to the Lord by night? Now he was bolder in his love for the Lord and spoke in the council to protect Him. On the one hand some were showing more plainly their love for the Lord. On the other hand some were showing more plainly their anger and hatred toward Him.

## **Junior**

Again we find the Lord in Galilee, and now because He had so few friends and so many enemies in Jerusalem and Judea.

Who can explain the first verse of our chapter? Why had the Jews in Jerusalem sought to kill the Lord?

We are coming to the saddest part of the Lord's life on earth, and we will stop one minute here to think of one of the sad things about it - His loneliness. The priests and Pharisees had always been His enemies, and now it was hardly safe for Him to go to Jerusalem at all. His brethren, in our lesson today, are urging Him to go to Jerusalem to show what He can do. They did not at all understand Him. And even His twelve disciples did not understand until after His death, that He did not come to make Himself an earthly king, and to gain an earthly glory which they could share with Him. Alone He must do His Father's will, being misunderstood by everyone. And He must avoid the anger of the rulers until His work on earth should be finished.

Our lesson opens with the conversation with His brothers; they wanting Him to go up to the feast of Tabernacles, He saying that they might go up, but that He would not go up yet. He could not safely go up with the crowd of pilgrims. They could safely go up at any time.

We have heard of the Passover feasts; at what time of the year did they come? (Exodus 23:14-17; Deuteronomy 16:13-15.) This feast of Tabernacles came in the fall, and was a feast of rejoicing and thanksgiving for the fruits of the harvest. The feast lasted eight days, beginning and ending with a Sabbath day. It was celebrated at Jerusalem, all the people living in booths made of boughs, in the courts, the streets, and on the housetops. After the first day they could move their booths outside the city walls. It must have been a pretty sight to see them spread over the hillsides, the people in their festival costumes grouped about their temporary homes or moving in and out, and back and forth to the city gates and the temple.

There was one great excitement at this particular feast of Tabernacles, one tremendous interest. Would the Lord come? And if He did, what would the rulers do? Many believed in Him, but others followed the rulers and hated Him. Perhaps some of them disbelieved because He was not what they supposed the Messiah would be, and honestly doubted; and the rulers were persuading the

people that He was a deceiver. The excitement was none the less, that they must not speak openly, but only in hushed voices among themselves.

He did not come up with the throng when His brothers came, but afterwards, and in secret. However, toward the middle of the feast, He came openly to the temple and taught. He taught with authority. He knew the Law. He knew the Scriptures as no one else ever knew them. He knew men's hearts. What wonder that the Jews marveled. He had never been to the schools of the Rabbis; where could He have gained this knowledge? Then, knowing their thoughts, He answered them, and told them that the doctrine He preached was not His own, but His that sent Him, and that anyone who would do the will of the Father who sent Him would know that what He taught was from God.

If he was seeking His own glory and speaking His own words, they might think that He spoke what was false, but if He was seeking only the glory of God and speaking His message, what He spoke must be true. The glory that he spoke of was the light of the Divine truth itself, shining in His words and life, but they would not see it. The differing opinions grew stronger as they listened to His teaching. What did the Pharisees and the chief priests do? And the officers whom they sent to take the Lord? Among the people some said, "This is the Prophet," others, "This is the Christ." Others could not believe. Nicodemus was there, a member of the council of the Jews. What have we learned about Nicodemus? (John 3: 1) Again he showed his belief in the Lord, opposing any hasty and unlawful action by the council.

"Every man went unto his own house. Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives." Other Gospels tell us that after days of teaching in the temple the Lord often went at night to the quiet of the Mount of Olives, the hill to the east of Jerusalem, where also the village of Bethany was, where Mary and Martha and Lazarus lived, who loved the Lord. (See Luke 21:37 and Matthew 21:17)

1. What three great feasts were the Jews commanded to keep each year? At what seasons were they kept? Why was one called the feast of Tabernacles?
2. Do you remember other references to the Lord's brethren?
3. What was the reason of the effort of the Jews at Jerusalem to kill the Lord, mentioned in verses 1 and 19? See verse 23.
4. What kind of learning is meant in verse 15?
5. What is needed to make one really wise?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

What were the three great feasts which the Jews were commanded to keep each year in Jerusalem? The Passover in the early spring; the feast of First Fruits (called also the feast of Weeks and Pentecost, "fiftieth," because it was kept a week of weeks, or the fiftieth day after the Passover); and the feast of Tabernacles, the thanksgiving feast in the autumn. You read of these feasts in Exodus 23:14-17, and Deuteronomy 16. The feast of Tabernacles (so called from the booths in which the people lived, in memory of the desert journey) was kept with pretty

ceremonies including the wreathing of the altar with willow branches and the bringing of water to the altar from the pool of Siloam in a golden pitcher.

In brief, the three feasts represented three stages of progress in heavenly life: first, repentance and deliverance from falsity and evil - the Passover; second, the first doing of heavenly uses as we learn truth and do what we know is right - the feast of First Fruits; third, the spontaneous doing of good uses from a full and loving heart - the feast of Tabernacles. The fullness of love and peace in this ripened life has been gained through faithfulness in temptations, which is suggested by the words of Deuteronomy 16:13 (in the Hebrew), "Thou shalt keep the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in from thy threshing-floor and from thy wine-press." (A. 9294, 10671)

The Lord accomplished His glorification by steps, analogous to the steps of our regeneration, but deeper and fuller in their extent and their results. His presence at the Passover at twelve years old means that He was already as a child accomplishing in Himself the release from the power of falsity and evil, which the Passover represented. (E. 430 near end) Now only six months remained before the completion of His life on earth, and His attendance at the feast of Tabernacles meant that the work of the threshing-floor and wine-press were nearly finished, and that the Divine Human life was ripening in Him. The Lord's words to His brethren, "I go not up yet unto this feast, for my time is not yet full come," gain new force when we think of the great spiritual labor which He must accomplish before He could attend the feast which represented this fullness of glorification. It was from the fullness of Divine life in Him which the feast of Tabernacles represented, that on the great day of the feast the Lord proclaimed Himself the fountain of living water of the Holy Spirit which was about to come to men in all fullness when His glorification should be complete. (A. 6993, 7499)

At each visit of the Lord to Jerusalem He had showed and declared His Divinity, His oneness with the Father. And each time this had made a division, some, especially among the common people, being touched by His love and drawn toward Him, while others, especially among the leaders, were made angry and were more and more confirmed in hatred; "So there was a division among the people because of Him." Everyone, by his attitude toward the Lord was showing his own character and was determining his own place, spiritually, forever. This great truth of judgment is expressed in the last verse of the chapter (after the conflicting estimates of the Lord have been told): "And every man went unto his own house." Each one settled into the state of feeling that he made his own. In the same way all are judged and find their eternal homes. (A. 5023; P. 338)

A beautiful thought is added as you join with the last verse of this chapter the first verse of the next: "Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives." This mountain above Jerusalem, named from the olives upon it, is a type of the Lord's love standing guard over His people. (Psalm 125:2) Whatever they thought or said of Him, whether they loved or hated Him, He found rest in perfect love toward all. (A. 10261; R. 493)

Let me suggest verses 17, 24 and 43 for you to think about. With verse 17, compare Psalm 111:10. With verse 24, read 1 Samuel 16:7 and Matthew 7:1-5. With verse 43, read John 3:19-21.

## **Lesson 14**

### **John 9: The Man Born Blind**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The Lord was in Jerusalem, and passing by He saw a blind man sitting begging. The poor man had never seen the sunshine nor the faces of his friends, for he had always been blind. How the Lord would love to give him sight! Two things helped to cure the blind man. The Lord spat on the ground and mixing the water with the dust He put it upon his eyes; then He said, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." The pool of Siloam was another of the pools of Jerusalem, like the pool of Bethesda, which we have learned about. He went and washed and sight came, and he could see. He could see the sky and the sunshine and the faces of his friends, the trees and the flowers.

What did the people think and say of this wonderful healing by the Lord? What did the Pharisees say? Read verses 13-16.

Then there were the father and mother of the blind man. What did they say? Read verses 18-21. They spoke in this way because they feared the Jews who were angry with the Lord.

And there was the blind man himself. What did he say? He told them how his eyes were opened: the clay, the washing in Siloam. And when they asked about the one who had healed him, he said, "He is a prophet. When the Jews asked him further he was not afraid like his parents, but said boldly, "Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God he could do nothing." Once more the Lord found the man who had been healed, and he worshiped Him. Read verses 35-38.

##### **Junior**

Do you remember where the Lord was in our last lesson? At what feast had He been present?

As Jesus "passed by," possibly at the gate of the temple, He saw a blind man begging for help from the passers-by. (Compare Acts 3:1-3.) This man was born blind and likely made that a special reason for asking help. There are many beggars in Palestine, all trying to attract attention and help by telling the passers-by of their troubles and showing them their diseases. There were none who gained more sympathy than the blind beggars.

This story of the blind man is most beautiful and dramatic as it stands in the Gospel. To try to retell it is to injure it. Yet we may pause for a thought here and there as we read. It was in Jerusalem where the Lord had attended the thanksgiving feast of Tabernacles. The blind man was begging, perhaps by the temple gate like the lame man who asked an alms of Peter and John at the beautiful gate of the temple. (Acts 3:1-3)

Notice the disciples' question, "Who did sin?" For the Jews thought of disease as a punishment for sin. The Lord does not send punishment. When He lets hard things come, it is always that they may teach some lesson and that they may bring some good. Watch in this story and see what

blessing came to this man from his blindness. No hard thing ever comes to us that may not be used to turn our hearts more truly to the Lord; but by this poor man and his troubles the Lord was about to give a lesson to all the world of His power and loving kindness. He was not long to walk with men on earth and He must do the works of His Divine love before it was too late. And it was part of His Divine work to help this blind beggar.

What means did the Lord use in this cure? (Verses 6, 7) You find the pool of Siloam on your maps outside the present walls of Jerusalem to the south of the temple hill. There is also a lower pool of Siloam, to which water runs from the upper pool.

Among the several characters in the story the Pharisees, the parents of the blind man and the man himself, the man himself is the most interesting. Watch him as the story goes on. At first he did not know the one who healed him. "A man that is called Jesus," he called Him. Presently he said, "He is a prophet," and then "a man of God"; and then he believed in Him as "the Son of God" and worshiped Him. Can we see how this man's blindness was for the glory of God? Not only did he receive physical sight, but the Lord gradually opened the eyes of his mind to know Him the Divine Friend.

While the eyes of this man's spirit were opening to know the Lord, other eyes in the story remained closed, in fact were more and more tightly close - the eyes of the Pharisees. Read the last verses of the chapter. The chapter speaks in the beginning of natural blindness and at the end it speaks of spiritual blindness. It has lifted our thought from natural seeing to a higher kind, of sight.

1. Where was the village of Siloam? Where was the pool of Siloam?
2. What other pool in Jerusalem have we learned of? And what happened there?
3. What did the Lord do, and what did He require the man to do, in healing his blindness? Tell me of other times when similar means were used.
4. When do we see, spiritually? When are we spiritually blind? In this story who were the most hopelessly blind?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Find out what you can about the pool of Siloam; its position under the temple hill, the tunnel by which its water came, and the spring which supplied it. It is very probably this tunnel which is mentioned as Hezekiah's work in 2 Kings 20:20 and 2 Chronicles 32:4. The pool is also mentioned in Isaiah 8:6. The rivers of Eden and of the Holy City represent the abundant cleansing and refreshing truth from the Lord in a heavenly state of life. The springs and rivers of Canaan have a similar meaning. And now we find even the pools and aqueducts of Jerusalem used as types of the same Divine water of life. See especially Isaiah 8:6 and A. 790.

No one is to blame for wrong that his parents have done. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be

upon him." (Ezekiel 18:20) One may inherit a tendency to an evil, but the evil is not his except as he chooses it and makes it his own. (T. 521)

Even for our own sins the Lord does not send punishments. If hardships come as the consequences of evil or otherwise, they are permitted for some good. (T. 521; P. 277 and on)

When is one spiritually blind? When he does not understand, especially when he does not understand the truth about the Lord and heavenly life. "None are so blind as those who will not see." The most serious kind of blindness is when one will not understand because he loves what is evil. A less serious blindness is from ignorance, when one has never been taught about heavenly things. This blindness is more easily cured. We see the spiritual eyes of the blind man in the story opening to know the Lord. The Pharisees would not see His Divineness; they remained blind. (E. 239)

We all are born spiritually blind, in utter ignorance, and this is for the glory of God. For the necessity to learn may keep us humble and capable of a truer wisdom than would be possible if we had knowledge without learning and thought ourselves wise, as we should in our selfish state inevitably do. (M. 133, 134)

The water of Siloam we recognize as a type of spiritual instruction. The washing represents the application of truth to the cleansing of life. "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." (Psalm 19:8) And what is represented by the anointing of the blind eyes with the clay? The water from the Lord's own lips represents instruction from the experience of His own life. The ground with which it was mixed represents the simple natural forms in which the Lord's truth is adapted to us in our natural state of mind. It seems especially to represent the practical applications of truth to good life, which make it tangible and effective. Compare similar means of cure in 2 Kings 5: 10; Mark 7:33; 8:23. (A. 6669; E. 475)

The contention between the Pharisees and the parents and the man healed of blindness is repeated in our minds when a true acknowledgment of the Lord is awakening, and is opposed by a proud, selfish spirit of denial, and by a disposition weakly to consider the opinions of the world and the natural effects of following the Lord.

## **Lesson 15**

### **John 10: The Good Shepherd**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Pictures will help us to think of the sheep and shepherds as they used to live, and still do live, in the Bible lands. While we look at the pictures we think what gentle creatures the sheep and lambs are and how soft their white wool is. We remember, too, how David tended the sheep in the fields near Bethlehem. We remember his shepherd's staff and bag and sling when he met the giant Goliath. The shepherd used his bag for carrying food, and the sling for protecting the sheep and attracting the attention of sheep that wandered and did not quickly answer his call. The

shepherds must be watchful also and on guard against thieves and robbers. The shepherd might often risk his life in protecting and caring for the sheep.

Remember the Psalm "The Lord is my shepherd." It reminds us how the shepherd must find good pastures for the sheep, and watering-places when they are thirsty. The Psalm speaks, too, of the shepherd's rod and staff: the rod or club more for defense, and the staff for climbing and for guiding the sheep.

You remember the Christmas shepherds, keeping watch over their flock by night, for the shepherds must often stay in the field with the sheep and must keep watch at night.

Remember the Lord's parable of the lost sheep and how the shepherd left the ninety and nine and went into the mountains and dangerous places to find one sheep that was lost, and how he brought it back safely to the flock.

The pictures and these stories of the shepherds in many parts of the Bible help us to understand the Lord's lesson in which He calls Himself the good shepherd and calls us His sheep. We will still look at the pictures while we read John 10:1-21.

## **Junior**

The Lord uses the picture of the faithful shepherd, which was so familiar to the people of Palestine, to show His gentle, loving care of His children. The shepherd and his life with his sheep is not a familiar picture to us, so we will learn a little about it, that we may understand the chapter better as we read it.

We must bring together what we know about the sheep and shepherds in Palestine. All the class can help us to do this. Our pictures will help. The shepherds in that land today are much like the shepherds of the Bible time. What do we know about the shepherds from the story of David and his shepherd life? (1 Samuel 16:11 and 17:34-40) What do we learn about them from the 23rd Psalm? Remember also the beautiful prophecy: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." (Isaiah 40:11) What do we know about shepherds from the story of the Christmas shepherds? (Luke 2:8-18) And what from the Lord's parable of the lost sheep? (Luke 15:3-7)

The shepherds spend their lives with their sheep, finding places for them to feed and places for them to drink, shelter from the storms and protection from the heat. Often in the dry season the pastures are all burned up, and the only place to find any grass or green thing is along the sides of the brooks; often they must lead their sheep great distances when one green place is used up before they find another, and sometimes even some of the springs give out and a new watering place must be found. The sheep feel the heat very much, and often in the summer they must lie quietly through the heat, of the day and only begin to eat as the sun goes down. Except in these hot times, the sheep (often several flocks) are gathered together at night in a sheltered place, sometimes in a fold, and the shepherds share the watches of the night, for there are many things to fear. There are the wild animals always fierce and hungry, the lions (or panthers), the bears, the wolves. The good shepherds must always be willing to risk their lives to save their flocks from these enemies. It is only those shepherds who are hired to take care of another's flock who would think of leaving the sheep in times of great danger. Then the thieves and robbers are always

looking for a chance to steal, and their time would be in the night if they saw a chance to climb over the fold when the watcher's back was turned or if his eyes grew heavy. Besides this, the sheep themselves sometimes stray away.

The shepherds carry slings and staves as they did in David's time. They also carry a srip or leather bag to hold their provisions, and often they have their shepherd's pipes on which they play and keep themselves company on the lonely hillsides.

The shepherds of Palestine often wore the coarse blue shirt, short trousers, stockings made of strips of cotton wound around the leg from the toe to the knee, and for shoes a sort of leather moccasin. Their heads are covered by a kind of turban. They also wore a loose, heavy coat, gathered about the waist with a cord. This they wrapped all about them in the cold nights, and in the loose folds of this coat they carried the little lambs which were too young and feeble to follow the flock.

The "sheepfolds" are just little enclosures, often surrounded by walls of thorn bushes, a place being left for a door. Through this door the shepherd leads the sheep out every morning, and through it he leads them home again at night.

Living among their sheep all day, sleeping among them at night, the sheep become the shepherds' friends, each has its name and will come at once when he is called. They understand the warning cry of danger, and come running to their shepherd for protection. They know their shepherd's voice so well that when many flocks have been mixed up together at a watering place or in a fold and it would seem impossible to sort them out, the shepherds have but to take different positions outside the crowding flocks, each calling his own sheep; as soon as they hear their own shepherd's voice they come running to him. People have tried to deceive the sheep and imitate the shepherd's voice, but the sheep will not follow them.

These things were familiar to the people of Palestine, when they read, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters." They were in the minds of the disciples and the others who heard the Lord say, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep." Do you see in the Lord's words about laying down His life for the sheep a prediction of what was coming, and of what He would suffer in saving men?

The feast of Dedication is mentioned in this chapter. It commemorated the cleansing and rededication of the temple by Judas Maccabaeus after its defilement by Greek rulers. The revolt of the Jews under their great leader Judas Maccabaeus against the insolent Antiochus Epiphanes, the Greek ruler who defiled the temple and tried to destroy the Jewish worship, is one of the most thrilling chapters of Jewish history. It was during the time between the Old and New Testaments. The rededication of the temple was in the early winter, 165 B.C., and a feast of eight days was kept each year at that season in memory of the dedication. Our chapter says, "It was at Jerusalem, the feast of dedication, and it was winter; and Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch." (See 1 Maccabees 4:36-59; 2 Maccabees 10:1-9.)

1. Tell me all you can, from what is told us in many places in the Bible, about the customs of the Eastern shepherds.
2. How is the Lord our shepherd? When are we His sheep?

3. How does the Lord call us by name? When can it be said that we hear His voice?
4. How did the Lord lay down His life, and how must we lay down our lives, for the sheep?
5. What miracle is referred to in verse 21?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The parable is about sheep. We ought to see as clearly as we can what sheep correspond to in ourselves. We say they are types of innocence. That is true, yet the innocence which they represent is not mere harmlessness, but a kind affection for one another, and a gentle, trustful love such as little children should feel toward their parents and we all should feel toward the Lord. Such gentle affection is beautifully pictured in the fondness of sheep for each other and in their dependence upon their shepherd, especially in countries where the shepherd lives with the sheep in the field and becomes their friend. It expresses the Lord's faithful, loving care for us, and the obedience and trust which we should show toward Him, when He calls Himself our shepherd and us His sheep. You all can say the Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want." And you remember the prophecy of the Lord's coming, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." (Isaiah 40:11) Do you remember the parable of the man with a hundred sheep, and his love for the one that was gone astray? (Luke 15:3-7)

The figure of the sheep and shepherd occurs many times and in many parts of the Bible, describing the Lord's loving care of us and the trustful dependence which we ought to have toward Him. So much use is made in Scripture of this figure that it is hard to see how a Scripture could have been written except in a land of sheep and shepherds. (E. 314; A. 10132)

With this general thought in mind we find several particulars of the Lord's relation to us described in this lesson of the good shepherd.

1. The Lord calls Himself the door as well as the shepherd. He is the door as by His truth and goodness He leads us into a heavenly state and heaven. He said again "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." (John 14:6; A. 2356)
2. The sheep hear the shepherd's voice. To hear "means also to attend and to obey. Notice the word again in verse 16. (A. 2542; E. 108; R. 87)
3. The shepherd calleth his own sheep by name. One's "name" spiritually is his whole character, all that makes him who and what he is. The Lord calls each one by name: He knows him through and through and all that enters into his life, and adapts His care to each one's need. Compare Isaiah. 40:26. (P. 230; A. 2009)
4. "He goeth before them," suggests the power of the sympathy and example of the Lord's life on earth.
5. Going in and out finding pasture, expresses the Lord's protection and blessing in more internal and more external states. Compare Psalm 121:8.

6. A thief or robber who climbs up some other way, is a disposition to think ourselves heavenly or that we can become heavenly, by other means than by the Lord's help. (A. 10794)
7. A hireling shepherd is pretended care for innocence and kindness, really for the sake of selfish advantage to ourselves. (E. 695)
8. The wolf is the cruel, selfish affection which shows itself when the pretense of caring for innocence is cast aside. (E. 314; A. 10132)
9. Other sheep not of this fold, suggest the many kinds of people whom the Lord is preparing for a place in the great fold of heaven. Remember the Lord's words to John who forbade one who followed not with them. (Mark 9:38-40) Find a special meaning of this verse explained in A. 3969.
10. The Lord laid down His life for the sheep not only when He was crucified, but in all the temptations of His life. In each temptation He laid down something of the life inherited from men, that He might make innocence possible to men. The Lord's saying that He laid down His life of Himself, emphasizes the thought that He desired to endure the conflicts which would bring help to men, and that He endured them and conquered in His own strength. (E. 900)

Verse 22 speaks of the feast of Dedication. It commemorated the cleansing and rededication of the temple in the early winter of 165 B.C., after its defilement by Greek rulers. The Lord's presence at the feast of Dedication seems to say that He fulfilled that cleansing of the temple in His own life. Like His acts of cleansing the temple, recorded in the Gospels, this reminds us how He faithfully resisted all evil things and made Himself the pure and perfect tabernacle of God with men. (E. 220; R. 585)

## **Lesson 16**

### **John 11:1-16: "Our Friend Lazarus Sleepeth"**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

From Jerusalem we see paths climbing the Mount of Olives and disappearing over the hill. Following one of these paths nearly two miles over the ridge of the hill and out of sight of Jerusalem, we come to a little village, Bethany. It is on a sunny slope of the hill. No doubt it once had many orchards and gardens about it. Here two sisters, Martha and Mary, lived, and their brother Lazarus. The Lord loved this family, and they loved Him. He often stayed in Bethany, sometimes when He was coming up from Jericho to Jerusalem, and sometimes coming at night from Jerusalem after days of teaching in the temple.

We must read Luke 10:38-42. It tells about a visit of the Lord to this home in Bethany. How did Martha show her love for the Lord? And how did Mary show her love?

The Lord visited Bethany again. Lazarus was sick and the sisters sent a message to the Lord, asking Him to come. He was in the country beyond Jordan, where many people loved to hear Him. It was at least a long day's journey away. He did not come at once, but He spoke with the disciples about Lazarus and said that his sickness would be for the glory of God. Read verses 11 to 14. The Lord called death sleep and said that He would go to awaken Lazarus from sleep. The Lord then went to Bethany and the disciples with Him, although they thought that it was dangerous to go again among the Jews where so lately they had tried to cast stones at Him. Their journey took them across the Jordan and across the meadows and up the steep road to Bethany.

## **Junior**

When the Lord had been telling of His gentle, loving care of His people, like the care of a good shepherd for his sheep, it seems most strange that the Jews should have been so angry that they took up stones to stone Him, and He had to leave Jerusalem and go to the other side of the Jordan River, near "where John at first baptized." (John 10:31, 39, 40) Many people came to Him in this quiet place, and loved Him and believed in Him.

So many times we are told of the Lord having to leave Judea because of the hatred of the Jews. It is pleasant to know of one home where He seems to have been always welcome; where He often went and was lovingly received and cared for. This home was in the little town of Bethany, nestled in a hollow near the top of the Mount of Olives. Two sisters were here and a brother. We are told their names and something about them. Martha and Mary were the sisters, and Lazarus their brother. The sisters served the Lord each in her own loving way; Martha caring that everything should be done in the home to make the Lord comfortable; Mary caring more to listen to His words and learn the lessons He would teach. (Luke 10:38-42) Still later on in the story, we are told of a supper in Bethany, when Martha served, and Mary came and anointed the Lord's feet with most precious ointment and wiped them with the hair of her head, showing her belief in His holiness, and her feeling that there was nothing too precious to offer Him. You remember that when those about found fault with what she had done, the Lord said, "Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." (Mark 14:9) It is interesting to notice that later, when John wrote his Gospel, Mary is remembered for this act of love. We are told that the Lord loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus.

A great sadness had come into this family; the brother Lazarus was very sick and seemed about to die. The Lord was not near them, but on the other side of the river, a long day's journey, at least, away. The sisters sent a messenger to the Lord saying, "Behold he whom Thou lovest is sick." The Lord knowing all things, did not go at once to help them, but saying, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby," He stayed still two days where He was. Then He said, "Let us go into Judea again." The Lord's words remind us of what He said before the healing of the man who was born blind (John 9:3, 4) and lead us to expect that His power is again to be shown.

The disciples were afraid when the Lord spoke of going again into Judea and reminded Him that only lately the Jews tried to stone Him. But the Lord said that if a man walk in the light he stumbleth not, but if he walk in the night he stumbleth, meaning that if one does what the Divine

truth shows is right, the way is made plain, and he has nothing to fear, but if he goes his own way there is nothing to guide him and then he is in danger.

Then the Lord told them that Lazarus slept, and He was going to awake him out of his sleep. The disciples did not understand until He told them plainly that He meant that Lazarus had died. The Lord was teaching the disciples and teaching us, that in what we call death the man himself, the spirit, sleeps and awaits the awakening in the other world. Swedenborg tells us more particularly what happens; how the Lord sends His angels to be with people in this gentle sleep of death, and lead their thoughts toward heaven. We may often see by the sweet, happy expression of the face of the body, before the spirit has quite left it, the joy of the heavenly influence which has come to the sleeping spirit; and we learn that this gentle sleep is happier than any earthly sleep, the first taste of the happiness of heaven. (A. 168-189; H. 445-452)

1. Find the several places in the Gospels, which tell about the home in Bethany and the Lord's visits there:
2. How did Martha show her love for the Lord? How did Mary show her love?
3. What does the Lord call death? At what other time did He call it by the same name?
4. Tell me about the sleep of death; what kind of sleep it is; how long it lasts. Who awakens us from this sleep?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The Jews repeatedly tried to cast stones at the Lord. What is particularly represented by this form of violence? Stones in a good sense represent sure facts of eternal truth; and stones used as weapons of defense against an evil thing (like the stones with which David armed himself when he went against Goliath) represent Divine truths, like those of the Commandments used resolutely in resisting and condemning evil. (A. 7456) On the other hand, stones cast at the Lord in the effort to destroy Him represent false thoughts and words with which an evil person denies and condemns the Lord and the good and true things that are from Him. Stoning was the punishment prescribed by the Jewish law for blasphemy and for crimes which represented denial and perversion of truth, for the stoning truly pictured what those who deny and falsify truth are doing spiritually to themselves. (A. 7456, 8799; E. 240, 655)

The contrast between the denial which met the Lord in Jerusalem, and the loving welcome in Bethany, is beautiful. This village on the Mount of Olives, a little withdrawn from Jerusalem, represents a state removed from the learning and intellectual pride of the church, with more of simple love and charity. The welcome of the Lord in Bethany was typical of His welcome by the common people and the Gentiles, and of His welcome by all simple, loving hearts. Lazarus, whose name means "God is my help," is especially the representative of this charity and openness to the Lord in simple, Gentile hearts. The two sisters represent the interior and external expressions of that love, all precious to the Lord. The death of Lazarus, and his raising by the Lord, besides showing us the Lord's care for these friends, shows also His care for charity in all simple hearts, and His desire to revive this life of heaven when it languishes through the neglect and

misguidance of the church. There never was a time in which the heavenly spirit of charity was more dead, than when the Lord came, and in which the heavenly affections were more desolate. Those who felt the goodness of the Lord's love, turned to Him, as the sisters of Lazarus sent to Him for help. We are taught that the beggar in the Lord's parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19, 20) was called by the same name as this friend of Bethany because he represents the same desire for good things in Gentile hearts. It is also said that the raising of Lazarus represents the raising up of a new church among the Gentiles. (A.2916; T. 215)

The Lord's waiting two days suggests the necessity for His waiting until the need for His help is full - until both in thought and desire, we are ready to be helped.

We have reminded the younger children of the sleep of death; how angels are near to protect one in this sleep, and how the Lord Himself awakens everyone from the sleep of death into the life of the spiritual world. It was the Lord who called death sleep. "She is not dead, but sleepeth," He said at the home of Jairus (Luke 8:52), and now, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." Older pupils should read the chapter in Heaven and Hell about death and resurrection, nos. 445-452. The purpose of the sleep is to make the transition gentle, and to bring one into the most favorable state for the awakening. Usually one awakens "on the third day after the heart has ceased to beat." (R. 153; T. 281) "After two days." (W. 390) Remember the example of the Lord's death and resurrection. It was Friday afternoon that He was laid in the sepulchre, and Sunday morning He was risen.

Note the statement in H. 447, that the separation of the spirit from the body is effected by the Lord alone. This wonderful truth is more strongly and more fully stated in D. 300, 322, 328, where it is said that the love and mercy of the Lord felt as a drawing or attraction is the sole means by which resurrection is effected. The Lord means this and more when He says, "I am the resurrection and the life."

When we turn from physical death to spiritual death in the individual or in the church, what meaning and comfort may we find in the Lord's words, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth. . . . This sickness is not unto death but for the glory of God"? They should remind us that often something of heavenly life lies dormant, as the remains of childhood's innocence for years are hidden from consciousness, to be called out by the Lord, in time, to take a place in character. They should remind us that when temptation and evil are permitted to enter our life, it is because it is possible for us to find warning in the experience, to become more resolute in resisting evil and more faithful and humble in following the Lord.

## **Lesson 17**

### **John 11:17-46: Raising of Lazarus**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Lazarus had died, and many Jews from Jerusalem were with Martha and Mary who had come to comfort them. When Jesus was near to the village, first Martha and then Mary went out to meet Him. "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died," they said. But they still trusted

that the Lord would help them. They were weeping and the Jews were weeping who were with them. "Jesus wept." He went with them to the grave. It was a cave in the rocky hillside, and it was closed by a stone. "Take ye away the stone," the Lord said, and when He had prayed He called, "Lazarus, come forth," and Lazarus came forth, alive, and was again among his friends. The sickness was for the glory of God, for they saw the Lord's great power. It is the same power of the Lord which wakens all people, when they die, into the life of the other world. "I am the resurrection and the life," He said.

## Junior

Can you tell me about the home in Bethany where the Lord loved to go? What had happened to make it sad? Was the Lord there when Lazarus died? Did He know about it? Did He come to Bethany? Yes, He came; and in our lesson today we learn what happened there. You know that Bethany was near Jerusalem, not two miles away, and many friends of Martha and Mary had come from Jerusalem to mourn with them, or comfort them. It was the custom.

The Lord seems not to have come to the house; but as soon as Martha heard of His being near, she went out to meet Him; and her first words were, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." And Mary when she came to the Lord said the same thing, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." They both believed in the Lord's power when they could see Him present with them. But they did not know that He was just as near and His power was just as great when they did not see Him.

The Lord asked where they had laid Lazarus, and they took Him to the grave. It was a cave, probably in the hillside, against the opening of which a stone had been rolled. Jesus told them to take away the stone. Then praying to the Father within Him, He called with a loud voice, "Lazarus come forth"; and Lazarus came forth bound hand and foot with grave clothes.

We have seen that the Lord knew of Lazarus' death. He knew of the sickness, the sorrow of the sisters, and of the quiet sleep of death that came to Lazarus. And He came to awaken him as He comes to awaken everyone, only this time the awakening was to be in this world instead of the spiritual world. He raised Lazarus in this world to show the Jews at that time, and people forever after, that one who dies still lives, the same person he was before. He has the same loves, the same character, the same understanding, which if they are good, will grow forever stronger and more beautiful in heaven. The resurrection, we are taught, comes usually on the third day. There is no waiting for the call, when all shall rise together, as Martha believed and as many people still think, but it comes to each one of us a few days after death; a glad awakening to the happiest things we are able to love, to the happiest life we are able to live. Because we do not see a thing it is hard for us to believe it, and for this reason the Lord showed it to men, so that they could see and know that it is true.

We all shall die, and either before us or after us all our friends will die, and the more we can think of it as an awakening to a happier life in heaven, the less sad it will all be to us, and the more truly we shall try to live here so that when our turn comes we shall have learned to live and love the happy heavenly life. For as we have just said, the same loves, the same character, that we make ours here go on forever.

In the New Church we are taught much that is beautiful about this sleep of death, which is made wonderfully peaceful by the near presence of holy angels. We are taught, too, about the gentle awakening, usually on the third day. First one becomes conscious of the presence of the angels. Soon he opens his eyes to see their faces and the beautiful world around him. Every care is taken that it shall seem home-like, nothing strange. Then good angels lead him on in his preparation for his heavenly home. The homes of heaven with their many uses are the mansions in the Father's house of which the Lord spoke in the verses that we are learning to say.

1. What miracle is referred to in verse 37?
2. What seems to you to be expressed by the Lord's weeping, as He went with them to the tomb of Lazarus?
3. Tell me about the awakening into the other world. When does it take place? What is it like?
4. By whose power is it accomplished?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Older students must turn again to the chapter of Heaven and Hell which describes the resurrection from the sleep of death into the life of the spiritual world. (H.445-452) We are especially impressed, in reading this account of resurrection, with the wonderful gentleness of the awakening. There is nothing sudden or startling about it. At first one becomes conscious of the angels' presence. Soon he sees them, and the objects about him. Everything is home-like, and only gradually one is given the power of reflection and comparison, which shows him that he is in another world.

Notice the statement in H. 447, that the withdrawing of the spirit from the body is effected by the Lord alone. In D. 322 and 328, it is said again that the love of mercy of the Lord, expressing itself as a drawing attraction, is the sole means by which resurrection is effected. The Lord taught that this power belongs to Him, when He raised Lazarus from the grave, and when He said, "I am the resurrection and the life."

The Lord's miracles of raising from the dead also represent the raising from the spiritual death of a false and evil state. Can you see the meaning of particulars of this story, as applied to spiritual death and resurrection? Lazarus had lain in the grave four days. It pictures a state that is confirmed in falsity and evil. The cave in which Lazarus was laid suggests the darkness and oppression of the evil state. The stone that closed the door is the denial that any rising to a higher state is possible. Notice how the taking away of the stone is associated with the belief in the Lord's power to help. (Verses 39-41.) We shall find the same thing true of the sealing of the stone and the rolling away of the stone at the sepulchre of our Lord. The grave clothes would seem to represent the habits of thought and life belonging to the evil state. They bind one hand and foot and cover the face, because they prevent the doing of good uses and the enjoying and expressing of heavenly affections. The command, "Loose him, and let him go," is the command to cast off the habits of thought and conduct which hinder the exercise of heavenly life from the Lord. (A. 2935, 5096; E. 687)

Do we see a meaning in the sisters' going to the Lord outside the town? The Lord's meeting the sisters there, suggests His desire to draw us out of a sad, despondent state into a state that is freer and more receptive of comfort. Compare His leading the blind man out of town. (Mark 8:23) The rising of the sisters and their going to the Lord suggests the need of effort on our part to come out of a state of grief and to find the Lord's comfort. Do you see a deeper thought in Martha's first rising and afterwards calling her sister Mary? We must often begin by doing the simple external duties for the Lord's sake, and this opens the way for a deeper sense of His love and comfort.

We saw in the Lord's declaration, "I am the resurrection and the life," the truth that He only has the power to raise us into the spiritual life when the body dies. It teaches also that He alone has power to lift us up from states of spiritual death, and to give new spiritual life. This heavenly life, if it has begun to be received in this world, is not interrupted by the death of the body, but goes right on into the eternity of heaven. (E. 899; A. 10083)

## Lesson 18

### John 12:1-11: The Supper in Bethany

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Soon we shall celebrate Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter, when the Lord rode as a king into Jerusalem and the people waved the palms and shouted "Hosanna," greeting Him as King. This was the Lord's last journey up to Jerusalem, at the time when many people were coming to the Passover, in the spring when the country was lovely with greenness and flowers. He came by the way of the Mount of Olives and stopped at Bethany, perhaps for a Sabbath rest. Do we remember Bethany, the little village on the Mount of Olives? Who lived in Bethany who loved the Lord and whom the Lord loved, and with whom He loved to stay?

They made Him a supper in Bethany. It seems to have been in the evening after the Sabbath rest. It was "at the house of Simon the leper," perhaps one whom the Lord had healed of leprosy; and those whom the Lord loved were there. Martha was one of those who served the supper, and Lazarus, whom the Lord had raised from the dead, was one of those at the table with Him; and Mary found a way to show her love. The people were not sitting at the table, but reclining, and their feet would be turned away from the table. So we may picture them as we think of Mary coming in with her "box" of precious ointment. It was probably a sort of flask of stone like white marble, sealed at the neck. She broke the seal or the neck of the flask and poured the sweet-smelling ointment upon the Lord's feet and then wiped His feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

Some called it wasteful, and Judas Iscariot, one of the Lord's disciples, said, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?" But the Lord did not call it wasteful. He valued Mary's gift for it showed her love for Him.

## **Junior**

What happened, in our last lesson, in the little town of Bethany? There were many from Jerusalem there who believed on the Lord; did that make it safer for Him? No, the rulers grew more and more anxious as they saw His great works and the love that many people had for Him and their growing belief in Him. From this time the chief priests and Pharisees determined to put Him to death; and they would have been glad to put Lazarus to death also, for through him many believed on the Lord. So again the Lord must go away, for "His time was not yet come."

The place where He went is called Ephraim. (John 11: 54) The exact spot is not surely known, but it was some miles from Jerusalem, and perhaps east of the Jordan. Here He stayed till His time was come, and then He started for Jerusalem with His disciples. He alone knew all the hard things that were to come. But He went before and led the way straight up to Jerusalem.

It was again the beautiful springtime, the time when the hills were covered with flowers, the time of the Passover feast when the multitudes were all journeying to Jerusalem.

In the other Gospels we learn of many things that happened on the way; but John tells us only of the supper that was given for the Lord at Bethany. Matthew and Mark add that it was "at the house of Simon the leper." We feel at home in Bethany, the village where Martha and Mary and Lazarus lived. We remember two visits of the Lord at their home: one when Martha served and Mary sat at the Lord's feet, the other when the Lord raised Lazarus from the grave.

"Ointment of spikenard, very costly." Ointments were made of olive-oil made fragrant with odors and spices. Read of the ointment with which Aaron was anointed in Psalm 133. You find the instructions for making the holy anointing oil in Exodus 30:22-33. Mary's ointment was fragrant with spikenard, a plant which grew on the mountains of India and was greatly prized. Such a gift was an offering worthy of a king. "Judas Iscariot which should betray him." Judas was a disciple of the Lord, appointed by him as one of the twelve. He carried the money for the little company. (See John 13:27-29.) Our chapter speaks of him as a thief, and we soon learn how he bargained to betray the Lord to the chief priests for money. "Three hundred pence." When we remember that a penny was a day's wages, we see that Mary's ointment would be worth the wages of nearly a whole year. The Lord did not call the anointing wasteful. Acts of reverence and worship toward the Lord and acts of kindness and politeness toward one another are not wasteful because they express and strengthen love. Is there ever any gift of love, or service, or possessions, too great to give the Lord? The Lord said that Mary anointed Him for his burying. In her love for the Lord she no doubt felt the growing hatred of the priests for Him and knew that the end was near. We are sensitive to the danger of those we love; and Mary had loved the Lord in a way that was acceptable to Him. This grateful love is what made the gift so precious. The grateful affection filled the house with the sweetest fragrance. And so does a sweet odor fill the house whenever we feel grateful love for the Lord and express it in our prayer, or in kind words and deeds to one another. The Lord also said, "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." (Mark 14:9) Did you notice how Mary was spoken of in John 11:2? It shows that she became known as the one who anointed the Lord.

1. Where had the Lord gone, away from the angry Jews? Why was He now returning to, Jerusalem?

2. Tell me of three visits of the Lord in Bethany.
3. What did Mary express by her anointing of the Lord?
4. What spirit is represented by Judas and his complaint?
5. When is our house filled with the odor of the ointment?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The words of Caiaphas in John 11:49-52 are a remarkable evidence of the continuance of the prophetic spirit with the high priest's office even to the end of the Jewish dispensation. It is also evident how distinct the spirit of prophecy was from the man who spoke the message and from his personal thoughts and desires. Compare Isaac's blessing of Jacob and Esau. (Genesis 27:33) Remember also the Lord's charge (Matthew 23:1-4) in regard to the scribes and Pharisees who sit in Moses' seat. (D. 2022, 2282)

The hostility toward the Lord in Jerusalem and His retirement to the country beyond Jordan "where John at first baptized" (John 10:39-42) is representative of the unwillingness to receive Him in an interior and spiritual way, and of His reception only in an external way by simple, Gentile minds. There is a similar meaning in His retirement now to a country "near to the wilderness." (John 11:54)

Bethany, as we have learned, represents a loving reception of the Lord by simple, Gentile hearts. Lazarus whom the Lord raised from the dead in Bethany is especially the type of the new heavenly life which the Lord awakened in such simple hearts. Lazarus' sitting at the table with the Lord represents the strengthening of this new life by continual increase from the Lord. There is the same meaning in the Sacrament of the Holy Supper, and in the frequent comparison of heaven to a feast. Remember especially the parable of the great supper. (Luke 14:15-24; E. 252, 617) We see also why sacred feasts formed an important part of the ancient representative worship. (A. 3596) The sitting or reclining at the table represents the peacefulness and permanence of the state.

Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, we have seen represent the more external and more internal love for the Lord, which belong to the heavenly life in simple hearts. The meaning of the two sisters is shown in the account of the Lord's visit to the home in Bethany, in Luke 10:38-42. We find Martha then expressing her love in outward service, not free from a sense of importance and anxious care; while Mary, sitting at the Lord's feet to hear His word, is a type of interior and trustful affection. Do the sisters have the same meaning in our present story? Martha again serves at the supper; and is what Mary did representative of the deeper love?

"The house was filled with the odor of the ointment." How truly this can be said of any home where love and kindness are, and grateful love and worship of the Lord.

The sacred oil in ointments was a symbol of love, and the spices and odors were symbols of humility and gratitude and sweet qualities which make love precious. (A. 9474) Note the charge in Exodus 30:31-33 that ointment like the sacred ointment should not be made or used for any

other purpose. There ought to be in love for the Lord qualities of reverence, of worship, which should not be in our love for any other person or any other thing.

The ointment was mainly olive oil, made fragrant with sweet spices, in this instance with costly spikenard. See the instructions for making the holy anointing oil, in Exodus 30:22-33. The olive oil is the familiar type of heavenly love for the Lord and one another, which heals and softens and makes all go smoothly between men. See Psalm 133. The oil is the love, and the sweet spices which make it fragrant are the humility and gratitude and other sweet thoughts which blend with love and make it delightful. (A. 9474) Pouring the ointment upon the Lord's feet represents especially a love for His perfect life. Wiping His feet with the hair expresses the abandon of perfect love, and the humble effort to bring the particulars of our life into contact with the Lord's life.

The remonstrance of Judas expresses the desire of self-love to withhold service from the Lord, and to spoil even apparently good works with a secret motive of advantage to oneself. Three and three hundred are numbers which express completeness. The three hundred pence which Judas would have put into his bag suggest how all of love may be spoiled by this selfish spirit. (T. 211; E. 532; A. 2788, 9825)

The Lord said that Mary's anointing was for His burial. Ointments of burial, like those which the women brought later to the tomb of the Lord, represent in a simple sense the love that would hold one who has gone in remembrance. But burial represents resurrection, and the ointments of burial represent also the deeper love which knows that there is no death and which seeks to keep the heavenly presence near. That Mary should be known for her anointing of the Lord seems to mean that in our love for Him we find our own immortal life. (A. 10252) The Lord's words imply that such deep, true love towards Him is more precious than love to one another, even supposing that love to be genuine, which it is not with selfish men. "The poor always ye have with you; but Me ye have not always."

## **Lesson 19**

### **John 12:12-26: Riding into Jerusalem**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The next morning the people were gathering to go over the hill and into Jerusalem. The Lord sent two disciples to a neighboring village for a young ass, and He rode on the ass as kings and judges used to ride, while joyful people carpeted the road with their clothes and with green branches. People in Jerusalem heard that the Lord was coming and went up the hill to meet Him, waving palms and crying, "Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord."

## **Junior**

The time had come and the Lord was making His last journey to Jerusalem. Can you tell me of other visits to Jerusalem, that are described in this Gospel of John? At each visit the rulers were more angry and jealous; so that until "His time was come" He could not go there again.

We learned in our last lesson of the Lord's stopping somewhere on the way; can you tell where it was? And the people of the little town did Him honor; they made Him a supper. But the greatest honor was paid Him by Mary. Can you tell what she did? This was perhaps the Sabbath evening after the sun had set, and the Jewish observance of the day was over.

The next day, the first day of the week, our Christian Sunday, the Lord and His disciples continued their journey to Jerusalem. Multitudes of the people were journeying to Jerusalem also, and they had been hearing of the wonderful things that the Lord had done, especially His raising of Lazarus from the dead; and they were sure that this must be the Messiah.

The other three Gospels tell of the Lord's sending two of His disciples to bring Him an ass and its colt, and upon this colt He sat as He came over the Mount of Olives and up to Jerusalem. Kings and judges rode upon asses, and Zechariah had prophesied saying, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; 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." (Zechariah 9:9) This prophecy the disciples remembered when the Lord had risen.

We will once again think of this glad, gay company surrounding the Lord. Think of them as they came in sight of the beautiful city with its temple of white and gold glistening in the sunshine; the people shouting, "Hosanna: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Then they cut branches of the palm trees, great feathery leaves of the date palm, and possibly other flower-covered branches, as it was in the springtime, the time for blossoms. With these they carpeted the Lord's way, throwing down their "garments," or outer cloaks, as well. Such things were also done to honor kings in their journeys.

And soon a second multitude came out of the city gates to meet him. They too had palm branches in their hands, and they cried, "Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." It was a wonderful sight. It comes back to us as we look from the city gate down over the Kidron valley and up to the Mount of Olives, seeing the very same path that the Lord and the multitude must have followed. What a wonderful sight! What a sad one when we think of what happened later.

This Sunday has been called Palm Sunday in the Christian Church in memory of the multitude with their palms and their hosannas. It is the Sunday before the Easter Sunday.

1. What event of the Lord's life is remembered on Palm Sunday?
2. Why did the Lord ride on an ass when He came to Jerusalem as King?
3. How did the disciples and the people show Him honor?
4. What did those who welcomed Him carry in their hands? Of what are palms emblems?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Palms have been emblems of victory from very ancient days. In the Bible, they are emblems of victory over evil through the saving power of the Lord. Trees correspond to intelligence of many kinds. The palm, with its single tall stem, corresponds to a knowledge of one single, lofty theme - the Lord. It is a tree of the deserts, growing in the hottest places, wherever there is water for its roots. It stands for such knowledge of the Lord as springs up and grows in times of spiritual trial and temptation - the knowledge of the Lord's power to save. The leaves of the palm are the grateful acknowledgments of His power. The people who met the Lord as He rode into Jerusalem cried "Hosanna," which means "Save now." It is a confession of His power to save. The palms in their hands have the same meaning. Read also in Revelation 7:9, 10 of the great multitude with palms in their hands, who cried, "Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Here also the palms are interpreted by the voices. They are joyful acknowledgments of the Lord's saving power. (E. 458; R. 367; A. 8369)

It is always with palms, with experience and acknowledgment of His power to save from evil, that the Lord is received into the soul as King. From this experience of His power, we can go on to enjoy other blessings of the Lord's kingdom and of obedience to His laws. There is a similar meaning in the fact that Jericho, the city of palm trees, was the first city taken at the gateway of the promised land. (A. 5323)

Kings and judges in the old days rode on mules and asses. Remember David's mule on which Solomon rode when he was anointed king. (1 Kings 1:38) The animals of travel represent affections for the mental labor of thinking and understanding. The horse represents the noblest, spiritual understanding, and the ass the understanding which carefully examines and judges of things of this world and natural life. That was the work of a judge and of a king. When the Lord rode on an ass into Jerusalem, it meant that He was bringing His truth to the simple, natural understanding of men, and was bringing the power of His truth into the things of natural life, to make them orderly and right. (A. 2781)

The rejoicing of Palm Sunday was of an external kind. The hope of the people was chiefly hope of a worldly kingdom, but the Lord would not rebuke it for it was a picture of spiritual rejoicing for victories in His strength. In Revelation 7:9-17 we see another multitude with palms in their hands, ascribing salvation to the Lord. They are those who have come out of great tribulation and know the Lord's power to save. There was the picture and promise of such deeper victory and rejoicing in the Palm Sunday scene. (E. 458; R. 367; A. 8369)

There were certain Greeks (probably native Greeks, converted to the Jewish faith) who desired to see Jesus. They told Philip, and Philip and Andrew told the Lord. The Greeks were an intellectual people, fond of philosophy. This desire of certain Greeks stands for the desire in any mind to come to the Lord and to Divine things intellectually. Philip, to whom the first came, also represents intelligence. Philip alone could not bring them to the Lord, but Andrew and Philip; and Andrew represents obedience to what we know. This brings us to the Lord (and to the Divine love which the name Jesus especially expresses), and not intelligence without obedience. Remember what we have already learned about Philip and Andrew, when they first followed the Lord (John 1:40-45),

and at the feeding of the five thousand. (John 6:5-9) It was Andrew, and not Philip, who found the bread which the Lord could bless to satisfy the people.

Now we are prepared for the Lord's answer, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die," which might seem at first to have no direct connection with the wish of the Greeks to see Him. The Lord was giving to men much more than a system of truth, and to come to Him and become followers of His required more than the acceptance of certain forms of truth and philosophy. Truth in the understanding only is a corn of wheat abiding alone, but it becomes fruitful when taken into the heart and life. So, as the Lord was glorified, we may be regenerated, laying down our selfish natural life to receive a nobler life from Him. So we may serve the Lord, and follow the Lord, and be with Him. (A. 880, 5115)

## Lesson 20

### John 13:1-17: Washing the Disciples' Feet

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

We remember a supper made for the Lord in Bethany, and how the next day He rode into Jerusalem, while a joyful company of people waved palms and greeted Him as King. That was on Sunday. The Lord now kept another supper, the last supper, with the disciples. We are supposing that it was on the Thursday evening, in the large upper room in Jerusalem where He had been keeping the Passover with them. The Lord had sent Peter and John from Bethany earlier in the day and they had found the room and made things ready. Now in the evening the Lord and the twelve disciples were at the table. During the supper the Lord gave them an example of loving service. Laying aside His outer garment, dressed like a servant with a towel about His waist, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet. This service was often done for guests at a feast, coming from the dusty road, wearing perhaps only sandals. But it was done by a humble servant. In this way the Lord showed that in His kingdom all must love to serve and to do kind things for others. Read verses 4-17.

##### Junior

We have learned about the glad, gay company who came up to Jerusalem with the Lord and His disciples, waving palm branches in their hands and shouting, Hosanna. This was on Sunday, the Christian Sunday, the first day of the week. From the other Gospels we learn many things that happened on Monday and Tuesday of that Holy Week. Our Gospel of John omits the events of the next three days, and takes up the story again on Thursday.

It was Thursday, when, toward evening, the Lord left Bethany, and with His disciples went into Jerusalem to keep the Passover. You remember that the Lord sent Peter and John to make ready for the Passover, and told them that they would meet a man having a pitcher of water, and that he would have a large upper room furnished for them. And here the feast was prepared, perhaps partly by the owner of the house and partly by Peter and John. The lamb, the bitter herbs, the

unleavened bread, and the sauce into which it was dipped, and the wine, were all made ready. And then, toward evening, the Lord Himself came.

As we read the opening verses of our chapter, we see that the Lord and the twelve disciples are about the table in Jerusalem for "the last supper," the last that the Lord would take with them before His crucifixion. On what evening of that last week it was, we are not sure, but we are supposing that it was the Thursday evening, the same evening on which they kept the Passover with the Lord. If you have time, recall what you know about the Passover, why it was kept, and at what time of the year. (Exodus 12: 1-14) Recall also what you know from other Gospels about the finding of the upper room by Peter and John, whom the Lord sent from Bethany to prepare the Passover. (Luke 22:1-16)

The table, you remember, was usually on three sides of a square, or else an ordinary long table arranged so that the guests reclined on couches on three sides and could be served from the fourth side. There would be one place of greatest honor, perhaps at the corner, the head of the central couch. Then there would be places of greater or less honor. It may have been at this time of taking their places that there arose a dispute among the disciples as to which one was the greatest. Of course there could have been no question as to which place was the Lord's. But He arose from the table, and taking off His loose outer garment, and fastening a towel around His waist, He took the brass basin and pouring water into it, He began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel. This was a service generally done by one of the humblest servants, and this service the Lord of heaven and earth did for His disciples, which showed them and us the holiness of serving, and that nothing is too humble for us to do for one another. There is no true greatness but in service.

We must today give special thought to some things which John tells us about the last supper which other Gospels do not tell. John alone gives us also the beautiful words spoken by the Lord on this last night with the disciples. (Chapters 14 to 17)

Let us consider the following details. Verse 1: "Unto the end" may mean "to the uttermost." Verse 2: Supper was "served," but not "finished." "During supper" gives the idea. It appears that Judas had already bargained with the priests to betray the Lord to them. (Luke 22:3-6) Verse 4: What do you know about this custom of washing the feet of guests? (Genesis 18:1-4; Luke 7:44) Verses 6-10: At first Peter objected that the Lord should do such a humble service for him. Then when the Lord told him of the blessing there was in it, he wanted as much as possible. The Lord answered, "He that is bathed, needeth not save to wash his feet." Guests usually bathed before coming, and before supper they needed only to wash their feet. Note in verse 11 the reference to spiritual cleanliness and uncleanness, which physical cleanliness and uncleanness represented. Verses 14-17: In this way the Lord taught even more plainly than by words that in His kingdom the greatest are those who serve. (Luke 22:24-27)

During the feast evil thoughts were working in the mind of Judas Iscariot, and presently he left the table and went out into the night.

1. When was it, and where was it, that the Lord washed the disciples' feet?
2. What did Peter say? And what did the Lord answer?
3. What spiritual act is represented by washing? By washing the feet?

4. How is what the Lord did an example for us to follow?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Notice the translation in the Revised Version, in three places in this lesson. "Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the uttermost." (Verse 1, margin) "And during supper," and on. (Verse 2) "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet." (Verse 10) After the general bath, it is only necessary to wash the feet.

The Gospels of Mark and Luke tell of the jar of water which the disciples followed to the house where the large upper room was ready for the last Passover with the Lord. It represented the truth of repentance and good life which leads us to the state of union with the Lord, which this eating with Him represents. John tells of the Lord's washing the disciples' feet in the upper room itself. It represents a further cleansing, of a deeper kind. What is the water for spiritual washing? The plain truth of right and wrong, that helps us to know what is evil and to separate it from our lives. It is like pouring water into a basin when we take such truth, so much of it, as is applicable to a particular need. The Lord's pouring water into the basin suggests His adaptation of His Divine truth of life to our simple comprehension and natural needs. He used the towel wherewith He was girded, for the principles which He applies to us are the same which are the controlling principles of His Divine life. (A. 7601, 10243)

If washing represents spiritual cleansing of repentance, what in particular is represented by washing the feet? The feet are the daily walk of life, the outward deeds and conduct. To wash the feet is to make the conduct clean and right; and the Lord washes our feet when we let Him help us to put away evil things from our daily life. Peter objected to the Lord's washing his feet, and then said, "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Does it suggest the greater ease of thinking what is true than of doing it? Of having good intentions than of carrying these out in practical good life? The hands, like the feet, are types of action, but the feet especially stand for the most external, practical plane of life, where repentance must be practiced. Does it seem to you significant that this remonstrance came from Peter, who stands for faith? Does this suggest the difficulty of bringing faith down to practical good life? The Lord's words, "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit," mean that when one has entered upon the way of regeneration, then what he needs is to be earnest and faithful in making right the steps of daily conduct. (E. 666; T. 530; H. 533)

"Thou shalt know hereafter." All developments of heavenly life forever rest upon repentance practiced in this world. The importance of every act of repentance is more than we now can possibly know. (A. 10243)

"I have given you an example," the Lord said, "that ye should do as I have done to you." It was, in general, an example of modest, loving service. But in particular it showed our duty, like the Lord, to help others to do right; our duty, like Him, to judge kindly of them and to help them to lay aside the wrong that clings to them from the world. (A. 3147, 7442)

Judas Iscariot stands as a type of self-love which values even the Lord and holy things for selfish advantage. "The devil" is the name of evil collectively, especially of this evil of self-love, which Judas allowed to whisper in his heart and whose promptings he obeyed. (E. 740)

## **Lesson 21**

### **John 13:18-38: "Who is It?"**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

While they were still at the table, the Lord sadly told the disciples that one of them would betray Him, would give Him into the hands of His enemies. We know from verse 2 of this chapter that it was Judas Iscariot, and it appears from other Gospels that Judas had already bargained with the priests for thirty pieces of silver to betray the Lord to them. (Luke 22:1-6) The disciples were startled at the thought that one of them would betray the Lord. You have seen a picture in which they are asking, "Who is it? Is it I?" The disciples were reclining at the table. The disciple John was next before the Lord. At a sign from Peter, he asked Him quietly, "Lord, who is it?" The Lord answered by handing to Judas a "sop," perhaps a piece of bread dipped in some dish on the table. Judas took it, but his heart was set upon his evil purpose, and he went out into the night. Read verses 21-30. After Judas had gone out, the Lord spoke loving words to the disciples who were still with Him at the table. Especially He charged them to love one another, and said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

##### **Junior**

In our last lesson the Lord and His disciples were keeping the Passover together in the large upper room in Jerusalem. The Lord had given them an example in kindly service to one another by washing their feet.

They were all together for the last time. This the Lord knew so well, and the disciples realized so little. Some of the disciples we have learned a good deal about, and some very little. We feel from the study of his Gospel, that we know something of John, the disciple whom Jesus loved. Peter, another fisherman, was the one who said, "Thou art the Christ"; the one who wanted the Lord to wash also his hands and his head. His home was at Bethsaida, and afterwards at Capernaum. Peter and John had been sent to prepare the Passover for the Lord; and they with James, John's brother, were the ones chosen to be with the Lord on some of the most holy times. We shall learn more about these disciples in the lessons which follow. Thomas was a twin (Didymus). It was he who said to the other disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." We also learn that he found it hard to believe that the Lord had risen. Andrew and Philip we remember in connection with the feeding of the five thousand. Then we know something about Judas Iscariot, who was "a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein." He murmured against Mary for anointing the Lord's feet with the precious ointment. There were many different kinds of men in this little group, who had been through much with the Lord, and whom He had chosen to preach His gospel to the whole world.

And now the disciples sat together with the Lord, at the Passover feast. We know how the feast was kept: the story of the Lord's bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt was told; the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs were dipped in the sauce of fruits and passed to each one in turn - the "sop" it was called; the Passover lamb was eaten and the wine was drunk in an order exactly followed by the Jews. We know also from the other Gospels how the Lord gave to the disciples the bread and wine and taught them to keep His Holy Supper.

Verse 18: The Scripture referred to is probably Psalm 41:9. See also Psalm 55:12, 13. The betrayal of a friend whose favors one is accepting seems even more contemptible than open opposition. Verses 21-30: Imagine the surprise and horror of the disciples as they hear the Lord's words and begin to ask, "Who is it? Is it I?" Leonardo da Vinci has chosen this moment for his picture of the disciples at the table with the Lord. If you have the picture, what disciples can you identify?

The Lord knew all that was to happen, the disciples did not; and yet they knew that their Master must soon leave them, for He had tried to prepare them for the changes that must come. Think of them then as the Lord said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me." And each one of them in terror said, "Lord, is it I?" Then Peter motioned to John who was nearest the Lord "lying on Jesus' bosom," to ask who it was. And Jesus answered, "He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot." And He said to him, "That thou doest, do quickly." The other disciples did not understand this. But Judas being full of his evil purpose went out into the night.

Then the Lord spoke most tenderly to the eleven, calling them "little children," and telling them that in a little while He must leave them. And He gave them a commandment, to love one another, and said, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." And this He also says to us if we would be His disciples; we must love one another.

Peter could not bear the idea of the Lord's leaving them, and said he was willing to die for the Lord's sake. But the Lord said, "Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice." That is, this very night before the morning should come, Peter would deny that he was the Lord's disciple. In our lessons which follow we shall see how this sad thing came true, as the Lord said.

1. What Scripture is referred to in verse 18? When had the Lord spoken to the Jews the words quoted in verse 33?
2. What disciple is meant in verse 23? How do you know? (See John 21:20, 24)
3. Where else is the fact of Judas' carrying the bag mentioned? (John 12:6) What do you understand it to mean?
4. What deeper meaning do you see in the last four words of verse 30?
5. Do you know how the Lord's words in verse 38 came true?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

One who betrays another is worse than an open enemy. He pretends to be a friend; he enjoys confidence and accepts kindness, and uses these to do harm to the one who gives them. "For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance." (Psalm 55:12, 13) "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I, trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." (Psalm 41:9) We are traitors and betray the Lord if we use the knowledge of holy things, or any of the blessings of the church, for selfish advantage to ourselves, to gain money or power, or to be well thought of. The acceptance of holy things from the Lord, which we are about to misuse, is represented by Judas' dipping with the Lord in the dish upon the table, and by his receiving the morsel of food which the Lord dipped. "One of you shall betray Me," the Lord says. We ought to ask with the disciples, "Lord, is it I?" We ought earnestly to consider whether, and in what ways, we are betraying the Lord, perverting His gifts of knowledge and other holy things to evil ends. As Peter and John asked the Lord who it should be, so our faith and love must help us to see and feel in what ways we are guilty of this wrong. (E. 617)

In verse 2 of the chapter, it is said, "The devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him"; and in verse 27 it is said, "After the sop Satan entered into him." Evil is called "the devil," and falsity is called "Satan." It seems to say that at the earlier time the evil purpose was in Judas' heart to betray the Lord, and that now the wicked thought came, as to how it should be done. (E. 740)

Does it tell something more than the natural time of day, when it adds that Judas went out, "and it was night"? The words also describe the state of darkness in Judas' mind, now that it was filled with evil thoughts. Also compare verse 38 with Mark 14:30, and consider what it means in regard to the state of Peter's mind. (A. 6000)

The air seems to be brighter after Judas has gone out. His going out, in one sense, represents the complete rejection from the Lord's human heart and mind of that evil, which Judas represents, the willingness to use holy things for selfish ends. When Judas was gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." The Lord's glorification was the union of the human with the Divine in Him. He spoke of it as a reciprocal union and glory. The human was glorified by being made one with the Divine, and the Divine was glorified by gaining this new means of accomplishing its purpose for men. Find the same thought expressed more fully in John 17:1, 4, and 5. All this when Judas was gone out. (A.2803)

When the Lord spoke of going away from the world and to the Father, the Jews and the disciples thought of a journey to some distant place. (John 7:33-36; 16:5, 16, 28) In fact He did not go by a change of place, but by a change of state, passing in His glorification beyond the power of their finite minds to comprehend Him. Yet to the disciples the Lord said, that they should follow Him afterwards (He made no such promise to the Jews), meaning that by steps of regeneration, analogous to His glorification, they would come to a fuller apprehension of His Divine perfection. The new commandment, to love one another, standing as it does in the middle of the words about following the Lord, shows the especial means by which we may come near to Him. By exercising

the love of the second Great Commandment, loving one another, serving one another, exercising patience and forbearance toward one another, for His sake, we are enabled also to keep the first Great Commandment, to love the Lord, and to come near to Him. Another necessity for gaining this Christian love and following the Lord is expressed in Peter's words, "I will lay down my life for Thy sake." How easy to say, but how hard to do, in the deeper sense of laying down each day our selfish life, giving up at each step of progress our way, to follow the Lord's way. Like Peter, we are weaker than we know. But the Lord will help us and strengthen us. "Thou shalt follow Me afterwards." (A. 1737, 10087; E. 864)

John's Gospel is the only one which does not describe the institution of the Holy Supper. But when we read the wonderful fourteenth to seventeenth chapters of John, we see that this Gospel teaches the same lesson of conjunction with the Lord, but in another way.

## **Lesson 22**

### **John 14:1-11: The Many Mansions**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary and Junior**

They were still at the table of the Last Supper, where the Lord had washed the disciples' feet; where He had told them that one of them should betray Him, and they had asked eagerly, "Is it I?" Before they left the large upper room, the Lord said many things to them, helpful, comforting things, to give them courage in the days that were to come, when He would have gone where they could not follow for a time. "Let not your heart be troubled. . . In My Father's house are many mansions."

Just try and think for a moment how many! Think of all the countries of this earth and their millions of people, and the thousands and thousands of years that people have lived here. Then look up in the great sky some night and see some of the other planets, earths which belong to our sun, most of them much larger than our earth. Then look again and see all the thousands of stars, most of which have earths about them, and then try to think of the many heavenly homes that the Lord is preparing for His children in the other world. You cannot do it. Only the Lord with His infinite love can include so many.

We will think a little of these homes as Swedenborg tells us about them. We learned in the lesson about Lazarus a little about the sleep of death that comes to everyone, and the gentle awakening by the Lord in the other world. The part of the other world where all are first received is called the world of spirits. Little children are taken at once to angels' homes. Older persons linger in the world of spirits; there all hidden things of their lives and hearts are opened, and all evil things must be given up by those who will go to heaven. Good and evil separate from each other, and the good are taught by angels and prepared for their heavenly homes.

The mansions which our Heavenly Father has prepared for us will so exactly agree with what we love and enjoy, that we shall know that they are ours the minute we see them, though we may see others much more grand. And besides the home, there will be about us the kind of people we

most love; and also the work that is waiting for each one of us to do is the work that we love best and can do best; for all in heaven have work to do, no one can be idle, for the laziness and indolence must all be left behind. Neither will there be the rush and worry we so often put into our work here, for neither has that a place in heaven, and we shall be able to do more work and better work without it. But we shall feel there that what we are doing is the Lord's work and that we are fitted better than anyone else to do just this particular thing; this will make it full of life and interest.

There are times of rest and recreation there. There will be heavenly music and heavenly beauty of every kind, perfect safety, and the way always open for us to do our best. No sickness, no suffering, no wickedness. We shall all be at the age of most perfect usefulness; the aged will be young again, and the children will grow up to be men and women.

We are told too of the many delightful things that surround the children. How they have beautiful gardens which they take care of, and that they are so bright and beautiful when the children are good, but lose their beauty if the children let selfish things come into their hearts. Then their clothes are also beautiful if they do what is right, but if they do something wrong spots come on their clothes, and they can only be made clean by their doing what is right again. I suppose we can hardly imagine the beautiful games and plays that the children enjoy there in that heavenly land.

If the growth of children is made so beautiful in the other world, what do you suppose is gained by children who grow up here? A greater strength to resist evil. There, that they may know and feel that the Heavenly Father is always protecting them, from evil, they are allowed at times as they grow older to feel their selfishness, and to realize that it is only by the Lord's help that they are saved from it. In this way they learn to be humble, and realize their dependence upon Him. Here in the temptations of this world, we can gain a different, perhaps a greater strength, and we may have an even greater sense of our dependence upon the Lord, as our need of His help has been more keenly felt. For some the gentler way is best, and for others the harder, and the Lord alone knows what is best for each one.

Teachers can read about children in heaven in H. 329-345; about the houses of angels in H. 184-190; and about the entrance into heaven in T. 622.

1. What are the "many mansions" of which the Lord speaks?
2. Tell me about the homes to which little children go in heaven.
3. How did the Lord tell us that we may find and know "the Father" of whom He spoke?
4. Who is meant by "the Comforter," in verses 16 and 26?
5. Where were these words spoken by the Lord? Who were present to hear them? Were they spoken also for others? (John 17:20)

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

These precious and tender chapters (John 14-17) are less suitable for reading with little children, but older students should read them entire. The chapters describe the union of the Lord's Humanity with the Divine, and our conjunction with the Divine in Him - the means by which this conjunction is accomplished, and its effects.

"Let not your heart be troubled." In the conjunction with Him, of which the Lord is speaking, there is trust and peace, which takes away fear and trouble from the heart. See also verse 27, and John 16:33. (E. 365)

"In My Father's house are many mansions." Conjunction with the Lord is heaven. We think of the many homes of heaven, which the Lord prepares in His great love. We think also of heavenly uses, as many as there are kinds of good men and women, or can be to eternity, for each angel's home is in his use. They are all mansions in the Father's house, for all heavenly uses and joys are from, and are included in, the Lord's great love and joy of use. (H. 7, 186)

The question of Thomas and the Lord's answer. (Verses 5-7) What is said of Thomas after the Lord's resurrection (John 20:24-29) shows that he was of a natural mind, and speaks for those of natural mind, who need external evidence of heaven. How are God and heaven made real to such natural minds? In the Lord's Divine Human life. Here is all the tangible evidence that any mind can need. (T. 370)

Philip's saying and the Lord's reply. (Verses 8-14) We have found Philip at other times a type of an intelligent understanding of heavenly things. His saying, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," expresses the desire to understand this subject of conjunction with the Lord. And in His reply the Lord explains some things to our understanding. Read very carefully what the Lord says about the relation of the Father (the Divine within Him, which was His life) and the Human nature which was showing the Divine to men in words and works. Compare the Lord's words with words which you might use if you were explaining to someone what your soul is and where it is. "My soul is in me," you might say; "it is my soul that speaks the words and does the works; knowing me you know my soul." The promise of greater works (verse 12) means that as the Human nature of the Lord was united with the Divine, His power to do good works, and the power from Him which enabled men to do good works, increased. "If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it," teaches that the power of usefulness will increase without limit as one comes into accord with the Lord. The verses which follow (15-21) teach that the practical way to come into accord and conjunction with the Lord is by obedience to His commandments. To those who thus do their part, His Spirit enters with comfort to their souls, and the Lord makes Himself known, not by an outward but by an inward way. (A. 6674, 9310)

The question of Judas and the words which follow. (Verses 22-31) The name Judas among the apostles, like Judah among the tribes, stands for a quality of love; and here for a good love and not a selfish one, for it is "Judas, not Iscariot" who speaks. His question leads to still deeper instruction regarding conjunction with the Lord as He makes Himself known not to outward sense, not to understanding, but to the perception of a loving and obedient heart. To such a heart He gives comfort and enlightenment (verse 26) and peace (verse 27). The disciples should not

grieve, and we should not grieve, that the Lord is no longer present to outward sense; for by His glorification, by the union of His Human nature with the Divine, the power and peace and other blessings of conjunction with Him are increased for men. (Verse 28) To them and to us it should be a help in days when the power of the world is strong, to look forward to the conjunction with Him, of which the Lord has spoken. (Verses 29, 30) "Arise, let us go hence." Perhaps at this point they arose from the table, and the Lord continued speaking as they went to the garden of Gethsemane. In a deeper sense the command expresses the Lord's purpose and our purpose to press on to the conjunction which has been described, by loving the Lord and doing His commandments in this world. (A. 1013, 10578)

## Lesson 23

### John 15: The Vine and the Branches

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

We all know grapes. Do we know where grapes come from? On what kind of a tree or plant they grow? They grow on vines, on grapevines. Some of us have seen grapevines, planted in rows in a field, or on a hillside, or climbing over an arbor. The large leaves make a good shade, and as the clusters of grapes grow they hang down under the leaves, and as they ripen they become sweet and juicy.

The disciples were still with the Lord at the table, or perhaps they were leaving the house and were going through the street and out by the city gate to the garden of Gethsemane, on the lower slope of the Mount of Olives. "I am the true vine," He said. "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Sometimes in His lessons the Lord called people trees, trees with fruit and trees without fruit, or vines, fruitful and unfruitful. We are like a fruitful tree or vine when we learn of some useful thing that we might do and make plans for doing it, and finally do the useful thing, which is the fruit. The Lord Himself was like a very fruitful tree or a very fruitful vine, for He knew so well the useful things to do and how to do them, and filled His days so full of works of kindness - the good fruit. How could the disciples be fruitful trees and vines? They did not know, as the Lord did, what was good and useful. No, but they could learn of Him. And they had not strength to do useful works as He had. No, but He gave them the love and the strength to do them. The Lord means this when He calls Himself the vine and His disciples the branches. We must read what He said about the branches that draw strength from the vine and are fruitful, and branches that forget to draw strength from the vine, which bear no fruit and are cut off and wither. (Verses 1-6)

The Lord went on to tell how we can be fruitful, by keeping His commandments and by loving one another. It was not a sad life that the Lord was showing them and asking them to live, but a happy, joyful life. "These things have I spoken unto you," He said, "that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

## **Junior**

Can we learn about grapevines and vineyards from other parts of the Bible, as we learned about the shepherds and the sheep? The vines were growing on the hillsides in that country. There are still good vineyards there, and in neglected places we may sometimes come upon terraces where there once were vineyards, or a vat, like a bathtub, cut in the rock which was once a wine-press where grapes were trodden to make wine. Remember the great cluster of grapes which the spies brought back to Moses from near Hebron. (Numbers 14:23, 24) We remember Naboth's vineyard at Jezreel. (1 Kings 21) The Lord spoke a parable of a vineyard with a hedge about it, with a watch tower and a wine press and vines to be cultivated. (Mark 12:1-9) Read the song of the vineyard in Isaiah 5:1-7, and the Psalm of the vineyard, Psalm 80:8-19. We think of figs and vines shading the doorways when we read of sitting under the vine and fig tree. (1 Kings 4:25; Micah 4:4)

The vines need care. They must have supports to cling to by their tendrils, to lift them from the ground into the air and sunshine. They must have careful pruning so that they will not exhaust themselves in too many branches, but will put their strength into the branches that will bear the best fruit. Such thoughts about the vines and vineyards were familiar to the disciples when the Lord spoke to them about the vine and its branches.

The Lord's great love for doing good to men would prevent His having any idle interests or any thoughts not leading to the doing of useful works. (Verses 1, 2) We too ought to be such vines. In verses 4-8, the Lord changes the picture and draws us closer to Himself, saying that He is the vine and that we are the branches. We are not independent vines, for we do not live of ourselves; we are not wise of ourselves; we are not strong of ourselves. We must have life and wisdom and strength from the Lord if we are to be fruitful. With the Lord we can bear much fruit; without Him we can do nothing.

As we read on from verse 8 we keep in mind what the Lord has said about the vine and the branches, and we see that He is telling us how to be fruitful branches, how to live useful and joyful lives. First, by continuing in His love, and this by keeping His commandments; also, by loving one another so much that we are willing to give up our selfish ways and give our lives to others. It was the way the Lord was living and the way He will help us to live. The Lord does not call us servants, but calls us friends. He takes us into His confidence and explains to us the useful life that He wishes us to live. The Lord has Divine purposes for us and work for us to do, but there must be willingness on our part, and cooperation on our part, if the Lord's purposes for us are to be realized, if we are to be the fruitful branches which He wishes us to be.

1. What parables do you think of in which a man or the church is likened to a vine or to a vineyard?
2. When are we branches abiding in the vine and bearing much fruit?
3. When are we branches cut from the vine and withered and burned in the fire?
4. What joy does the Lord speak of in verse 11?
5. How can everyone prove his love by laying down his life for his friends?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

In many places in the Bible, as in the first Psalm, a man is likened to a tree. The tree represents especially his intelligence, growing stronger and reaching out more widely from year to year, and bearing the fruits of good works. The grapevine, among the trees, is the type of a spiritual intelligence leading to good uses that are sweet with heavenly charity. A spiritual tree may need pruning, and even a spiritual vine, for intelligence must be checked from running wild, and its strength must be concentrated upon the best uses. The Lord was the true vine as He gained all spiritual wisdom; and the vine was pruned and corrected by the Divine Husbandman as the Lord gave up all idle enjoyment in intelligence, and devoted the power only to doing the works of the Divine love, and to doing them fully and perfectly. Read verses 1 and 2. (A. 1069, 5113, 9139)

But here, as in the previous chapter, the Lord speaks of Himself and His relation with the Father, that He may extend the lesson to us and to our relation with Him. We also are branches in the vine. We may receive from Him something of spiritual intelligence, something of the wisdom of good heavenly uses, and may do uses from Him. The abundance of such fruit is told in verses 5 and 8. The endless possibilities of it are suggested in verse 7. The joy of it is told in verse 11. But all this fruitfulness, with the strength and the joy of it, is from the Lord, not from ourselves. Apart from Him we are like branches cut from the vine, which can bear no fruit. As the branches wither, so our intelligence must fail. The branches are also cast into the fire and are burned. If intelligence is not acknowledged to be from the Lord, and is not applied to good uses for His sake, it is destroyed by being joined with evil. Read verses 3 to 8. Memorize verse 5. (R. 883)

All that the Lord did in His coming into the world, He did for the sake of men. He overcame all evil, that He might help men to overcome. He brought down into His human life the Divine love of every good thing, that He might give of this love to men. By the same way that the Lord gained that love, He enables us to gain it - by keeping the Divine commandments, and so providing vessels into which the Divine love can flow and in which it can abide. The Lord did this in an infinite degree, and it was His glorification. He makes it possible to us in our limited degree, and it is our regeneration. Read verses 9 and 10. Again, as if to make still more simple the duty that is required of us, the Lord tells us that love for one another is the form that the Divine love and the Divine commandments take when they come down to the plane of human life. Only let that love be great, to the extent of giving up the life for others. Such is His love, and such is love in us if we have it from Him. Read verses 12, 13. (T. 70)

The Lord's regard for our freedom, His desire that we shall keep His commandments and receive His love, but that we shall do so freely and find the happiness that comes only with willing service, is beautifully shown in His calling the disciples not servants but friends. It is His choice for us, and what He brings to pass so far as we consent, that we shall bear fruit of lasting value, and that our lives shall have the strength and indefinite increase which comes from union with Him. Read verses 14-19. (E. 409)

Worldly influences from without and from within oppose and hate this life of charity, as they hated it in the Lord. We are not ignorant of the good life; the world is not ignorant of it; then it would not be to blame. But the Lord has shown us the beautiful life and has told us about it. We

are to blame if we neglect it and despise it. The Lord works in two ways to bring us to the life of charity, by His Holy Spirit from within, and by the witness of His life which the Gospels give us; and by the example of Christian men and women, from without. (Verses 20-27; T. 153, 154)

Have you thought what is represented by the manner of growth of a vine, not standing alone, but climbing on a tree or wall or other support to lift it into the air and sunshine? This suggests an intelligence that relates itself closely with some other intelligence or interest. Many vines are decorative, representing intelligence which knows how to do something gracefully; how to preach a sermon gracefully (Grace must not be excessive, or the vine may kill the tree on which it grows); how to treat gracefully the legal rights (the iron fence) between my ground and my neighbor's. But the grapevine is more than decorative, it bears sweet fruit. A grapevine on the walls of the house (Psalm 128:3) and over the door represents the spiritual intelligence which applies itself to the conditions of domestic life and of social life to find in them opportunity for uses of spiritual charity. (E. 340)

## **Lesson 24**

### **John 16: The Comforter**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Intermediate**

The Lord had already told the disciples that in the days that were coming they would be hated and persecuted. (John 15:18-20) Not only would the disciples suffer hard things, but the principles of Christian faith and love for which the disciples stood would also be despised and lost from Christian life and worship. "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." It would be a comfort to the disciples to remember that the Lord had foreseen and foretold their trials; it should reassure and encourage us to know that He foresaw that the principles of Christian faith would suffer hard things and be denied. He knew it would be so; still He was not discouraged. Read A. 3488.

What did the Lord mean by His going to the Father? Not a going to some far-off place, but a passing beyond the natural sight and comprehension of the disciples, as His human nature was glorified by union with the Divine. The disciples were sad at the thought of losing the Lord's outward presence, but the inward presence would become more full and powerful. "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." The Comforter or Holy Spirit was the Lord's own influence, which would be with them after His glorification more strongly than when He was visible to natural sight. It was especially the influence of His truth enlightening and strengthening them. It is plain from John 14:18 and from John 20:22 that the Holy Spirit was the Lord's own personal influence. The increased power of this influence when the Lord should be glorified is promised in John 7:39. (A. 9818 end, 9199)

That the Comforter would reprove or convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, means that the light and power of the Lord's presence would expose and condemn sin in matters of goodness (righteousness) and of truth (judgment). By His going to the Father the

Lord opened the way to all goodness; by overcoming falsity, the prince of this world, He opened the way to all truth. Compare John 15:22-24. (A. 2235)

The mission of the Comforter, the power of the Lord's influence, to enlighten and instruct is beautifully described in verses 12, 13. "He will guide you into all truth." The Lord had spoken in parables and in other simple ways, but all the wisdom of heaven was in the words, and by the enlightenment from Him that wisdom would be opened more and more forever. The infinity of this wisdom is suggested by the words, "He will show you things to come." The influence of the Spirit in opening the meaning of the words already spoken is shown in John 14:26, where it is said, "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (T.139, 140; E. 25)

"A little while." These words so many times repeated in verses 16-18 emphasize the temporariness of the natural states in which we are while preparing for the enduring spiritual state. The little while in which we do not see Him is the experience of natural disappointment and obscurity by which we are prepared to know the Lord in a more true and spiritual way. How truly we may say of every state of natural trial, "A little while"; and then, if we are faithful, the joy which no man taketh from us!

Read also chapter 17, the Lord's prayer for His disciples, which describes in a wonderful and beautiful way His oneness with the Father, and our union with Him.

## **Lesson 25**

### **John 18: 1-14: The Garden of Gethsemane**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

It was still the Passover night. The Lord was still teaching and comforting the disciples as they went out of the city gate and down the hill in the moonlight. They crossed the brook Kidron in the valley, and at the very foot of the Mount of Olives they came to a garden called Gethsemane, or the "oil-press." There are very old olive-trees here now, and it was doubtless an olive garden then. Here among the trees it seems the Lord and His disciples often rested.

The other Gospels tell us how, while the disciples slept in the garden, the Lord prayed three times most earnestly. John does not speak of the agony or the prayer, but only of the perfect strength which followed. For as Judas came with armed men to take Him Jesus asked them, "Whom seek ye?" And when they answered, "Jesus of Nazareth," He said, "I am He." And when they heard it, they went backward and fell to the ground. Then He asked them again, "Whom seek ye?" and again He answered, "I am He; if therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way." He would protect His disciples in this trial.

There must have been a Divine majesty as He stood before them and said, "I am He," never for a moment trying to escape from them or resist them, and yet He had infinite power to do so.

The disciples must have been bewildered, feeling that they ought to defend the Lord, and yet it was all so unexpected to them, and they so few. Peter had a sword, and he drew it in his desire to protect his Master, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. But the Lord bade him to put up his sword. "The cup which My Father bath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

Comparing these words with the prayer recorded in the other Gospels (Matthew 26:39), we feel again that John is showing us the result of the trial which they describe. Then the Lord was taken and bound and carried away in the night and in secret to the palace of Annas. Annas had been the high priest, and now his son-in-law Caiaphas held the office. Annas and his family were the principal ones who had made the Lord's house a den of thieves. They had defiled the temple and were making immense profits from the trading and money changing. They were hated by the people who were obliged to buy of them for the sacrifices and feasts. When the Lord cleansed the temple they feared to rebel, but hated the Lord intensely for interfering with their money getting, and were among the first to wish His death and to help to bring it about. There is no record of what happened at the house of Annas; what follows was at the house of Caiaphas.

1. "These words," verse 1. What words are meant?
2. Who are meant by "these" in verse 8?
3. When had Caiaphas given the counsel referred to in verse 14?
4. Where was the garden of Gethsemane? What had happened at the garden before Judas came?
5. What happened at the garden after Judas came?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The three other Gospels say that the Lord went with the disciples from the table of the Last Supper to the Mount of Olives. Two Gospels give the name of the place, Gethsemane, which means "oil press." A threshing floor and a wine press often represent states of temptation, by which external and evil things are rejected from the life, and the deeper things of heavenly life are brought forth. So here the oil press is associated with a state of severe temptation, in which there was a crushing and laying down of natural life and a bringing forth of the pure oil of the Divine love. A garden also suggests the laying down of life, that a higher life may arise. (John 12:24) We shall think of this again when we read of the Lord's sepulchre in a garden. (A. 10261; R. 493; E. 359)

The three other Gospels tell of the Lord's trial in Gethsemane; how He prayed three times, while the disciples slept. It is descriptive of the extremity of the trial into which the disciples could not enter with Him. The Lord prayed that "the cup" might pass from Him. In verse 11 of our lesson He also speaks of "the cup." We see that the cup and its contents stand for the experience that the Lord must meet. In a good sense a cup and wine represent heavenly truth. In an opposite sense they represent falsity, and the temptation which is caused by the fighting of falsity against truth. Plainly the cup here means the experience of temptation. (A. 5120)

The calm strength which came after temptation, and the majesty of presence before which those who came to take the Lord went backward and fell to the ground, remind us of the day at Nazareth when they would have cast Him from the hill, but He passed through the midst of them and went His way (Luke 4:30), and of the day in the temple courts when officers who were sent to take Him, came back saying, "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46). The wonder is not that a Divine power and majesty were at times felt in the Lord's presence, but rather that His power was so wonderfully restrained, that it might not overpower the freedom of men.

What is represented by the night and darkness in which the trial in Gethsemane and the betrayal of the Lord took place? See John 13:30; Luke 22:53. (A. 6000) Can you also see what is represented by the lanterns and torches in the hands of those who came to take the Lord? They represent the false thoughts which lead to the doing of evil, even to betraying and fighting against the Lord. Compare what is said of the Holy City: "There shall be no night there; and they need no candle," etc. (Revelation 22: 5; R. 940)

What do the weapons represent in the hands of Judas' men? and what is represented by the sword in Peter's hand? Peter's sword is the truth which exposes and condemns the wickedness of those who deny and betray the Lord. The weapons in their hands are the opposite, the false thoughts and denials with which they accuse and argue against Him. Why then did the Lord tell Peter to put up his sword? Because He did not wish to condemn and to compel by force of reasoning even those who were against Him. This would destroy their power to listen to Him willingly and obey Him freely. This violence to their free obedience is represented by the cutting off of the servant's ear, for which the Lord rebuked Peter, and He healed the wound. The sword of truth is a right thing to have, but we must be careful that we do not use it to condemn harshly, and to take away the willingness of men to hear and to obey. (A. 2799, 3868)

Annas, to whom the Lord was first led, had been himself high priest, and was still the ruling spirit in the priestly party. A father-in-law, or wife's father, is sometimes in the Scriptures a type of a higher or interior good from which the good comes, which is represented by the wife. Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, would seem to represent the inmost evil purpose which prompted the wicked acts of the other priests and of Pilate. See John 18:24; 19:11. (A. 6827, 8643, 8644)

## **Lesson 26**

### **John 18: 15-27: In the High Priest's Palace**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Junior**

It was still night, after the trial in Gethsemane, and the Lord had been led bound to the palace of the high priest. It was probably near the temple and not far from the city gate, where they would enter on coming up from the garden, and the secret company on their evil errand would not have far to go through the city streets to reach it. They feared the people, and the rulers feared the people, so this capture was made in the night; and they tried to decide secretly upon what they should say in asking the Roman governor to have Jesus put to death. For had the Lord ever done

any kind of wrong? It was on account of the good things He had done, and His showing them so plainly the evil of their ways that they hated Him so much.

But the priests could not put anyone to death; that could only be done by the Roman governor, and ought only to be asked of him when decided upon by their great council the Sanhedrin. And the laws for trial before the Sanhedrin were very strict. The prisoner must have every chance to defend himself by counsel and witnesses. The president must remind the others of the value of human life, and that they must consider everything in favor of the prisoner. Even so a verdict of death could not be given the same day as the trial, but only after a long fast by the judges. The Lord had no witnesses or counsel, and no witnesses against Him agreed. It was all done in one night, the people led on by the high priest. Nothing was found against the Lord, and yet they condemned Him to death, and asked the Roman governor that He might be crucified.

It is said that Annas sent the Lord bound to Caiaphas. They may have lived in different palaces, they may have lived in different parts of the same palace. The disciples had fled; but there were two who were not far off. One of them, who probably was John, was known unto the high priest; he spoke to the maid who kept the door, and she let in Peter. But as they went in she said to Peter, "Art thou not also one of this man's disciples?" He said, "I am not."

The palace was probably built around an open court, the rooms opening upon it. The Lord was probably taken into a room or hall a little above the court, where the priests were gathered. Others stayed with the servants in the court. Peter was among them, and, as it was cold, he stood by the charcoal fire which was burning in the brazier and warmed himself.

We can imagine Peter's anxiety and distress. He himself was not safe there, he might be recognized at any time as one of the Lord's disciples and perhaps be put to death. But he was willing to run that risk in his great anxiety to be near the Lord his Master, and to know what was happening to Him. He must have seen the people hurrying to and fro, for the great men of the council of Sanhedrin had been sent for in haste to help decide upon the accusation against the Lord. He must have heard the servants and the soldiers talking of this man whom their masters hated. It must all have been like a horrid dream. And then someone spoke to him and said, "Art not thou also one of his disciples?" He denied, and said, "I am not." Then another came, a man who had been with the band who had taken the Lord in the garden of Gethsemane, and as it happened a kinsman, or relative, of the very man whose ear Peter had cut off. And he said, "Did not I see thee in the garden with him?" Peter denied again, and straightway the cock crew. It was getting toward the end of this long and dreadful night, and the crowing of the cock was the sign of the coming day; it was also the sign which the Lord had given Peter when He said, "The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice." "And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly." (Luke 22:61, 62)

We are apt to think that if we had been in Peter's place we never would have denied the Lord. But do we not sometimes forget that we are the Lord's disciples when following Him takes a great deal of courage, and doing our own way seems so much easier? But we may learn from our failures, as Peter did, to be humble, faithful disciples, trusting the Lord and not ourselves. Peter not only "went out and wept bitterly," but we learn of him afterwards as one of the Lord's bravest disciples, and gladly laid down his life for the Lord's sake.

1. What two disciples followed the Lord to the high priest's palace?
2. What did Peter do on that night, that made him weep bitterly?
3. What purpose was in the hearts of the priests?
4. When do we deny the Lord as Peter did?
5. When does the Lord turn and look upon us, and we weep?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

Other Gospels tell us that when the Lord was taken all the disciples forsook Him and fled. So sometimes our good resolutions, our grateful affections, and even our remembrance of the Lord are scattered in a time of spiritual darkness when trial comes unexpectedly upon us. But John and Peter followed "afar off" to the high priest's palace. A little of faith and love is still there, though feeble and bewildered. (E. 820, 821)

Our chapter follows especially the experience of Peter on the night of trial. This pictures the wavering and failing of faith in the Lord, in an individual or in the church, in a time when natural hopes are disappointed. The Lord before had said to Peter, "This day, even this night, thou shalt deny Me thrice." (Mark 14:30) It was night in his mind and it is night in our minds in such a time of trial. Now we read also that it was cold, so that Peter warmed himself at the fire. As the night represents the absence of truth with its light, so the cold represents the absence of love and its warmth. When love for the Lord fails and a heavenly charity, and we content ourselves with natural and selfish loves, then faith is sure to lose its light. This accounts for the close connection in the story between Peter's warming himself at the fire and his denying the Lord. (A. 6000; E. 820)

There were three denials, more and more emphatic. We associate the number three with what is complete. It suggests especially what is made complete in feeling, thought, and deed. It is a first denial, when we admit an evil feeling contrary to the Lord. We deny Him a second time when we think the false thoughts which the evil feeling suggests. And it is a third and last denial when we do the evil deed. Then perhaps we realize for the first time how unfaithful we have been, and we are overcome with remorse. It is as when the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, bringing back the memory of his love and his earnest professions of faithfulness, and of the Lord's warning that he would deny Him, and he wept bitterly. (A. 4495, 10134) "To mourn has respect to grief on account of night as to goods in the church, and to weep as to truths." (A. 2910)

The Lord made little answer to the high priest's questions and was silent also before Pilate and before Herod. "Ask them which heard Me, what I have said," He replied. Hearing, spiritually, is a willingness to attend and to obey. To those who have this willingness the Lord can speak, but not to those who question with idle curiosity, or to criticize and deny. Only those who read with willingness to obey can find the precious wisdom in the Bible. Ask them what the Lord had said, for they alone know. (A. 2542; E. 365) The "officers" and "servants" who struck the Lord, were like the hand giving outward expression to the hatred in the heart.

It may be useful to think in any time of temptation that the Lord is put on trial in our souls. Shall we be among those who hate and strike Him? Shall we cowardly deny Him? Will not this story, and the scene in the high priest's palace help us to be faithful?

## Lesson 27

### John 18: 28-40; 19:1-15: Before Pilate

#### THE STORY

##### Junior

Early Friday morning, after the night in Gethsemane and at the high priest's palace, they took the Lord bound to the palace of Pilate, the Roman governor. But the priests themselves did not go into the palace for fear of being defiled, for Pilate was a Gentile, and to go into his palace would make them unclean, and they would not be able to engage in the part of the Passover celebration which was observed on that day, and on the next day, the Sabbath of the Passover week. This seems to be the meaning of John 18:28. See John 19:14, 21, 42; and for a full discussion of the seeming conflict with the other Gospels see Andrews' "The Life of Our Lord," pages 450-481.

Pilate was governor of Judea under Tiberius, the Roman emperor. His official home was in Caesarea on the Mediterranean shore, but it was the custom of the Roman governors to be in Jerusalem at the great feasts in case of riots and insurrections. Pilate hated the Jews, and was hated by them in return.

The Lord was led into the judgment hall, but Pilate must go outside to speak to the people. He asked them what accusation they brought against the Lord. They angrily answered that if He had not been an evil doer they would not have brought Him to him. Pilate on hearing that He said He was a King, went into the judgment hall and asked the Lord, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" The Lord said that He was a King, but that His kingdom was not of this world. We must read very carefully His answer to Pilate's questions; it shows so clearly what makes a spiritual king and kingdom. A king is one who knows the Divine truth and rules his life by it. The kingdom is in all hearts where the Lord's laws are obeyed. Truly the Lord was King. Pilate could not understand such a king and such a kingdom, but he knew that it did not conflict with Caesar's government, and he said, "I find in him no fault at all." Notice a little later (verses 12, 15) that it was this charge, that the Lord disputed Caesar's rule, which the priests urged. It was this which Pilate dared not ignore although he knew that it was false.

The choice of Barabbas, the robber, instead of the Lord, the King, is briefly told. And then the mocking of the Lord by the soldiers. Presently the Lord was led forth to the people wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. The words "Behold the man!" were spoken by the Lord Himself as He stood before the angry people. And presently Pilate said, "Behold your King!" The Lord as He stood there with perfect gentleness, perfect self-control, gaining a victory over the very powers of hell that were making the priests and Pilate their tools - He was the true Man and King. We can admire the manliness of self-control; the Lord gives us the perfect example of it; He

was making it possible to us. Do we admire it? Do we choose it? Or do we despise it, and choose to let selfish passion and worldliness have their way - Barabbas and Caesar?

1. Who was Pilate? What was his whole name? What office did he hold? (Luke 3:1.)
2. Why is the Lord called a King? How did He show His kingly power as He stood before Pilate?
3. How did Pilate treat such a king and such a kingdom?
4. How did the soldiers treat such a king?
5. How did the priests and the Jews treat such a king? Whom did they choose to be released? What king did they acknowledge?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

How superficial and empty the sanctity of the priests appears, when they stood before Pilate consumed with hatred for the Lord and with desire to destroy Him, but unwilling to go into the house of a Gentile for fear of some ceremonial defilement. They were, as the Lord described them, dishes clean outside but full of extortion and excess; whitened sepulchres full of all uncleanness. Truly in demanding the Lord's death they were filling up the measure of their fathers who had killed the prophets. (Matthew 23:25-33; E. 939)

The Lord is a King. His words to Pilate (verses 36, 37) help us to understand how He is a King, and what His kingdom within us is. Truth is the kingly element in character. When the Lord's truth is known and faithfully obeyed, His kingdom is established in us, and each one is a king ruling his little province of the kingdom. The Lord is the King because He has all truth, and He ruled His life with absolute faithfulness by the truth. "Thou sayest that I am a king," He said to Pilate. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." The Lord has promised to make us kings and to appoint unto us a kingdom. Do we see what the promise means? (Revelation 1:6; Luke 22:29, 30; T. 114; E. 31)

We may keep this thought of the Lord as King, as the central thought of our lesson. To some, as to Pilate, such a King and kingdom have no meaning: "What is truth?" They appear harmless and meaningless. Others mock and ridicule such kingdoms; and this is pictured in the mockery by the soldiers. The crown of thorns is the mockery of the truth and the purple robe the mockery of the love in the Lord's kingly rule. Others still hate such kingliness and the order and strength of the heavenly kingdom. They choose the spirit of robbery (Barabbas), and the rule of false and worldly standards (Caesar), and reject true manliness, true kingliness, with spiteful hatred. (E. 577; A. 9144; L. 16)

## **Lesson 28**

### **John 19: 16-42: Hate and Love at the Cross**

#### **THE STORY**

In telling the story of the Lord's trial and crucifixion to little children, it is best not to pause in a sad place in the story, but to go through to the gladness of the Easter morning. In pausing where we do in this lesson, give at least a suggestion of the gladness that is coming.

#### **Primary**

If we had followed the Lord from the room of the Last Supper, we should have gone with Him to the garden of Gethsemane. Then we should have followed up into Jerusalem, when Judas and the soldiers with him led the Lord, still in the night, to the high priest's palace. There we should have seen the priests who were enemies of the Lord gathered to decide what charge they could bring to Pilate the governor, asking that the Lord should be crucified. They would say that He claimed to be a King and so was dangerous to the Roman rulers. In the early morning they led the Lord to the house of Pilate the governor. Pilate questioned the Lord and knew that His kingdom was not of this world; he found no fault in Him. As the Lord stood before them, wearing a crown of thorns and a purple robe which the soldiers had put upon him, Pilate said, "Behold your King!" But Pilate feared the priests and weakly yielded to their will. He commanded' that the Lord should be scourged and crucified. Again we follow the Lord, still early Friday morning, through the city street and out by the northern gate of the city to a low rounded hill called Golgotha. There the Lord was crucified, and two thieves were crucified with Him. And Pilate wrote a sign in Hebrew and Greek and Latin, which was fastened to the cross: "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS."

Some of the priests were there who hated the Lord, who objected to the writing and who spoke scornful words. Roman soldiers were there, who stood by as guards and divided among them the Lord's garments, but the inner garment was woven without seam; they cast lots for it and did not tear it. Others were there, who were ready when the Lord said, "I thirst," to fill a sponge with the common sour wine and to put it on a bunch of hyssop and lift it to His mouth. And there were there some of those who loved the Lord: the mother Mary and her sister, and two other Marys, and the disciple John. Read the loving words which the Lord spoke to the mother Mary and John. (Verses 26, 27)

"It is finished," the Lord said, and bowed His head. It was now three o'clock. All trials were over; His work was done; a great peace had come. Before the sunset, when the Sabbath day would begin, two friends, a man named Joseph and Nicodemus, with permission from Pilate, took down the body of the Lord from the cross. They wrapped it in linen clothes, with ointments that Nicodemus brought, and laid it in a new sepulchre cut in the rock, which belonged to Joseph, in a garden near at hand. The sepulchre, like the grave of Lazarus, was closed by a rolling stone. How quickly the great sadness had come to those who loved the Lord! But a glad surprise would meet them when they came to the sepulchre Easter morning.

## **Junior**

The story of the rejection of the Lord of infinite love and mercy by evil men is the saddest of all stories, yet it is not all sadness. It is at the same time the story of His last and greatest victory over the powers of evil. We will remember the story in four scenes. First, in the garden of Gethsemane on the lower slope of the Mount of Olives, where the Lord prayed so earnestly and where Judas and the band of men made the Lord a prisoner. (John 18:1-12) Second, in the high priest's palace in Jerusalem (after a brief stay at the palace of Annas), where the priests in an informal meeting in the night and in a more formal meeting in the early morning decided upon a charge against the Lord which they would present to the governor. Here also Peter, with the servants about the fire, three times denied the Lord. (John 18:13-27) Third, in the morning at Pilate's palace the priests gathered before the door, as they would think themselves defiled by going into the house of a heathen; and the next day was the Sabbath of the Passover week, a very holy day. "Crucify Him," was their angry cry. Pilate went in to question Jesus in the judgment hall, and came out again before the people. He found no fault in the Lord, but he weakly yielded to the priests. The Lord, silent to some of Pilate's questions, calm and self-controlled, conquering the evil spirits who were making the mob their slaves, was the one strong majestic figure. "Behold the man," we believe are the Lord's own words. "Behold your King," are Pilate's words. (John 18:28 to 19:6) Fourth, at the hill Golgotha outside the northern gate. From it one looks upon the city and up to the Mount of Olives. John tells of the title which Pilate wrote in three languages, that it might be read by all.

There was a custom when one was crucified, that a writing should be nailed to the cross above the head telling of the crime for which the man was put to death. What Pilate wrote for the Lord's accusation was, "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." He wrote it in three languages; Hebrew for the Jews to read, Greek for the strangers, and Latin for the Romans. This did not please the chief priests, who wanted him to change it to, "He said I am King of the Jews." But Pilate answered them, "What I have written I have written." So this was the accusation which was placed above His head upon the cross where all could see it.

A guard of four soldiers and an officer, a centurion, was placed at the cross, and to these four soldiers belonged the clothes of the one who was crucified. So the guard divided the Lord's garments between them; but when they came to the inner garment, the long shirt or tunic, they found that it had no seam, but was woven in one piece from the top to the bottom; and not wishing to divide it they cast lots for it. The garment of the Lord seems such a precious thing. While He wore it His power was in it, for as many as touched its hem were made whole of whatsoever disease they had. Find in Psalm 22 mention of the garments, and other incidents of the crucifixion.

Besides His enemies, and the passers-by, and the guard, there was a group of those who most tenderly loved the Lord and who were grieving and sorrowing on account of His suffering, and that He must leave them. There stood by the cross of Jesus, His mother and her sister, and Mary Magdalene, and the disciple whom Jesus loved (the John who wrote this Gospel). When He saw His mother and the disciple He said, "Woman, behold thy son!" and to the disciple, "Behold thy mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

The vinegar which was given to the Lord in His thirst was the common sour wine; the hyssop was a little plant, a stalk or bunch of which was used in raising the sponge to His lips.

"It is finished," the Lord said, and bowed His head. It was now three o'clock. The Jews would have the bodies removed before sunset, when the Sabbath would begin. The breaking of the legs with a heavy mallet was a cruel practice, yet perhaps intended to hasten death. Jesus was already dead, yet a soldier with a spear pierced-His side. More is told us of the two thieves in Luke 23:39-43. As we read verse 35 we remember that John was standing with the mother Mary near the cross.

The enemies of the Lord had done all they could, and now kind friends came and begged his body and took gentle and reverent care of it - Joseph of Arimathaea, and Nicodemus who you remember came to the Lord once by night to ask Him questions. These two men were both among the rulers and had not dared to follow the Lord openly. Now they came to do this last loving service, Joseph bringing fine linen clothes to wrap thee body in, and Nicodemus splices "one hundred pound weight," to be wrapped with the clothes, as was the custom of the Jews. Then they laid the body in a new tomb that Joseph had that was hewn out of the rock in a garden near by.

All this had to be done quickly, for it must be finished by sunset when the Sabbath would begin. A great stone was rolled across the opening of the sepulchre, and as the chief priests were afraid that the body would be stolen away by the Lord's disciples, they sealed the stone, and placed a guard to watch.

1. What words do all the Gospels say were written upon the cross? In what languages was the title written?
2. What was done to the Lord's garments? What has been told before about His garments?
3. What did the Lord say to Mary? What did He say to John? What did John do?
4. In what way did Joseph and Nicodemus show their love for the Lord?
5. What do other Gospels tell about this Joseph? What two things have we already learned about Nicodemus?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

It will help us to realize the victory of the crucifixion to notice the tone of victory in the later verses of Psalm 22 and of Isaiah 53. "He will swallow up death in victory." (Isaiah 25:8) The Lord does not ask our pity, but a deeper appreciation of His saving love and a deeper loyalty to Him.

When we put something in writing, we regard it as fixed and not liable to change. So the Commandments were written on stone to show that they are unchanging laws, and that they ought to be made enduring in the heart and life. When Pilate wrote the title which was fastened upon the cross, it meant that however they might deny it, it was the eternal truth, that Jesus was King. The priests protested, but Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written." "King of the Jews" means spiritually the guide and protector of all states of heavenly love and usefulness, for these are what the Jews represent.

"Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Jesus is the name of love, and nothing brings the Lord's love more near to human needs than the name of Nazareth. He was King, for He lived the truth,

and truth is the kingly element in life. "Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." The title on the cross meant that so men were rejecting the Divine truth and love. (T. 114; E. 31) The writing was in three languages, Hebrew and Greek and Latin, so that all could read it. The appeal is to all, to acknowledge the Lord as King. The appeal to each one is three-fold, to acknowledge Him in affection, in thought, and in life. The ancient, childlike Hebrew is the appeal to the affections, the Greek, the language of philosophers, is the appeal to understanding; and the Latin, the language of Roman soldiers' and rulers, is the appeal to life. Is it still rejected, as by the priests who would have the title changed? (A. 8620, 9416; R. 473)

There were at the cross the soldiers who divided the Lord's garments. They represent those who should have been the Lord's defenders, but who instead perverted and destroyed His truth, for garments represent the expressions, especially the words, which clothe the deeper life.

The parting of the Lord's garments by the soldiers reminds us of other things that have been said about His garments in the Gospels. Mary wrapped the infant Lord in swaddling clothes. The sick were healed as they touched His garment's hem. On the mountain of transfiguration His garments shone with a Divine brightness. Garments do not represent the most interior things of life but the outward things of thought and expression which clothe the deeper and more living things of affection. The Divine thought and words that gave expression to the Lord's love were represented by His garments. They were so simple that children could hear them; they were full of Divine healing for the spiritually sick; they were shining with Divine radiance to angels and to men who had eyes to see it. The whole Word is the Lord's garment. The parting of the garments by the soldiers represented the denial and rending of the Lord's Word by the Jews and by all who fight against Him. Yet there was an inner garment woven without seam, which the soldiers did not rend. So there is in the Lord's words and in all the Scriptures a deeper meaning, continuous throughout, which those who pervert the letter cannot hurt. (A. 4677, 9942)

Another soldier pierced His side and there came forth blood and water. It is a picture of more utter denial of the Lord and more utter destruction of the truth, spiritual and natural, of His Word, represented by the blood and water. (E. 38; R. 26)

The preservation of the bones unbroken may represent the scrupulous care of the Jews to preserve the written Scriptures, and to observe the ceremonies of the law. (A. 8005; E. 329)

The "wine mingled with myrrh" that the Lord would not take, was a stupefying drink given, it is said, to deaden pain. The "vinegar" that He took was probably the sour wine of the soldiers. Good wine represents pure heavenly truth. The wine mingled with myrrh represented the Divine truth as it was falsified and perverted by evil among the Jews. The vinegar represented falsity as it was held by Gentiles who were ignorant but well disposed. With such falsity of ignorance there may be much that is good and acceptable to the Lord. The hyssop was used in cleansing (Psalm 51:7), and its association with the vinegar which the Lord received suggests that with the falsity or imperfect truth there was an effort for repentance and good life. (E. 519)

There was by the cross the group of those who loved the Lord: the mother and the other Marys and the disciple John. The Lord's words to the mother Mary and to John are a beautiful evidence of His self-forgetfulness and His thought for others even in the extremity of His trial. There was also a deeper meaning in this committing of the mother Mary to the care of John. The Lord had

once said, "My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it." (Luke 8:21) They are all those who love and cherish the truth and life which are His and from Him. The mother Mary was a type of all those who form the Lord's church. John we know was a type of love for the Lord, not as a mere sentiment, but love in act. Where this is, the church is and abides. (M. 119; E. 821; N. 122)

What Joseph and Nicodemus did for the body of the Lord expressed the loving remembrance in which they held His life. But more than this, the wrapping of the body with preserving spices represented the truth that the Lord could not die, and the sepulchre meant resurrection.

The ointments and wrappings of the dead were in very ancient days emblems of faith in the eternal life. Myrrh was the lowest of the series of aromatics used in embalming, and expresses faith that not only higher qualities but even the lowest qualities of life are preserved for the life of heaven. In the anointing of the Lord the aloes and myrrh expressed the faith that the lowest elements of life in Him were glorified, were made Divine. (A. 10252)

How much meaning there is in the words, "It is finished," as the Lord spoke them on the cross! Not only the trial of that day, but all the conflicts with evil, and all the saving work which He came into the world to do, were ended. It is restful to feel that a day's work is done. A greater peace comes at the close of earthly life. What Divine peace was with the Lord when He could say, "It is finished," "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit!"

## Lesson 29

### John 20: 1-18: Early at the Sepulchre

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Easter Day! The Lord is risen indeed! All those who loved the Lord were sad on the Friday evening when the Lord had been crucified by His enemies, and His body had been laid in the sepulchre, with a great stone rolled to the door. Sunday was a day of glad surprise for the disciples and the loving women. One was saying to another, "The Lord is risen," "The Lord is risen indeed." But they were slow to believe it; only gradually they believed and knew that it was so.

Mary Magdalene was one of the women who came early to the sepulchre, and found the stone rolled away. Without waiting to learn more she ran to Peter and John, and said, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him." The two disciples ran to the sepulchre. (Some of you have the picture of them running, John the younger man running faster than the older Peter.) The sepulchre was open, and when they went in and saw the linen clothes lying on the floor, John saw the meaning, the Lord had risen.

Mary stayed by the sepulchre weeping. Looking in she saw two angels sitting. They spoke kindly to her and asked, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Then the still greater surprise, when Jesus Himself stood near her and spoke to her. At first she thought He was the gardener (the sepulchre

was in a garden), and she did not know Him until He spoke her name, "Mar "; and she said, "My Master." She was the first to see the risen Lord.

## Junior

"Grandest day of all the ages! Easter Day!" Easter Day, like Christmas, is a happy and holy day. Our Easter songs are full of gladness. What makes it happy? On that day early the Lord rose from the sepulchre, and that day sadness was turned into joy for the disciples as they learned that the Lord still lived, and was still with them, to love them and help them as before. On that day all the sufferings of the Lord's earthly life were over. The great work for mankind was finished with absolute perfection, and He arose from the sepulchre with a Divinely human body, and a Divinely human nature to which all people forever can come for Divinely human help in their trouble. The hasty burial had been on Friday afternoon. He had lain in the grave over the Jewish Sabbath, our Saturday, and with His rising on the Sunday morning, the Christian Church was born. The Lord had told them that He would be killed and would rise again, but they had not understood or remembered His words. (Matthew 16:21; 17:23; Mark 9:10) They were not expecting His resurrection, and were very slow to believe those who first saw Him and brought them the glad news. (Mark 16:9-14) The dawning and brightening of Easter joy is told in our chapter. Consider it in five scenes.

First, Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, when it was yet dark. What do we know of Mary besides the fact that she was of Magdala? (Mark 16:9; John 19:25) The verse in Mark seems to connect the deliverance of Mary by the Lord with the fact that she was the first to see Him. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Second, the visit of Peter and John to the sepulchre. There were the clothes collapsed upon the floor, not as if hands had touched them, but as if the body had simply left them. John's love and reverence for the Lord made him perhaps more slow to enter, but made him more quick to perceive and believe that the Lord was risen.

Third, Mary Magdalene again at the sepulchre. The two angels at the head and feet remind us that holy angels are with all who die protecting them and preparing them for the awakening. (H. 449) "Why wepest thou?" Her thoughts were still with the body, thinking of the Lord as dead. She must learn to know the risen Lord. The two disciples whom the Lord joined in the walk to Emmaus did not know Him until they recognized Him in the breaking of bread. (Luke 24:16, 31) Mary knew Him as He spoke her name.

1. Who were with Mary Magdalene when she came early to the sepulchre? Why were they coming?
2. What two disciples came to the sepulchre? Which first reached the place? Which first went in? Which first believed?
3. Who stood weeping by the sepulchre when others had gone away? What did she see and hear?
4. Who was the first to see the risen Lord? What did the Lord send her to do?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

It was spiritually as well as naturally the first day of the week when the women came to the sepulchre and learned that the Lord was risen. It marked the beginning of, a new state of thought and feeling for them and for the church. Note the words applied to their coming: "When it was yet dark"; "at the rising of the sun." (Mark 16:2; A. 2405,10114; E. 179)

A stone, spiritually, is an unchanging truth, a fact, or what is believed to be a fact and asserted as a fact. Peter's declaration, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," the Lord said was the stone on which His church would be built. A rocky sepulchre and a great stone at the door, making safe the body's resting place, may have stood to the wise ancients for the sure truth of eternal life.

The stone seems at first to represent the fact of death, which seems sometimes an inexorable fact. Sealed by the priests it represents determination of evil hearts that the Lord shall be dead and shall remain so. How differently death appeared to the Easter angels. They accepted the fact of death, but they dispelled its sadness. To them it meant resurrection and for the Lord life all Divine. A stone is rolled to the door of the sepulchre when in any natural disappointment there comes disbelief and denial of the Lord's loving presence and care. The stone is rolled away by angel hands when the heavenly truth is received of His continued care and love. (R. 339, 900)

The women first at the sepulchre represent tender, grateful affections for the Lord, which open our minds to perceive His living presence. The running of John and Peter to the sepulchre pictures the awakening of other powers of the mind to the reality of the Lord's presence, or to His presence in a new and higher way after the disappointment of natural hopes. John has stood to us as a type of love for the Lord, and Peter of faith in Him. This pictures a further awakening of love and faith, of will and understanding. Love is more quickly awakened. The women were first at the sepulchre. John outran Peter and was also the first to perceive the meaning of the empty tomb and grave clothes and to believe that the Lord was risen. Peter's going first into the sepulchre suggests investigation by the understanding, and its aid to the perception of a loving heart. (R. 879; E. 9)

The linen clothes in which the dead were wrapped with spices we may think of in a general way as representing the thoughts and beliefs concerning those who had gone. Sometimes they were dark thoughts in which was little hope of resurrection. Such thoughts were like the grave clothes which held Lazarus bound, until the Lord bade them to loose them. The clothes in which they wrapped the body of the Lord represented in the minds of Joseph and Nicodemus loving thoughts but containing little hope. In the presence of the Easter angels, the stone was rolled back from the door, denial and disbelief giving place to the glad certainty of resurrection. In their presence also the grave clothes were loosed and became emblems of bright thoughts of the Lord's glorified and eternal presence.

In reading of Joseph and Nicodemus in our last lesson we learned that with very ancient people the wrappings and ointments of the dead were expressions of faith in the immortal life, and as applied to the Lord faith that He lived glorified and Divine. They spoke this message now to John. No less true, less glorious thought could stand. (A. 10252)

The account of Mary's change from weeping by the empty tomb to joyful recognition of the risen Lord is most beautiful, and it is representative of such changes with us all. The inquiry of the angels and of the Lord, "Woman, why weepest thou?" suggests their tender sympathy and their desire that we shall see the cause of our sorrow, as a help in removing it. (Compare the Lord's questions to some before He healed them, John 5:6; Mark 10:51.) The Lord's question was more searching than the angels', and He knows our hearts more thoroughly than they. It is twice said that Mary turned herself, first to see the Lord as a gardener, and again to recognize Him as her dear Lord and Master. The turning represented the turning of her mind. The first turning to see the Lord as the gardener represents the opening of the mind to instruction. For the trees and plants of a garden represent intelligence of beautiful kinds, and the Lord is the gardener when we are teachable and let Him guide our thought. The second turning of Mary when the Lord spoke her name represents the full sense of His living presence. Compare in the Revelation John's turning to see the Lord. (Revelation 1:12; R. 90; T. 467)

What did the Lord mean by ascending to the Father? (E. 899)

## **Lesson 30**

### **John 20: 19-31: With the Disciples at Jerusalem**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The same Easter Day in the evening the disciples were together in Jerusalem, with doors shut for fear of the Jews, and Jesus stood in the midst of them. "Peace be unto you," He said; and He breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

But Thomas, one of the disciples, was not with the rest that Easter evening, and it was not until the next Sunday evening that Thomas was made sure. Then the disciples again were together and Thomas with them; again the Lord stood in the midst and said, "Peace be unto you." Thomas was made sure and said, "My Lord and my God." The word spread among all those who loved the Lord, "The Lord is risen indeed."

##### **Junior**

In our last lesson we considered three of the five scenes of Easter happiness. Now we consider the fourth and fifth events.

Fourth, with the disciples gathered in the room Easter evening. "Peace be unto you," was the usual greeting, but with what fuller meaning when spoken by the Lord. One of the last things He had said to them was, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you," and, "These things I have spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace." (John 14:27; 16:33) The wounds in the hands and side helped the disciples to be sure that it was really the Lord. Breathing on the disciples was a sign that His influence would be with them and give them power in their own lives and in the

lives of others. The Lord's promises were fulfilled, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you"; "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice." (John 14:18; 16:22) But Thomas was not with the other disciples when the Lord came to them. They told him, but he could not believe.

Fifth, a week later in Jerusalem when Thomas was with them. The Lord was patient with their slowness to believe, and made even Thomas sure. He made it the occasion of a lesson to us all who do not see the Lord in outward form as the disciples did, that we do not need to see Him, that we can feel His comfort and His help in inner ways still more real and sure.

1. What appearances of the Lord on Easter Day do you remember?
2. Where did the Lord come to a number of the disciples together? What was their first feeling when they saw Him?
3. What did the Lord say, and what did He do, to change their fear to joy?
4. Which disciple was not with them when the Lord came? How was he afterwards convinced?
5. Are all the things that the Lord did recorded in John's Gospel, or in all the Gospels? All that we need to know?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The great lesson of Easter Day for the disciples and for us was that the Lord still lived and still was with them. His presence after His resurrection was different from what it had been before, but it was no less real. You see that it was different, for the Lord now came to them "the doors being shut," and He vanished out of their sight." (Luke 24:31) In His glorification He had cast off the limitations of material things. Those who saw Him, saw Him now with spiritual sight. "His body was now no longer a material, but a Divine-substantial body." (L. 35; T. 793)

The Lord could not explain to the disciples the change which was taking place, for they could not have understood it; but by words and proofs He made them sure that He was really with them. The Lord is more fully with us than our friends who die. For they leave the natural plane of life and enter into the spiritual life; but the Lord did not leave the natural plane of life. He glorified it, He cast off its limitations and made it Divine. This was the meaning of His saying to the apostles, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." (Luke 24:39) This is why He is called in the Revelation, "the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." (Revelation 22: 13) By the glorification of His human nature, even to His flesh and bones the Lord is with men in the natural life of this world as fully as He is with angels of heaven. "All power is given unto Me," He said, "in heaven and in earth." (Matthew 28:18; A. 5078; H. 316)

Those who wish to give deeper study to the subject of the Lord's resurrection should read carefully the references given above. We quote also a few other sentences of special interest.

"The Lord was conceived from Jehovah; . . . and therefore He could glorify the whole body, so that even that part of the body which is rejected by those who are born of human parents, and

putrefies, in Him was glorified and made Divine from the Divine in Himself; and with this He rose, leaving nothing in the sepulchre, differently from any man." (J. post. 129)

"In the sepulchre, thus by death, the Lord rejected and dissipated all the human from the mother, by which He endured temptations and the passion of the cross, since that could not be conjoined with the Divine itself, and thus He put on a Human from the Father; thus the Lord rose with His Human fully and entirely glorified." (De Domino post. p. 42)

"With man the prior forms are not destroyed, but are removed; but with the Lord the prior forms, which were from the maternal, were altogether destroyed and extirpated, and Divine forms received in their place; for the Divine love does not agree with any but a Divine form; all other forms it absolutely casts out; hence it is that the Lord, when glorified, was no longer the son of Mary." (A. 6872)

"The Lord's body itself also, when glorified, that is, when it was made Divine, is nothing else [but the Divine love]." (A. 6135)

The signs which gave the disciples a general proof of the Lord's presence, when understood more deeply contain particular instruction in regard to His presence. He showed them His hands and feet, for the hands and feet represent the natural plane of life in which He is still present with us. The words, "Handle Me and see," are an invitation to make practical proof of the Lord's presence by depending upon Him in our own natural life. The wounds in the Lord's hands and side may suggest His sympathy with our natural trials; His eating of the fish and honeycomb suggests His participation in our natural knowledge and delight. (E. 513, 619)

"Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." The knowledge of the Lord which is possible to us may be as satisfying as the knowledge which they had who knew the Lord on earth. It may even be surer and more satisfying. Miracles and outward revelations would not help us. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." (Luke 16:31; A. 7290; E. 1156)

We have found that the Gospel of John is by no means a complete record of the events of the Lord's life. It supplements rather than repeats what is told in the other Gospels. It reveals more than other Gospels of the Lord's love. The last two verses of this chapter express the special purpose of this Gospel of John.

## **Lesson 31**

### **John 21: 1-14: At the Sea of Galilee**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We go back to the Sea of Galilee, the beautiful little lake among the hills, where the Lord had been so much with the disciples. Some of the disciples were fishermen, and others had lived near by. Capernaum was by the lake, where the Lord made His home after leaving Nazareth. How many

sick people He had healed in and near Capernaum! How often He had walked along the shore and taught the people! He had sailed with the disciples in their fishing boat and had quieted the storms. He had gone with them sometimes to the eastern shore, once to cast out devils and again to feed the multitude.

A little party of the disciples, lonely for the Lord, had come back to the Sea of Galilee where they had been so much with Him. There were seven of them; Peter and Thomas and Nathaniel, James and John, and two others. Peter said, "I go a fishing," and they went out for a night of fishing on the lake. All night they caught nothing. But we must read what happened in the morning. (Verses 4-14) It was another glad surprise. The Lord had told the disciples that He would meet them in Galilee. He met a large company of them in a mountain which He appointed, and He came also to these lonely men by the Sea of Galilee.

## **Junior**

Do you remember the beautiful Sea of Galilee, with its mountains and hills sloping down to its shores, and the lovely fertile plain on the northwest? There were the many little fishing boats on the sea, and many people coming and going, for the cities near the sea were busy places in those days. Many of the disciples had their homes near the Sea of Galilee. You remember that Andrew and Peter were casting their net into the sea when the Lord called them to follow Him and become fishers of men; and that James and John were in a boat mending their nets when the Lord called them to be His disciples.

The Lord and His disciples at times entered into a boat and went to the other side to find rest. For you know much of His work was done near Capernaum. Twice you know they were on the sea when great storms arose. Once the Lord was in the back part of the boat asleep, and when they awoke Him He bade the wind and the waves be still. The other time He came to them walking in the sea, and when He went up into the boat not only did the storm cease, but the boat was at the land where they would go.

Another time when the multitude thronged Him, the Lord entered a boat, and pushing out a little way from the shore He taught the people. You remember the time when He sent Peter to catch the first fish that came up, and in its mouth Peter found a shekel, the tribute money for himself and the Lord.

These things and many more the Gospels tell us of the life of the Lord and His disciples on and near the Sea of Galilee.

The Lord, after He was risen, appeared several times, sometimes to many of His followers and sometimes to one or to a few, during forty days before He ascended from their sight. One very lovely meeting with seven disciples was by the Sea of Galilee, all the more lovely for being in this familiar place where the Lord had been so much with them. Do you remember the five disciples who are named? Read the story through the 14th verse. "The third time" probably refers to the two times that the Lord had come to the company of disciples gathered in the room in Jerusalem.

How many memories of days spent with the Lord, of His miracles and of His teaching, must have come to the disciples' minds in this familiar place! Also the Lord's command to let down the net and the miracle of the many fishes must have reminded them of the day when the Lord first called

some of them from their nets to be disciples. Read Luke 5:1-11, and see how nearly alike the two incidents are. Do you notice any differences? The filling of the net for the disciples by the Lord on the day that He called them to be fishers of men was a sign of His power which would be with them in their ministry; and now when He gave the same sign after the resurrection, was it not a sign and promise that the same power of the Lord would be with them as they went out on their larger ministry?

Let us make as perfect a picture as we can in our minds of this scene, the last scene that John gives us in his Gospel. The place so dear to them all, so full of precious memories: the waves lapping the pebbly beach, the beloved mountains across the little sea outlining themselves against the morning sky, and all enveloped in the charm of the early dawn, with the sweet familiar sounds of the awakening world. Here the Lord met His loving disciples for almost the last time on earth. The same gentle Friend, and yet so changed, come back to them for the moment, and they partaking of His simple meal listened and wondered.

1. "The sea of Tiberias." What sea is meant? Where does it get this name?
2. "The sons of Zebedee." What were their names? Where had the Lord first called them to be disciples?
3. When was there a similar miracle of fishes? What points of likeness and of difference do you notice between the two events?
4. At what other times since His resurrection had the Lord been seen, when He was not at first known? What in each case made Him known?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The "third time" in verse 14, no doubt has reference to the two times already described by John, when the Lord had come to the disciples in Jerusalem. (John 20:19, 26) It had been promised that He would also go before them into Galilee. (Matthew 26:32; 28:7, 10) Besides this meeting by the Sea of Galilee, we are told in Matthew of a meeting in an appointed mountain. (Matthew 28:16-18; see also 1 Corinthians 15:6, 7) There is special interest in the coming to the disciples in Galilee, when we remember that the districts of the Holy Land have relation to the several departments of a heavenly life, Judea to its interior affection, and Galilee to its outward thought and conduct. The coming to them in Jerusalem gave assurance that the Lord would be with them still in states of heavenly affection and worship; the coming to them in Galilee gave assurance that He would be with them in the labors of daily life. He came to them in the old familiar place, by the shore where they had so often walked with Him. He would still be with them, as He had been, the same faithful Friend. (A. 6516; E. 439, 447)

The coming to the disciples as they were fishing reminds us of their first call from their nets. The miracles of the fishes on the two occasions are very similar. (Luke 5:1-11) Their occupation as fishermen represented the higher work to which the disciples were called. The sea represents the atmosphere of natural thought and life. Catching fish for food is like applying natural truth to the needs of spiritual life. It is also like lifting men up from natural to spiritual states. Toiling all night

and catching nothing pictures the ineffectiveness of effort for heavenly life, or of efforts to lead others into heavenly life, made in our own strength without the Lord. The miraculous draught of fishes was a promise of the great power to teach and uplift men, which the disciples would have from the Lord. The miracle was repeated: at the beginning of their discipleship and after the Lord's resurrection. The same power which had made their work effective when the Lord was outwardly with them would be with them now from His inward presence. The net of the spiritual fishermen is the doctrine and instruction by which they uplift. Casting the net on the right side of the ship is teaching with charity, and for the sake of charity. The net in the earlier miracle began to break, in the second miracle it was not broken; suggesting a stronger grasp of truth by the disciples and more effective teaching after the Lord's resurrection than before. (E. 513; R. 405) May it have been partly that they realized now more fully that the Lord's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, not an earthly kingdom? While the thought of an earthly kingdom lingered it surely was a weakness in their net. (E. 513; R. 405)

That night they caught nothing, but in the morning Jesus stood on the shore. To be without the Lord is spiritual night; His coming is spiritual morning. (A. 10134)

John was the first to perceive, and told Peter that it was the Lord. So at the sepulchre John had been the first to perceive that the Lord was risen. Do you see the reason, remembering the elements of character for which these disciples stand? We shall think more about John and Peter in our next lesson.

"Come and dine." Eating with the Lord represents the strengthening of the soul by the reception of truth and goodness from Him. The disciples would still receive from the risen Lord their daily life and strength. The fish and the bread which they saw laid upon the coals, like the loaves and fishes with which the multitudes were fed, represent the truth and goodness which the Lord desires to give. The fire of coals represents the Divine love in which He imparts these gifts of life. The disciples were bidden to bring of the fish that they had caught. It suggests that it is partly through the Lord's blessing upon our own efforts that the heavenly satisfaction and strength are given. (E. 513; A. 7852)

## Lesson 32

### John 21: 15-25: "Lovest Thou Me?"

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

The disciples were just finishing their meal when we left them last week. Can you tell where they were? And when it was? And who they were who had their meal together? And what it was they had to eat?

We will read the rest of the chapter from verse 15. The Lord asked Peter three times: "Lovest thou Me?" Peter twice answered very earnestly: "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee," and then with still greater feeling, "Lord Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee"; and the Lord said, "Feed My lambs. Feed My sheep." The Lord also spoke loving words to John. Both Peter

and John, as long as they lived, and John lived to be very old, must have remembered the Lord's coming to them on the shore and what He said to them.

## **Junior**

After they had finished eating the Lord spoke to Simon Peter and asked him if he loved Him more than these, probably meaning more than the other disciples loved Him.. Three times He asked Peter if he loved Him, and when he answered earnestly, the Lord three times charged him to feed His lambs or His sheep. As you read the three earnest professions of love, you remember how once Peter had three times denied Him.

The Lord then said, "Follow Me," and John followed, apparently knowing that the call was to him. The Lord then spoke words of prophecy about John, which no one understood, not even John himself. "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

The words to Peter and John look forward to their faithful service in the church. You will be interested to read in the Bible Dictionary, or some other good authority, what is known of the later life of these two apostles. Peter was a leader among those who preached the new Christian faith, laboring in and about Jerusalem, afterwards in Antioch and neighboring towns of Syria, and finally at Rome. John labored at first with the apostles at Jerusalem, and afterwards became leader of the church in Ephesus in Asia Minor. The beloved disciple lived to be very old, outliving his fellow-disciples, and the saying went abroad that he should not die. It seems to be one purpose of this last chapter, a sort of postscript to the Gospel, to tell exactly what the Lord did say: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" The last verse of the chapter is a way of saying that the Lord's life was Divine and contained more than could possibly be told or written.

1. At the meeting on the shore of Galilee, what question did the Lord ask Peter? How many times?
2. What charge did He give to Peter?
3. What did the Lord say that gave rise to the belief that John should not die? Exactly what were His words?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

A deeper meaning opens to us in the Lord's words to Peter and John, and in the predictions concerning them, when we remember that each of the apostles stands for some element of character in the church and in every Christian. Peter, with his confession, "Thou art the Christ," stands for a firm faith in the Lord. His name "Peter" means a rock, the type of eternal truth. But truth is useful only when it is obeyed and so becomes the guide and protector of good life. Verses 15-17 teach this lesson. The Lord did not use the name "Peter," but "Simon, son of Jonas" Simon and Simeon are from a word meaning "hearing and obedience." Jonas and Jonah mean "a dove." When the Lord addressed Peter by this name, it meant that He was about to speak of faith as it is obeyed and joined with innocence. This is still more plain from the question three times repeated, "Lovest thou Me?" and from the charge to feed the Lord's lambs and sheep. The question is asked

three times to show that the examination of faith must be thorough on every plane and degree of life; to be sure that faith everywhere and always is joined with goodness. The lambs are types of innocence; the sheep are types of charity, both that which is from love and that which is from knowledge of what is good. (A. 10087; E. 820)

The saying to Peter, "When thou wast young, but when thou shalt be old," applies also to faith in the Christian Church. With the apostles and in the early days of the church faith was free and strong, but by and by it would be perverted until it was almost destroyed. But a new and stronger faith would follow.

Afterwards the Lord spoke of John, and he represents the tender love for the Lord which proves itself in devoted life. "If I will that he tarry till I come," meant that something of that love for the Lord which John represented would endure through times of little faith, until the Lord should give again new life to the church.

The Lord's words to Peter and John were more than a prediction in regard to their personal service in the church. They were a prediction in regard to the faith and love which Peter and John represented. Faith had a beautiful beginning, but it would suffer violence in the intellectual dissensions of the church. The love and charity represented by John would in some form endure until the time when the Lord would be more fully and truly known. Even John did not undertake to say what the Lord meant by His words, "If I will that he tarry till I come," but we can now see in them this larger prediction for the church. Remember how the Lord had already committed the mother Mary, who represents the church, to the keeping of the apostle John. Compare also the saying in Matthew 16:28, "There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom." Such words were spoken of the elements of Christian character which the apostles represented. (E. 8, 821)

The last verse of the chapter bears witness to the infinity of the Lord's life and works. The days and years of His life with men were full of works of mercy and service. Mark says of one day that "there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." (6:31) And in the same chapter (verses 54-56) he tells how the people ran through the whole region, carrying the sick in beds, and laying them in the streets for healing. Peter told the story of the Lord's life in the sentence, He "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil." (Acts 10:38) Still it could not have been merely the number of the Lord's works, which impressed the disciples, but the sense of unlimited power in what He did, of exhaustless wisdom in His words. Remember the testimony of the woman at Jacob's well: "He told me all that ever I did." (John 4:29, 39) How true it was that the world could not and did not contain the things that Jesus did. They all were works which reached in their power and effect to all heavens and beyond all heavens, for they were Divine.

## REVIEW

Let me turn over the chapters that we have studied and read you a sentence here and there, and see if you can tell me where the sentence comes in the story; who spoke the words; when they were spoken; who heard them. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Who said this? Of whom was he speaking? "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." To whom was this said? When and where? Who said it? "My meat is to do the

will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." You know who said it, but who knows when it was, and where? "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." Who was it who had been lying helpless a long time, and who heard these words and was made whole on a Sabbath day? "Make the men sit down." Who said it? How many men? What were they seated for? "I go not up yet unto the feast; for My time is not yet full come." What feast? Where was it kept and when? To whom was this said? "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." Who said it? How had his eyes been opened? "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." What beautiful lesson is this a part of? "I am the resurrection, and the life." Who said it? To whom was it said? What had happened? And what was about to happen? "The poor always ye have with you; but Me ye have not always." When was this said, and why? "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." What was the example? Where were the Lord and the disciples at the time? "In My Father's house are many mansions." Who was speaking these words of comfort? When was it? What was the need of comfort? "Without Me ye can do nothing." Without the Lord what are we like? "What is truth?" Who asked the question? "Woman, why weepest thou?" Who was the woman? Who asked it? I hear two answers. Who asked it first? Who afterwards? What other question the second time? "My Lord and my God." Who said it? When? "Lovest thou Me?" Who asked it? To whom was He speaking? Was the question asked once? twice? How many times?

## **Lesson 33**

### **Acts 1; 2:1-18, 41-47: Ascension: The Holy Spirit at Pentecost**

**Study in connection with Mark 16:14-20, and Luke 24:50-53**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

You can tell the story of the first Easter Day, about the women who went early to the sepulchre with spices and ointments which they had made ready, and the angel from heaven who, rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre and told the women that the Lord was risen. Who can tell me whether any of the women or of the disciples saw the Lord on Easter Day, or on other days after He was risen? Yes, they saw Him, by the sepulchre, in Jerusalem, and in Galilee. During forty days after the Lord arose they saw Him many times, until they were sure that He was alive and with them still.

At last one day the Lord came to the disciples at Jerusalem, and talking with them He led them out of the city and across the valley to the Mount of Olives and to Bethany. How often He had gone with them over this same path! And had they been with Him at Bethany before? Who lived there whom the Lord loved? Now on the Mount of Olives, near Bethany, the Lord blessed the disciples and ascended from their sight. The story is told in a very few verses in the Gospels. Let us read them. (Luke 24:50-53; Mark 16:19)

Would you like to hear more about this last meeting of the Lord with the disciples? The same Luke who wrote one of the Gospels wrote another book called The Acts of the Apostles. In the beginning of this book he tells more about this last meeting. The Lord talked with the disciples

and promised them that the Holy Spirit would come to them and give them power to do His work. "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight." Then two angels talked with the disciples, and they came back from the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem. Let me read you this from the Acts. (Acts 1:4-12)

Soon after this the promise was fulfilled. The Holy Spirit came to the disciples with wonderful power. It was at the time of Pentecost, a feast which the Jews kept fifty days after the Passover. The disciples were together in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit from the Lord came with "a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." Then the disciples began to speak "with other tongues." There were there at Jerusalem people from many different nations, and as they listened to the disciples each one heard his own language. It was a part of the new power which the Holy Spirit had brought to them. Let me read you about the day of Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:1-13)

## **Junior**

In our lesson today and in several following lessons we shall read some verses from the Gospels and some from the book called The Acts of the Apostles. The Acts and the Epistles are not books of the Lord's Word; they do not have the continuous spiritual meaning which the books of the Word have; but they are most useful books of Christian teaching, and are especially precious as being the account of the ministry of those who had been with the Lord, and of others who learned directly from the Lord's disciples.

The Acts is believed to be written by Luke, the same who wrote the Gospel. He writes both to a friend whom he calls Theophilus, "lover of God." Compare the first verse of Acts with the first verses of Luke's Gospel. Luke is mentioned in the Epistles as a companion of Paul. (Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11) In one of these passages you find him called "the beloved physician." In the Acts he often says "we," having been himself one of the party. The book of Acts, as its name implies, tells of the acts or doings of the apostles and the first followers of the Lord. In Acts 1:8 the Lord tells the disciples what their work will be; to be witnesses unto Him, "both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." This was exactly the order in which their work developed, and the order in which the story is told in the book of Acts.

There are three parts of our lesson today: two great events, the ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, of which I have spoken to the younger children; and one other thing, the choice of one to take the place of Judas.

You read of the Lord's ascension in Mark 16:20, Luke 24:50-53, and Acts 1:1-14. How long was it now after the Easter Day? (Acts 1:3) Where was the Lord with the disciples when He ascended from their sight? (Luke 24:50, Acts 1: 12) You see how the disciples were still expecting that the Lord would establish a great earthly kingdom (Acts 1:6), and how gently He told them that they could not yet understand the kingdom that He was establishing. (Acts 1:7) Describe to me as well as you can what the disciples saw as the Lord ascended from their sight. And what were they told by the two men in white clothing? You can see that all this was an outward picture of the fact that the Lord was now too Divine for the disciples to see Him any more. That He sat on the right hand of God, means that He now had all Divine power. The cloud which received Him out of their sight was like their own obscure thoughts, as their thought about the earthly kingdom, which hid the

Lord from them. And when they should learn the real meaning of His kingdom and of other things told in the letter of the Word, it would be an opening of the cloud and a coming of the Lord again. This was what the two angels meant.

Read the list of the apostles in Acts 1: 13, and compare it with the list in Matthew 10: 2-4. Compare what is said of Judas in Acts 1:18 with Matthew 27:5-8. Read now how another was chosen to take Judas' place. It reminds you of the dividing of the land of Canaan among the tribes, and of the choosing of Saul as king, when the Lord guided the lot. What was the name of the one chosen in Judas' place?

Now the third part of our story, in Acts 2:1-13. The Lord had told the disciples that He would send the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit to be with them and comfort them. (John 14:16-18, 26) The promise was renewed on the last time that the Lord was with them, at His ascension. (Acts 1:5, 8) A few days later the promise was fulfilled in a wonderful way.

Do you know the meaning of the word "Pentecost," and do you know other names by which the same feast was called? Does the sound of a rushing, mighty wind seem at all like the sign which the Lord used at another time when He said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit"? (John 20:22) Had the speaking with other tongues been promised? (Mark 16:17) It was a token of the power which the Lord gave the disciples to speak His new message to all kinds of people. As you read the list of countries in verses 9-11, can you place them on the map? Later on in this book of Acts we shall go to many of these countries with the apostles. (Read Acts 2:41-47.)

1. How are books of the Word distinguished from books not of the Word? Is the Acts a book of the Word?
2. When was the ascension? Where?
3. Who was chosen in Judas' place? How was he chosen?
4. What and when was Pentecost? What came to the apostles at Pentecost?

## DEEPER STUDY

### Intermediate

"The books of the Word are all those which have an internal sense, but they which have not, are not the Word." (A. 10325) A list of the books of the Word then follows, those of the New Testament being "the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; and the Apocalypse." Swedenborg's friend, Dr. Beyer, asked him in a letter in regard to the writings of the apostles, and he replied: "In respect to the writings of the apostles and Paul, I have not quoted them in the Arcana Coelestia, because they are doctrinal writings, and consequently are not written in the style of the Word, like those of the prophets, of David, of the evangelists and the Book of Revelation. The style of the Word consists altogether of correspondences, wherefore it is effective of immediate communication with heaven; but in doctrinal writings there is a different style, which has indeed communication with heaven, but mediately. They were written thus by the apostles, that the new Christian Church might be commenced through them; wherefore matters of doctrine could not be written in the style of the Word, but they had to be expressed in such a

manner as to be understood more clearly and immediately. The writings of the apostles are, nevertheless, good books for the church, insisting upon the doctrine of charity and its faith as strongly as the Lord Himself has done in the Gospels and the Book of Revelation...." (Documents 224) In reading the Acts we shall remember this distinction between it and the Gospels. We shall value it for its simple narrative of the first Christian workers, and for its teaching of Christian doctrine. Also, while books not of the Word do not have the continuous spiritual meaning, there are in some of them, as in Job and the Proverbs, many examples of the use of correspondences by the wise ancients, which are frequently quoted by Swedenborg. There are also events recorded in the Acts, like the ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit in our present lesson, and the miracles done by the apostles, which are representative of spiritual things.

What spiritual fact in regard to the Lord's relation to the disciples is represented by His ascending from their sight? The Lord used the same word in His saying to Mary Easter morning: "I ascend to My Father and your Father; and to My God, and your God." (John 20:17) It meant that as His union with the Divine became full and complete He passed beyond their natural sight and literal finite understanding. What is meant by the saying in Mark 16:19, that He sat on the right hand of God? Compare Matthew 28:18. There is a beautiful meaning in the place of the ascension. The Mount of Olives has been associated with some of the most tender expressions of the Lord's love, and Bethany with some of the most receptive states in simple, loving hearts. It seems to say that in the loving states represented by Bethany on the Mount of Olives we come as near as we in this world can come to the Divine and to heaven. (E. 638, 899; A. 9780)

A cloud represents literal and obscure thought in regard to Divine and heavenly things. Remember the dark cloud at Sinai and the bright cloud on the Mount of Transfiguration. Plainly the cloud at the ascension represents the literal and obscure thought in the disciples' minds, which prevented their better understanding the Lord and His kingdom. This also helps us to understand the words of the two angels and the Lord's own predictions in regard to His coming again in the clouds of heaven. (Matthew 24:30; 26:64) The clouds in which He comes are the clouds of the letter of the Word. He comes as the letter is opened, and the inner meaning seen, which explains how He is with us in this world forever as truly as when He walked with men. This opening of the letter of the Word and the revealing of its inner meaning has been accomplished by the Lord through Swedenborg. It is an essential part of His second coming. (R. 642, 820; T. 779)

That the Holy Spirit is the Lord's own personal influence He made very plain in John 14:16-18, 26, and in John 20:22. In the place last referred to, as in our lesson, the Spirit is represented by a breath or wind. Remember the Lord's words to Nicodemus, in which the influence of the Lord and heaven is likened to the wind, and also the Lord's rebuking of the stormy wind, where it represents the influence of hell. The fire which rested on the disciples represented a new love and zeal for the Lord's truth. New tongues (predicted also in Mark 16:17) represented new power to acknowledge and to teach the truth about the Lord and Christian life. The Lord would give them power to speak it not only to all nations, but to all sorts and conditions of men. (T. 146; E. 455) that whoever receives the power from the Lord, also receives pleasures that last forever.

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Ascension. Pentecost

Forty days after the Lord's resurrection from the tomb, He ascended to heaven in the presence of His disciples, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. We read in Mark, that He then "sat on the right hand of the Father." This is a figure of speech, and does not imply that the Lord Jesus Christ was a different Divine person from God the Father, but it means that He now possessed in His Divine Human all Divine power. We often read about the "right hand" and it always means the granting of power. "At Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore," does not mean that there are none on the left hand of the Lord, but that whoever receives the power from the Lord, also receives pleasures that last forever.

The cloud receiving the Lord out of the sight of the apostles reminds us of the Lord's prophecy that He will "come in the clouds of heaven." "Clouds" mean Divine truths that are not very clear to us, like the truths of the letter of the Word. The apostles were not yet advanced far enough to understand and retain all that the Lord had taught them, but they understood most things literally. They did not therefore clearly see the Lord, who is Divine Truth Itself, but to them He was covered with a cloud. But now that the Lord has made His second coming "in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory," we are able to understand the Word, and so can also see the Lord more clearly, that is, we can understand His Divine-Human mind, for this is what He reveals to us in the Writings.

You will doubtless wonder what the Lord did during the forty days between His resurrection and His ascension. We learned from the last chapters of the Gospels of some of the things that He did. He appeared several times to His disciples and taught them. But most of the time, no doubt, He was hidden from them; that is, the eyes of their spirits were kept closed, so that they could not see Him.

What was He doing? He was doing a great work in the spiritual world.

Remember that the Lord came to set free the many people who were kept in "the lower earth" of the spiritual world, where they had been troubled, or infested, by evil spirits for a long, long time.

(If you are interested in knowing where in the Word the lower earth is spoken of you will find the passages quoted in A. 4728, 7090.)

The lower earth is meant by "the graves that were opened, and many bodies of the saints that slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." He delivered, or redeemed, or freed them when He arose. But before they could enter heaven they had first to undergo temptations. Now you know that the Lord, after His baptism, was tempted forty days in the wilderness. You also remember that the children of Israel wandered forty years in the wilderness before they entered the promised land of Canaan. So, no doubt, the forty days between the resurrection of the Lord and His ascension were spent in temptations by those who were of the spiritual church and whom He redeemed. He freed them when He arose, just as the children of Israel were freed from the Egyptian captivity when they left the land of Egypt. Then the Lord spiritually led them and protected them, fed them and instructed them for forty days, as He had naturally led and protected and fed and instructed the children of

Israel for forty years in the wilderness. And finally the Lord raised those who were of the spiritual church into heaven, just as He had introduced the children of Israel into the land of Canaan, under Joshua.

And as the children of Israel formed a new nation, with a new worship, and new laws, in the land of Canaan, so those who were of the spiritual church constituted a new heaven, with the new worship of the Lord Jesus Christ as the God of heaven, and with the new laws of His spiritual kingdom to guide them.

Through this new heaven of that time, consisting of the ancient people who had lived since the time of the flood, the Lord was going to establish His new Church, the Christian Church, on earth.

The Lord had told His disciples, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endowed with power from on high." They did so, and on the fiftieth day after the Lord's resurrection, they were all assembled together with one accord, and there "came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat on each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." This outpouring of the Holy Spirit of course came from the Lord Jesus Christ in His Divine Body, but it came from Him in His New Heaven and through it.

The word "fiftieth" in Greek is "pentecoste," and therefore we call the day on which we celebrate this outpouring of the Holy Spirit "the day of Pentecost", the fiftieth day after the Lord's resurrection. Some call it Whit Sunday.

Just as the Lord delivered people from the lower earth at His first coming, and founded a new heaven of them, so He did at His second coming. The Last judgment in the year 1757 was followed by the deliverance of many in the lower earth, where they had gathered during the Christian era, and they were instructed and purified by the Lord, and out of them the Lord formed the New Heaven, from which the New Church meant by "The New Jerusalem" in the book of Revelation, is now coming down upon earth. This New Heaven is below the ancient heavens.

Let us on Ascension-day and on the day of Pentecost also think of this New Heaven, and of our duty so to prepare ourselves by studying in the doctrines of the New Jerusalem, and thus "tarrying there as to our minds, that we may be filled with the power which the Lord sends us from on high, out of His New Heaven.

## **Lesson 34**

### **Acts 3; 4:1-12: The Lame Man Healed at the Beautiful Gate**

**Study in connection with Luke 12:4-12**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

When the Lord was living on earth, teaching the people and doing wonderful works among them, the disciples were with Him and helped Him. Remember in the feeding of the multitude how the disciples seated the people on the ground and passed the bread and fishes to them. And the Lord sent out the twelve apostles, two and two, into the towns of Galilee, and "gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease." Now the Lord was risen, but they knew that He was still with them, and He still gave them power to do many wonderful works, such as He had done and had given them power to do.

In our story today Peter and John were going together up into the temple in Jerusalem, in the afternoon, as the time was near for the evening prayer. There were great open courts about the temple. In the outer court were covered porches with many columns. That on the east side, from which one could look down the Kidron valley, and across the Kidron to the Mount of Olives, was called Solomon's porch. From this outer court steps led up under beautiful arched gateways to a higher court, and from this to still higher courts nearer to the temple building. The Beautiful Gate in our story may have been the gate in front of the temple, by which people went up from the outer court. It was a place where many people passed, so that a poor man who had been always lame was carried there day after day, and was laid by the gate to beg from the people passing by.

See now what happened when Peter and John passed by, going up the steps toward the temple. Peter said to him, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up," and he was strong and well. I will not tell too much, for I must read you the story. (Acts 3:1-11) Think of the man who had been lame all his life walking and leaping and praising God.

You know how it was sometimes when the Lord did some good work that showed His power; the common people were glad, but the priests and leaders of the Jews were angry. It was just so now. Among the priests who came together to question Peter and John were Annas and Caiaphas. Do you remember them? How the Lord was led to Annas, and then to the palace of Caiaphas; they were among those most urgent that the Lord should be crucified. How fearful Peter had been that night in the palace of Caiaphas, when he denied the Lord, but now all his fear was gone, as he told the priests that the power by which they healed the lame man was not their own, but was the power of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, "whom ye crucified." And he said, "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

What gave Peter and John this courage? And how did they know enough - simple fishermen from the Sea of Galilee - to teach the learned priests at Jerusalem? They were "filled with the Holy Spirit." The Lord was with them, His Spirit was giving them courage and putting into their minds

what they should say. The Lord more than once had told them that this would be so. "And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Spirit shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say." (Luke 12:11, 12; Matthew 10:19, 20) The promise was beginning to be fulfilled with Peter and John; and as we go on in the story we shall see many other times when it was fulfilled with them and with the other disciples.

## **Junior**

While the Lord was living on earth with the disciples had He given them power to do miracles of healing? (See Matthew 10:1; Luke 10: 9) Was there any promise that this power would still be with them after the Lord's resurrection and ascension? (See Mark 16:18, 20) We have a beautiful example of it in our story.

When you read of "the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour," you will remember the several hours mentioned in the parable of the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16), and also the hours mentioned in connection with the crucifixion. (Mark 15:33; Matthew 27:45)

Notice what I have said to the younger children about the courts of the temple, and Solomon's porch, and the Beautiful Gate. Do you remember a time when the Lord walked in the temple in Solomon's porch? Find, if you can, a good plan of the temple and its courts, as they were in Gospel days. Notice the court of the Gentiles, the court of the women, the court of the men of Israel, the court of the priests, with the steps and arched gateways leading up from one court to another. You will find Solomon's porch marked quite surely; and the Beautiful Gate doubtfully at the east entrance of the women's court.

As you read the story you will be reminded of miracles done by the Lord Himself. Remember especially the Lord's healing of the man born blind, who also was a familiar object by the wayside in Jerusalem. (Acts 3)

Passing to chapter 4, we are in the midst of the same hostile atmosphere that met the Lord in Jerusalem; we are in the presence of the same Annas and Caiaphas. Notice the Sadducees, and their especial displeasure that the disciples taught of the Lord's resurrection, implying that there is resurrection for all. Remember that the denial of the resurrection was prominent in the teaching of the Sadducees. (Matthew 22:23-32) Three thousand were added to the disciples on the day of Pentecost. The number had now grown to five thousand. Verses 9-12 (which you will connect with verse 12 in the previous chapter) are a splendid confession of the Lord's power with the disciples and with us forever, the only power whereby we must be saved.

The priests marveled at the boldness of Peter and John, perceiving that they were "unlearned and ignorant men." Remember from what life the Lord had called them to be disciples. They did show boldness when they stood before the very men who had caused the Lord's crucifixion, and charged them with what they had done. The saying of the Lord which Peter brought to their recollection (verse 11) was also one which had made them angry when it was spoken by the Lord. (Matthew 21:42-46)

The power of the disciples' words was from the Lord's Holy Spirit with them. Notice first how many times the Lord had foretold to the disciples persecutions which they would suffer for being

His disciples. The first mention of such things was perhaps in the blessing, when He said, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake." (Matthew 5:11) See also Matthew 10:17-22; John 16:1-4; Luke 12:4-12; 21:12-19. This last prediction we find also in nearly the same words in Mark 13:9-13. But joined with the predictions of persecution is the promise that the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, as we usually say, would be with them and teach them what to say.

First, be sure that we know what is meant by the Holy Spirit. It was the Lord's own influence; for He still was present with the disciples. In promising the Holy Spirit the Lord identified it with Himself, saying, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." , (John 14:16-18, 26) Standing among them after His resurrection He breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." (John 20:22)

The same Divine presence and Holy Spirit are with us. We may have the enlightenment of it especially as we reverently read the Lord's Word. It gives to those who try to live as the Lord's true disciples a perception and real wisdom which do not depend on natural learning. It helps us to say the right and useful thing to others when we try to come to them with Christian feeling. To be sure that our feeling is right is better than to meditate beforehand what words we shall say.

1. What words did Peter speak to the lame man by the temple gate?
2. In what name did the apostles heal? What did Peter say of the power of that name?
3. How were the untaught disciples able to speak with boldness and power?
4. What promises had the Lord given the disciples of power to heal and power to speak?

## DEEPER STUDY

### Intermediate

The miracle recorded in Acts 3 may bring up the whole subject of miracles; why they were done in the beginning of the Christian Church, and whether Christians ought still to have the power to do them. By much instruction on the subject Swedenborg makes it plain that the power of the Lord is with us forever, as fully now as in the Gospel days and with the first Christian disciples, but that the ways in which that power is manifested have changed. Miracles which were useful in an age when men's minds could be approached only in an outward way are not useful, but would destroy freedom of belief, in an age when they are able to receive truth with spiritual intelligence. "I have spoken with angels," he says, "about the miracles in the time of the apostles, and that they spoke with other tongues, and that they sensibly perceived the Spirit; that this was so because it was entirely unknown everywhere that the Lord had come into the world, who would save souls; and because it would never be received by anyone without miracles.... For these reasons miracles were done; but now when doctrine has been received they are done no longer. The inrooting of truth and good with the Gentiles is from external things; but with Christians who are in the knowledge of internal things, otherwise." (Smaller Diary 4724) "The reason miracles are not done at this day, as before is that miracles compel, and take away free-will in spiritual things; and, from spiritual, they make the man natural. All in the Christian world can become spiritual; and they become spiritual solely from the Lord through the Word; and the faculty for this would

perish, if men were brought to believe through miracles," with much more explanation. (T. 501. See also P. 130, 132.)

Feel the power of Peter's confession of Jesus Christ of Nazareth as the one by whom the lame man was healed, and of that name as the only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:10-12) We do well to learn it in Peter's words.

The Lord speaks of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth. The Divine influence which is meant is especially that which comes to us through learning and living the Lord's truth; it comes to us especially in the Holy Word, with enlightenment and strength and comfort. We cannot expect the Holy Spirit to enlighten and guide us while our minds lie empty. "The Lord does not dwell with an empty man; that is, with a man who does not know His truths and do them." (A. 10645) Such an empty mind is a house swept and garnished, which easily becomes the home of evil spirits. The Holy Spirit can come to us and teach us, as we learn from the Lord's Word, for the sake of good life, and do the truth we learn. Then the Holy Spirit can find something in our minds to rest upon, materials to work with, to do its regenerating work - to teach us what to say. This it may do "manifestly or not manifestly." (A. 9818; T. 139; Canons)

We have learned that the events at the ascension and at Pentecost represent spiritual things. (R. 642; E. 455) The same is true of the miracles done by the apostles. (See E. 455 and especially E. 706, in comment on Mark 16:17, 18.) The miracles of physical healing represent healing of spiritual ills which the Lord still more desires. Spiritual lameness represents weakness in the love and power to make life effective. The lame often stand for those who are in good, but not in genuine good because ignorant of truth. The man lame from birth (like the man born blind) represents one whose helplessness is not of his own fault, but from ignorance or other deficiency for which he is not to blame. That he begged and expected an alms represents a soul conscious of need and desiring help. The man spiritually lame needs not worldly silver or gold, but the truth and the love which make the soul strong. Compare the expression of strong, joyful life with the promise in Isaiah 35:6, "Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing"; the hart standing for spontaneous affection, free and joyous. A splendid promise of spiritual strength from the Lord is set before us by this prophecy of Isaiah and by the miracle wrought by Peter and John by the Lord's power in the temple. (E.455; A. 4302)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### **Leading Thought: Brought Before Powers**

Once, before the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, a great crowd of people, so great that they could not be numbered, gathered to see and hear Him. He taught them, and among other things told them that if they should ever be brought before the Jewish teachers and leaders and other officials and powers, they must not be anxious beforehand as to what they should say to defend themselves, for the Holy Spirit would teach them at the time what they should say. You may read about this in Luke 12:4-12.

In Acts 3 and 4, you will read of one of the occasions after the resurrection and ascension of the Lord, on which this happened just as He had foretold. Peter and John, going one day to the temple, saw in the gate a man about forty years old, who had been lame from the time that he was born.

The two apostles, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, raised him to his feet and healed him. This caused the greatest excitement among the people. The lame man took hold of the two apostles and with them entered the courtyard of the temple. The people ran together to see the two apostles who had performed this astonishing miracle, and seeing this great gathering who looked with awe and admiration upon the two, Peter then preached to them telling them that they two did not have the power to heal, but that the power was from the Lord Jesus Christ whom the Jews had crucified. And he urged them to repent of the great sin they had committed. Many people did so, and became followers of the Lord, that is, Christians.

The excitement in the temple courts of course attracted the attention of the priests and the captain of the temple, and of the Sadducees (these latter were the sect who denied that man rises again after the death of the material body). They arrested Peter and John, and the next morning brought them before the high priests and priests. Among these were Caiaphas and Annas, the very men before whom the Lord had been tried, falsely accused, mocked and sentenced to be crucified.

You will remember that when Jesus had been arrested, Peter had followed him into the palace of the high priest, and there had three times denied that he knew the Lord. Then he became bitterly sorry for what he had done.

Now he was going to have the chance, in this same palace, and indeed before the high priests and all the priests, to make up for what he had done, and thus show that he truly repented. For it is not enough to be sorry when we have done anything wrong, we must stop doing the wrong when we have the chance of doing it again. Now, instead of denying, Peter would confess the Lord Jesus in the high priest's palace, just as he had done in the temple courts. How thankful he must have been to the Lord for this opportunity to repent!

While Peter and John spent the night in prison, it is very likely that they did not feel afraid, nor did they lie awake all night puzzling and studying out what they were going to be asked, or what kind of a speech they themselves ought to make; for the Lord had told them "not to be afraid of them that killed the body," and had promised that the Holy Spirit would teach them what they ought to say.

Probably the priests thought that the two apostles had performed the miracle by means of magic; for, while they denied the Lord and His power, yet they believed in the power of magic. And so, when the two apostles were brought before them, they asked them, "By what power" or "by what name," that is, by what kind of incantation, by calling up what evil spirit, they had done it.

According to the Lord's promise, Peter "was filled with the Holy Spirit," and boldly told them, and wanted "all the people of Israel" to know, that they had done this good deed "by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead."

Read the whole story. You will find it intensely interesting.

It is well for us to know that the Lord's promise was fulfilled literally. But the Lord's words are Divine and eternal. They apply all the time. Is, then, the Lord still with us at the present day? Does He help us and enable us to say what is necessary and right at all times? Yes. But we must be prepared for it. Remember that Peter had been with the Lord for three years, learning from Him all the time, seeing the wonders that He did; and, with the other eleven, he had even gone forth

and preached and performed miracles by the Lord's command, while He was still with them on earth.

Peter had been on the Mount of Transfiguration. He had been in the garden of Gethsemane with the Lord. He had passed through the bitter experience of denying the Lord, thus seeing how weak he was of himself, and that he needed the Lord to make him strong.

In all these ways Peter had been prepared to do the Lord's work. He had good things in his heart and true things in his head. In other words, his will and his understanding had been prepared by the Lord, so that he could receive the Holy Spirit right, and then when the test came, the Holy Spirit could give him the right words to say.

The Holy Spirit is a Divine influence that goes into the will and understanding of men, just as the sunshine with its heat and light goes into the plants, be these plants grasses like wheat and rye, or bushes like the berry bushes, or vines like the grapevines, or trees like the apple and peach and orange trees. But grasses do not bring forth apples; nor orange trees, rye. The sunshine produces fruit in each according to the inner structure, or "form" of the grass, bush, vine or tree.

It is exactly that way with the heavenly sunshine; the good and truth coming from the Lord. This produces thoughts and words, or loves and deeds, according to the "form" of man's mind. For this reason we must all have our minds formed. And in order that your minds may be formed right, so as to receive the Holy Spirit in a becoming manner and bring forth good fruit, not bitter and poisonous fruit, the Lord has made you so that it takes you about twenty years to grow up, during which time you can be constantly trained to think what is true and love what is good - trained to look to the Lord in everything, and shun evils and falsities as sins against Him - trained, moreover, to love to be of use, and to know how to perform uses (or engage in business) sincerely, honestly, justly and well. Then you can perform spiritual miracles; that is, you can make slow and lame affections in you move in a healthy and quick manner.

## **Lesson 35**

### **Acts 6; 7:51-60: Stephen and His Death**

**Study in connection with Luke 6:27, 28**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

There is agate in the wall of Jerusalem called St. Stephen's gate, and they show you a place just outside the gate, where they say that Stephen, one of the Lord's disciples, was stoned to death. It is on the east side of Jerusalem, looking toward the Mount of Olives. You would go out by this gate if you were going across the Kidron to Bethany or to Jericho. Stephen was not one of the twelve apostles, but he was working with them. He was one of those who were appointed to give help from the common fund to the widows and others in need. The disciples then had all things in common. Those who had houses or lands sold them, and brought the money to the apostles, and

they gave to everyone as he had need. (Acts 4:32-35) But the number of the disciples was growing. On the day of Pentecost there were added to them about three thousand souls. Soon the number was five thousand. (Acts 2:41; 4:4) There were so many that the apostles were kept busy giving the relief to those who needed it, and had not time for teaching. This was not right. There was also complaint that the help was not fairly distributed, that some widows who spoke Greek, a strange language in Jerusalem, were neglected while others who spoke Hebrew were given more. So seven honest men were chosen whose business it should be to take care of the giving to those in need. One of these was Stephen. He also was full of faith and power, and did great wonders and miracles among the people.

But you know that some of the priests and people were made angry by the Lord's teaching, until finally they sent men with Judas to take Him; and they brought Him before the priests, and before Pilate, and He was crucified. And the Lord had said that it would be the same with His disciples. "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." (John 15:20) So it was with Stephen. Some who were enemies of Stephen caught him and brought him before the council of priests. They found false witnesses, as they had found false witnesses against the Lord, who said that Stephen spoke against Moses and God and the temple. "And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Then Stephen spoke long and boldly, and when he had ended the priests were fierce with anger. They put him out of the city and stoned him to death at a place near to this gate. But the Lord was with Stephen to protect him.

Looking up he saw the glory of God, and Jesus at the right hand; and when they stoned him he said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And he said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," and he "fell asleep."

The words of the Psalm were true for Stephen, as they were true for many after him: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

## **Junior**

St. Stephen's Gate is on the side of Jerusalem toward the Mount of Olives. Our story tells us who Stephen was and why the gate is called by his name. Read the sketch of the story that I have given the younger children, and we will look up some points to make the picture more complete. The apostles were teaching boldly in the temple courts, and healing very many that were sick. Commands of the priests would not silence them. Beating would not silence them. What happened when they were seized and put in prison? (Acts 5:17-20)

The number of people with the apostles was growing fast. It had reached five thousand, and still more multitudes were being added. They had all things in common. They sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men as every man had need. (Acts 2:44, 45; 4:32-37) Read of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11. Trouble rose in distributing the money. The Grecians who made complaint were Jews, but speaking Greek and not the usual Hebrew of Jerusalem. We can understand, too, as the apostles said, that the care for the distribution took them from more important things. "Serving tables" means probably paying out money over a table, not serving food. Remember the tables of the money changers in the temple. Our own word "bank" meant originally a bench or table. Seven able men were appointed to this responsible work. Read what is

said of Stephen in Acts 6:8. But read on about his enemies. There were several synagogues in Jerusalem with which people from different countries were connected. The Libertines were some who had been slaves in Rome but now were free. Read about these enemies of Stephen, the council, false witnesses and false charges. How it all reminds us of the council that condemned the Lord, the false witness against Him, and the false charge about destroying the temple. Read Mark 14:53-59. The Lord had warned the disciples that they too would suffer such things, but He promised that He would be with them to protect them and to teach them what to say. (Matthew 10:17-20; Luke 21:12-19) These promises of protection come to mind as we read what verse 15 says of Stephen's face.

Stephen's reply to the high priest's question is a review of the history of the Jews from the call of Abraham to his own time, showing how they had always been perverse, disobeying God, resisting the Holy Spirit and persecuting the prophets, and now they had rejected the Lord. Read verses 54-60. Heaven was near. The Lord whom he served was near to protect this first Christian martyr. His words are in the spirit of the Lord's own words on the cross. (Luke 23:33, 46) "And Saul was consenting unto his death." (Acts 8:1) And this Saul was the Apostle Paul. All this we remember as we stand by St. Stephen's Gate.

To what point in our story do the verses Luke 6:27 and 28 apply? Do they mean that non-resistance is always a Christian duty? Not necessarily that, but it is a duty always to act from love and not from anger and resentment. And what had the Lord told Peter about forgiveness?

1. To what duty had Stephen been appointed?
2. What was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira?
3. Why is Stephen known as the first Christian martyr?
4. How was he strengthened in his death?
5. Note the first mention of Paul.

## DEEPER STUDY

### Intermediate

Chapter 7 of the Acts completes the first section of the story, the bearing witness to the Lord in Jerusalem (Acts 1:8); for the stoning of Stephen was the beginning of a persecution which caused the scattering of the disciples through Judea and Samaria, taking the Gospel with them. How well they had done their work in Jerusalem we can judge by the numbers added to their party, and by the testimony of the high priest, "Behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine." (Acts 5:28)

Do you remember the occasions when the Jews took up stones to stone the Lord? They were occasions when He declared His Divinity, which they chose to regard as blasphemy. (John 8:59; 10:31) So when Stephen said that he saw the Divine glory and the Lord in heaven, they stopped their ears and stoned him. The punishment of stoning was prescribed for blasphemy (Leviticus 24:16) and for other crimes which represented the spiritual sin of falsifying truth. For stoning represented the extinction of spiritual understanding by the indulgence of false thoughts. In

contrast with stoning, crucifixion on wood was associated with violation of good. The distinction was based on the correspondence of stone and wood. (A. 7456, 8799; E. 240, 655)

Consider Stephen's prayer, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," in connection with our Lord's words, "Father, forgive them," and the charge in Luke 6:27, 28; Matthew 5:38-48. "That these words (Matthew 5:38, and on) are not to be understood according to the letter is evident to everyone; for who is under any obligation from Christian love, to turn the left cheek to him who smiteth the right, and to give his cloak to him who is desirous to take his coat? In a word, who is there to whom it is not allowed to resist evil? . . . Internal men, as are the angels in heaven, do not will the recompense of evil for evil, but from heavenly charity forgive; for they know that the Lord protects all who are in good against the evil, and that He protects according to the good appertaining to them, and that He would not protect, if by reason of the evil done to themselves, they should be inflamed with enmity, hatred, and revenge, for these avert protection." (E.556; A. 8223, 9048) Force may be an expression of love. "The end in view shows whether there is charity or not." (T. 407, 408)

Many particulars in the account of Stephen's trial and death remind us of the condemnation and crucifixion of the Lord. The Lord had said that the disciples would suffer as He had suffered. (John 15:20) It was the spirit of the Lord with them that some would feel and love, and others would hate. (Matthew 10:40) Look again at predictions of persecutions and promises of the Lord's protection, some of which the Lord gave to the disciples when He first sent them out to teach, which were now having fulfillment. (Matthew 10:17-20; Luke 21:12-19; E. 137)

The evidence of the Lord's presence with Stephen and His protection in his trial and in his death is clear. Stephen's description of what he saw may indicate his own conception of Jesus and his Divineness. Probably the figure of Jesus was the only figure which he saw, and with this the impression of the glory of God. "On the right hand of God," as in Mark 16:19, expresses the fact that the Lord at His resurrection and ascension entered into the fullness of Divine power. (Compare Matthew 28:18.) That the apostles thought of all Divineness as embodied in the Lord Jesus Christ is shown by the fact that they fulfilled the Lord's charge to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost by baptizing in the name of Jesus Christ. (Acts 2:38; 10:48)

The simple words "he fell asleep" describing Stephen's death we may well remember with the Lord's saying of the daughter of Jairus, "She is not dead, but sleepeth," and His saying, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth" when in fact He spoke of his death. Death is a sleep from which the Lord awakens all into the eternal life of the spiritual world. (H. 449, 450)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### **Leading Thought: Prayers of the Persecuted**

The Lord Jesus Christ teaches us to pray for forgiveness, and at the same time He teaches "if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Again He teaches, "Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you."

He Himself did all that He asked others to do. When He hung on the cross, suffering from all that had been done to Him before and at the crucifixion, He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

His disciples remembered His teachings and His example, and we see this in the story of Stephen.

Acts 6 and 7 tell the interesting story of how the Apostolic Christian church was organized: there were the apostles who "gave themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word." And they appointed others, seven men, among them Stephen, whose business it was to care more especially for the widows and the poor. (We call them "deacons" from the Greek word which means to minister or serve.) But these deacons did not confine themselves to this. We read of Stephen that he also did "great wonders and miracles" and "spoke with wisdom and power," which brought on him the hatred of the men of the synagogue. He was falsely accused, and stoned to death; yet he did not revile those who stoned him, nor did he hate them in turn, but while he was being stoned he cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Thus he did, while being stoned, what the Lord did when He was crucified, and obeyed what the Lord had told His disciples to do to their enemies. So Stephen "loved" his enemies and "prayed" for those who "despitefully used" him.

So must we do also, if we would be truly followers of our Lord Jesus Christ. When people persecute us and hate us, we may be apt to feel that we should like to hate them back, and "pay them back" and hurt them in one way or another. We must hate the evil in them, but we must wish that they themselves may become good. In this way we love them. And then we pray to the Lord to lead them to do good. Sometimes people do what is wrong, without knowing that it is wrong. If you will recall, Peter, in his speech to the people who ran to see him in the temple, in Solomon's porch, told them that he knew that they had "through ignorance" killed the Prince of life. Peter here repeated what the Lord had said on the cross in His prayer to the Father: "They know not what they do."

We must remember this, and when people do things to us which we know are wrong, we must stop to think that perhaps they do not know how mean and wrong they are. Then we shall be more likely to make allowance for them, and to feel like forgiving them.

Stephen was the first "martyr." The martyrs were those who passed through trials and afflictions on account of their belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, and who were faithful unto death; and we may know from the book of Revelation that they were given "the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10; 3:11) The word "martyr" means a "witness." They were witnesses to the Divinity of the Lord's human nature, for they testified that Jesus whom the Jews had "hung on a tree" had risen from the dead. They remained true witnesses even though they were tortured and slain. Swedenborg tells us that after death crowns were given them, but that, because they were afraid that they might claim honor to themselves in consequence, they took their crowns off their heads.

While reading the Acts of the Apostles, bear in mind that this book does not belong to "the Word of the Lord." It is a very important and good book, and the Lord has preserved it because He wishes us to know about the early Christian Church, how good and simple-hearted the early Christians were, and how the Lord's Holy Spirit influenced them in their preaching and their works. But, although it is an excellent and very important book, the Acts does not contain a spiritual sense. It was not written by the Lord through a man, like the Gospels and the Revelation.

These books, like all the other books of the Word, began in the Lord. He spoke, and the truth He spoke passed through all the heavens in order until they reached the man who wrote the book on earth. His truth was clothed in every heaven, and finally by a clothing taken from the mind of the man who wrote the book on earth. These successive "clothings" in the heavens are the inner senses of the Word, while the last is the literal sense.

It is true, and very interesting, that the Acts contains some correspondences, and tells of some incidents which were representative of spiritual states, like the Lord's going up to heaven and being received by a cloud. But the Acts does not contain an internal sense which continues unbroken from beginning to end, such as the books of the Word contain.

## Lesson 36

### Acts 8: Samaritans Study in Connection with John 4:39-42

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

We have been with the disciples of the Lord in Jerusalem, and have learned how the Holy Spirit came upon them and gave them power to preach and to do many wonderful works. Now the time had come for them to go out more widely into the country about Jerusalem, and Philip preached in Samaria. This was the Philip who was appointed with Stephen as one of those to give the money to the people who needed help.

Samaria was the name of a part of the country in the Gospel days, the middle part, between Judea and Galilee. You may remember about the Lord's going through Samaria on His way from Judea to Galilee. (John 4) It was the time when He rested by Jacob's well and talked with the woman of Samaria there. She believed in the Lord, and so did many people of her city who came out to hear Him; and He stayed with them there two days. The Samaritans were not learned people, like the priests at Jerusalem, but they were goodhearted, and were willing to be taught. You remember the parable of the good Samaritan, how the priest and the Levite passed by the man wounded by the wayside, but the Samaritan took pity on him and helped him. (Luke 10:30-37) The city of Samaria, to which Philip went, was in the same part of the country, but quite a little distance from Jacob's well, some six miles to the northwest. It stood on a beautiful hill. Large stone columns are still standing on the brow of the hill, where there used to be a beautiful colonnade where people could walk and look out over the wide view of fertile hills and away to the Mediterranean in the west. We must go back to our story and learn how Philip first preached to the people of Samaria about the Lord.

They were ready and willing to hear him, as the people had been glad to hear the Lord at Jacob's well. "And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did." Many unclean spirits were cast out, and people sick with the palsy and lame were healed. "And there was great joy in that city." When the apostles at Jerusalem heard of this good news, they sent Peter and John to Samaria; and when they had

prayed and put their hands upon the people the Holy Spirit came to them as it had done to the disciples in Jerusalem.

There was a man in Samaria named Simon who offered money to the disciples to give him the Holy Spirit; but Peter told him that his heart was evil and that the gift of God could not be purchased with money.

Another beautiful story about Philip I must read you in the last part of the chapter. It was after he left Samaria, and the angel of the Lord told him to go "toward the south into the way that goes down from Jerusalem unto Gaza." If you look on the map you will find Gaza near the seashore far south in the Philistine country. I think I will not tell you this beautiful story, but read it to you just as it is. At the end of the story it says that Philip was found at Azotus. This was the city before called Ashdod. You will find it near the middle of the Philistine country not far from the sea. And so Philip passed on to Caesarea, on the seacoast further to the north. It was perhaps the most important city in the country at that time. Our story will take us there again, and it seems that Philip made this city his home. (Acts 21:8)

## Junior

The stoning of Stephen was the beginning of a "great persecution" of the Christians in Jerusalem. But the Lord made this hardship useful to them, for it was the means of scattering them through Judea and to other places to teach about the Lord. Remember the order in which the ministry of the disciples should develop, as indicated in the Lord's own words to them. (Acts 1:8) Saul's (Paul's) part in the stoning of Stephen and in this persecution is emphasized, and it is referred to later in Paul's own teaching. (Acts 22:4, 5, 19, 20) It makes more remarkable the story of Paul's conversion and of his zealous Christian work.

It will be well to have clearly in mind the geography and the history of Samaria. You find the district in the heart of the land between Judea and Galilee. Jacob's well you find at the old camping place of Abraham and Jacob in the edge of the meadow where Joseph came looking for his brethren, at the foot of Mount Gerizim. It is near to the old city of Shechem. The city of Samaria on the fine hill to the northwest was not so old as Shechem. It was founded by Omri, the father of Ahab. (1 Kings 16:23, 24) It had a beautiful location. The strength of the city can be inferred from the Assyrian record that it was taken by the Assyrians after a siege of three years. It was rebuilt and fortified by Herod the Great, who was king in Jerusalem at the time the Lord was born. It is interesting to connect the ruined Christian church, called the church of John the Baptist, still standing in Samaria, with Philip's first preaching there, although this church was built much later, in the days of the crusades.

In regard to the character of the Samaritans you will remember in connection with the Lord's talking with the woman at Jacob's well the saying, "For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." (John 4:9) Do you recall the history which explains this saying, how when the tribes which occupied this part of the land were carried captive by the Assyrians, strange people were brought and settled in the country? They learned something of the worship of the Lord, but mixed it with the worship of their idols. The Jews would not recognize these people as their brethren. After the return from captivity in Babylon the Samaritans wished to have part in the rebuilding of the temple, but their help was rejected, and from that time Jews and Samaritans had no dealings, and the Samaritans were despised. But many of them were good-hearted people and willing to be

taught, as appeared in their willing acceptance of the Lord and in the character of the good Samaritan in the parable. It appears further in their willing acceptance of Philip's preaching.

The Simon mentioned in this chapter is usually spoken of as Simon Magus, which means the "magician" or sorcerer. Much was said about him by early Christian writers, perhaps a good deal of it fanciful. We may think of him as exercising something of that power which ancient magicians had, coming from the ancient knowledge of heavenly things, but which used by evil men brought them into connection with evil spirits. It was such power that the magicians had in Egypt in the days of Moses. Swedenborg refers to Simon and his miracles as a fulfillment of the Lord's prophecy in Matthew 24:24: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Have you ever heard the word "simony"? Suppose you look it up in the dictionary and see if you understand how it is derived from Simon and what is told of him in this story.

The story of Philip and the Ethiopian is beautiful in many ways. The Lord spoke to Philip by an angel, and sent him to a certain road. The words "which is desert" (verse 26) no doubt showed Philip just which road was meant. He was to go there because the Lord knew that he would there meet one who needed his help. The Lord is guiding us all, not so evidently but just as really, to go here and there where we shall meet those who need our help. The man who came riding in his chariot, no doubt with a company of attendants, was from Ethiopia; a name then applied to the countries which were later called Nubia and Abyssinia. The name Candace was the title of queens who ruled the northern part of that country. There were many Jews in Egypt, and no doubt from them this Ethiopian had become converted to their religion. He had been to worship at Jerusalem, and was now reading in the Jewish Scripture. It is interesting to notice that what he was reading is given word for word as it stands in the Septuagint version, which is the Greek version made in Alexandria for the Egyptian Jews. He was apparently reading aloud, as was common. Again it was not by chance but of the Lord's providence that at the moment when Philip drew near he was reading a prophecy about the Lord, which Philip could explain to him. Can you find the prophecy in the Old Testament?

1. What Gospel history shows the receptive spirit of the Samaritans? What Gospel parable shows their kindly character?
2. What apostles first preached in Samaria?
3. Who was Simon Magus?
4. Tell me about Philip's meeting with the Ethiopian? How did it happen? With what result?

## DEEPER STUDY

### Intermediate

In regard to magic and its origin from the perversion of the ancient knowledge of correspondences, and of its harmful effect in the hands of evil men, read much of interest in A. 5223, 6692.

We read in verse 17 that the apostles laid their hands on the new converts and they received the Holy Spirit. We remember how the Lord put His hands upon the little children in blessing them, and often laid His hand upon the sick whom He healed. The laying of the hand on another represents the imparting of influence and power to him. There is actually a communication of influence through the hand though we are not very sensible of it. It was from this fact and from the representation of the act, that the Lord laid His hand upon the sick in His miracles, and that it has become the custom in the church to put the hands upon the head of one who is blessed or introduced into an office. (M. 396; D. 6094; E. 79)

At the end of the chapter it is said, "that the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and he was found at Azotus." What it is to be carried away by the Spirit to another place is described by Swedenborg in H. 441. Turn to the number and read it carefully.

The account of Philip and the Ethiopian joins itself beautifully to the account of his work in Samaria; both are pictures of willing reception of instruction by simple open hearts. Remember much that Swedenborg tells us of the ready reception of instruction by the Gentiles, and especially by many Africans. (H. 318-328, especially 326; J. post. 115.)

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Samaritans

When the Lord brought the twelve tribes of Israel to dwell in the land of Canaan, and divided up the land among them, they were again admonished by Joshua as they had previously been by Moses, to abstain from idols and to worship Jehovah, as the commandments told them to do. They were not always true to this injunction, and whenever they worshiped idols they were punished by their enemies. Matters became very bad in time. After Solomon, ten of the tribes rebelled against Rehoboam, Solomon's son, and set up a kingdom under Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, which they called Israel, to distinguish it from the kingdom of Judah. Samaria became the capital of Israel, while Jerusalem was the capital of Judah. The Jews continued to worship Jehovah in the temple at Jerusalem. The Israelites set up golden calves in the two ends of the kingdom of Israel, and worshiped them. They were punished over and over again for their idolatry. They worshiped not only the calves, but other idols, such as Baal, the moon, Moloch, etc. At last the Lord permitted them to be punished by the Assyrians, who carried them away captive into Assyria. To make up for the loss of inhabitants, the Assyrian king sent immigrants from Assyria, who occupied the city and region of Samaria. Israelitish priests from among the captives were sent back from Assyria to these immigrants to teach them the law of Moses. But the worship of the Samaritans was different from that of the Jews. They had a temple on Mount Gerizim. They were therefore not really part of the Jewish church, but Gentiles, for by the law of Moses the children of Israel might worship only in the one place where the ark was, containing the two tables on which the Ten Commandments were written, and this ark was in the temple at Jerusalem. And yet the Samaritans differed from other Gentiles because they knew about Jehovah, and expected the Messiah.

The Lord made a distinction between (1) Jews (or "the house of Israel"), (2) Samaritans, and (3) Gentiles. And on one occasion when He was sending out His twelve disciples, He told them, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 10: 5, 6)

But He Himself preached to the Samaritans, as you may see by the beautiful story in John 4:1-42, which, if you do not remember it, you ought to read. You will see there that of the Samaritans "many believed on the Word" of Jesus.

After our Redeemer's resurrection, He said, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:47) And now we read in the Acts that this was done just as the Lord had commanded. First the Apostles, and also the deacons, preached in Jerusalem and converted many to Christianity. They continued their work in Jerusalem and in Judea for a long time, but after the death of Stephen they extended their work elsewhere also, and first in Samaria, where the Lord Jesus Christ Himself had started the work some time before.

You may remember from the last lesson (Acts 6) that among the seven men appointed to be deacons, was a man who had the same name as one of the twelve apostles, namely, Philip. This is the man who, as today's story tells, went from Jerusalem to Samaria, and there "preached the Christ to them."

Remember that "Messiah" is Hebrew, and "Christ" Greek, of the same word, namely, "anointed," or king. The Samaritans had been expecting the Messiah, as we learn from the story in John 4, and Philip preached the Messiah to them. The Lord Jesus Christ had come to establish a spiritual kingdom - the kingdom of God on earth. And Philip preached Him as King. And, as you will read in today's chapter in the Acts, he did similar miracles to those which the Lord had performed, for he did all "in His Name." He was so successful that Peter and John came down from Jerusalem to take part in the great work.

The Christian Church, as we see here, and as we see elsewhere, was principally established among the Gentiles. The Samaritans were practically Gentiles. Comparatively very few Jews became Christians. Eventually Christianity spread to the heathen or Gentiles throughout Europe and in parts of Africa and Asia.

We are taught in the heavenly Doctrines that the New Church also will be principally established among the Gentiles, that is among those who are not Christians. Some of them may know something about the Lord and the Word, just as the Samaritans did. For the Bible is being translated into almost all the languages of the world, and is being distributed everywhere. How glorious it would be if some of the boys who are reading or hearing these lessons would prepare themselves to preach the Doctrines of the New Church, both to those who are in the Christian world and to those who are outside it! There is no nobler calling than this.

You read that among those who were converted and became baptized was a magician, or sorcerer, named Simon. "Simon" was a common name in those days. We read, in the Gospels and the Acts, of nine different men whose names were Simon. So, to distinguish this one from the rest, we will call him "Simon Magus," for the word "Magus" means a magician.

Although he had been baptized, he still continued to believe in sorcery, and did not have the true idea of Christianity, which is, that we must do good to others from the love of good, not from the love of money. Also that the Lord gives us everything freely. We cannot buy anything from Him. We can receive His good gifts freely, but we must make room for them in our hearts. We must remove everything out of our hearts which is not good, so that His Holy Spirit can enter. Simon

Magus saw the wonderful operations of the Holy Spirit, and thought he could buy the power to bestow it upon others. Notice how indignant Peter was at this suggestion.

The story shows us that although it is important to acknowledge the Lord Jesus the Christ and we must be baptized, yet this does not make us true Christians, unless we repent.

Such a false idea as Simon Magus had, if it is kept in the mind, and if it is taught, is called a "heresy." This was the first "heresy" or trouble in the Christian Church.

How beautiful it is to see how the early Christians were led by the Lord. Philip was told by the Lord to go to a certain road leading from Jerusalem to Gaza, and there he met the foreign official who was passing the time of the journey reading the Old Testament. Philip was to instruct him that the Scriptures were fulfilled by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. You learn from this charming story that the faith or belief that saves us is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that the very first thing of such belief or faith is the acknowledgment that He is the Son of God. So this eunuch, or official, said to Philip, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"; and this, as we know, means that the human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ had become Divine from Jehovah or the Father, Who dwells within it, as the soul dwells in the body. Everyone who wishes to be truly a Christian, and to be saved by the Lord, must believe that Jesus is the son of the living God. This, you will remember, is "the Rock" upon which the Church is founded.

Notice also that the eunuch was baptized although as yet he knew nothing more than this. By baptism he was introduced as to his spirit, among those in the spiritual world who acknowledged the Lord Jesus Christ and so he could be kept in faith in the Lord, and could the better be enlightened to learn more about the Lord and the Christian life.

## **Lesson 37**

### **Acts 9:1-28: Paul's Conversion**

**Study in connection with John 3:16-21**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We go now from Jerusalem to Damascus. Here it is on the map. It is a wonderful old city, famous before the days of Abraham, and a thriving city still. We must see pictures of Damascus if we can; its fine houses and gardens, its streets crowded with people in all kinds of bright clothes, with loaded camels from the desert and other strange sights, and especially the bazaars where the queer little shops are crowded thick together. There are gates in the old city wall which are closed at night, and heavy doors here and there across the streets which shut off one part of the city from another. And this wonderful old city has been kept alive for thousands of years by two beautiful streams which run from great springs in the mountains out into the desert and make it a garden of beautiful green.

Travelers and traders are journeying to the city, and caravans of camels from across the desert. Among the travelers is Saul, whom we saw at Jerusalem, with those who stoned Stephen. He was an enemy of the followers of the Lord, and was now going to Damascus with power from the high priest to seize any of these followers who might be found in Damascus and bring them bound to Jerusalem. But something wonderful happened, which changed Saul from a most dreaded enemy of the disciples and made him one of them, and one of the strongest in the Lord's work. "And as he journeyed he came near Damascus." Read on, Acts 9:3-9. It was midday, but the light from heaven was brighter than the sun. Those who were with Saul saw the light and heard a sound, but he alone heard the words which the Lord spoke to him. After the vision Saul was blind, and they led him into the city. For three days he was blind. Then the Lord sent one of His followers, Ananias, who was living in Damascus, to go to Saul and heal his blindness. He would find him at the house of Judas in the street that is called Straight. The main street of Damascus is still called by that name. It is the street that is seen as one looks in through the eastern gate of the city. Saul's blindness was healed. He was baptized and was one of the Lord's people, and he began to preach in Damascus. For a time he left the city and found quiet in Arabia, to the south and east of Damascus. When finally he left the city enemies were watching at the city gates to kill him, and he was let down in a basket by a window from the city wall. Then he came to the disciples at Jerusalem. At first they were afraid, for he had been their enemy. But they learned to trust him, and he was now one of them. At first called Saul, from this time in the story he is usually called Paul. Many times he told this story of the Lord's coming to him with blinding light on the road to Damascus and calling him to His work.

## **Junior**

In connection with this story of Paul's conversion, read two other accounts given by Paul himself, which are in some particulars more full. (Acts 22:1-21; 26:4-20) These also refer to Paul's earlier life. He was born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, the southeastern district of Asia Minor. He learned the trade of tent-making. He was an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin, was brought up as a strict Pharisee, and was a pupil of Gamaliel, the famous teacher in Jerusalem, probably the same who is mentioned in Acts 5:34.

After reading the three accounts of Paul's conversion, you can bring the particulars together into one story. All saw the bright light at noonday. Paul seems to have seen a glorious human form. He afterwards speaks of having seen the Lord. (1 Corinthians 9: 1; 15:8) The others heard a sound, but Paul the spoken words. The name Saul, by which the Lord addressed him, was his name in Hebrew, his mother tongue; but from this time he is known usually by the Roman name Paul. The bright light which shone about Paul with the Lord's coming to him reminds us of the shining of the Lord's face as the sun and His raiment white as the light on the Mount of Transfiguration, and the disciples were overshadowed by a cloud. Paul's blindness suggests that the Lord's glory was more than he could bear.

The phrase "of this way," in verse 2, was a name applied to the Christians, and we find it several times in Acts 19:9, 23; 22:4. Christianity was thought of as a way of life, the way of life with the Lord.

Other accounts show that considerable time passed before the flight of Paul from Damascus, described in verses 23-26. It was during that time that he made the visit to Arabia for preparation

for his ministry, of which Paul speaks in an Epistle. (Galatians 1:17, 18) Another Epistle (2 Corinthians 11:32, 33) gives some further particulars of the attempt to kill Paul, and of his escape, showing that the effort to kill him had the support of the authorities of Damascus. We shall be with Paul on some of his missionary journeys and shall hear some of his teaching. The Lord said of him, "He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

1. What was Paul's relation to the Christians when we first learn of him?
2. What experience caused him to become one of them?
3. By what name were the Lord's followers known at this time?
4. What did the Lord call Paul in speaking of him to Ananias?

## DEEPER STUDY

### Intermediate

The words just quoted gave Ananias courage to go to Paul to heal his blindness and to be the instrument of his baptism and reception of the Holy Spirit. They also indicate the nature of the service to which the Lord was calling Paul, a service which would take the Christian message out into the world, making its appeal not only to Jews, as it so far had done, but to the great Gentile world. It was a bold and important step which opened new doors for the Church. "He is a chosen vessel unto Me," the Lord said, "to bear my name before the Gentiles."

We learn today of Paul's preparation, very different from that of the men of Galilee whom the Lord first called. Learn something of his home in Tarsus of Cilicia, a city whose people had been granted Roman citizenship, and of his education. We have seen the zeal with which he at first persecuted the Christians in Jerusalem and in other places, but how he was changed by the experience on the Damascus road and was now one of them. He brought new powers to the service of the Church, needed in the new development which it was now to make. Paul's witness of Jesus before kings we find in his speech before Agrippa and in his preaching in Rome, resulting from his appeal to Caesar. (Acts 26:1, 32)

We shall in the Acts learn of Paul's missionary journeys in which in the face of hardship and persecution he with his chosen companions, of whom Luke who tells the story was often one, carried the knowledge of the Lord Jesus and of Christian life into many districts of Asia Minor, into Macedonia and Greece. Even as a prisoner he was a power for the Church in Rome. In each new place it was Paul's custom to appeal first to the Jews, but the conviction was strong with him that the Christian Gospel was equally for the Gentiles, for all men. It became the conviction of the Church that Gentiles could be received by the Lord as Christians without first conforming to the Jewish ceremonial law.

Paul's belief in the world-wide mission of the Church is strongly shown in the Acts.. The book contains reports of many pleadings of Paul with members of Jewish synagogues, and of addresses to Gentile audiences. For further knowledge of Paul's teaching of the Christian gospel, not to Jews familiar with Scripture, but to Gentile minds trained in Greek philosophical thought, we have the

group of his letters or Epistles to churches under his care and to individual disciples. Note his strong statement of the Divinity of Jesus Christ in Colossians 2:9, his emphasis upon the supreme place of charity or love in Christian life (1 Corinthians 13) and his teaching of resurrection and the reality of the spirit. (1 Corinthians 15:44.) Swedenborg often quotes Paul in support of Christian doctrine. Read again his statement in regard to the value of the Acts and Epistles to the Church in Documents 224, quoted in Lesson 33 above, page 204. It will be right to learn the facts of Paul's ministry and then to form our estimate of it.

Give more careful study to the subject of the bright light attending the Lord's presence, which was seen on the Mount of Transfiguration and by Paul, and which makes the Lord the sun of heaven. Read the chapter in Heaven and Hell on the sun in heaven, especially Nos. 117, 118. Note the caution in W. 97: "But beware of thinking that the sun of the spiritual world is God Himself. God is Man. The first proceeding from His love and wisdom is a fiery spiritual substance, which appears in the sight of the angels as a sun." Read also in U. 40 a beautiful account of the appearing of the Lord to spirits from this and other earths as a human form encompassed with the sun. He appeared so to some who when they were men saw the Lord in this world, and they said that it was the Lord Himself. (See also R. 831; A. 10809)

Notice first, in regard to the appearance of the Lord as a sun to the angels, that the heat and light which shine from Him are in correspondence with the love and wisdom from Him which warm their hearts and lighten their minds; for in that world the inward and the outward radiance are inseparable. In the Lord's words to Nicodemus, in John 3:16-21, see described these two elements of the heavenly sunshine which He brought into the world: the great saving love and from this the light to show all things truly. In His coming the prophecy was fulfilled, that the Sun of righteousness would arise with healing in His wings. (Malachi 4:2) It was the receiving of the inward heat and light which made men the Lord's disciples; but when a glimpse of His outward glory also would be useful it was granted by the opening of their spiritual sight, as to the three on the Mount of Transfiguration, and to Paul.

There is in the Lord's question, "Why persecutest thou Me?" a beautiful expression of His nearness and sympathy, which makes our trials His trials, our joys His joys. Remember the saying of the King to those on His right hand and left, that what they had done to the least of His brethren they had done to Him. (Matthew 25: 40, 45) It is true always that love or hatred of goodness and truth in our relations with one another is an act of kindness or cruelty to the Lord. "He who loves evils, also loves to do evil to the Lord, nay, to crucify Him: this is inmost latent in all evil." (R. 527)

It may not be necessary or possible for us to know deeply the effect of this sudden and startling experience upon Paul's character as a man. Such an experience in itself could not regenerate a man. (P.130-136; D.4322) What Swedenborg says of Paul shows also that a sense of importance and a desire to rule were deep rooted in his character. (D. 4412) While this should keep us from undue reverence for Paul as a man, it should not prevent our recognizing that in the Lord's providence he wrote "good books for the church, insisting upon the doctrine of charity and its faith as strongly as the Lord Himself has done in the Gospels and the Book of Revelation," and that he had an important part in making known the Christian religion to the world. Remember the Lord's words to Ananias when He sent him to Paul: "He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Jesus the Light

Our Lord Jesus Christ is often called the Light. (See John 1:4, 5, 8, 9; 3:19-21; 12:35, 36, 46, and elsewhere.) When the Lord appeared to the three disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration they saw His Divine Human with the eyes of their spirit, and His countenance was like the sun, and His garments white as the light. He is also described in this way in the Book of Revelation (1:16). In heaven He "dwells in light inaccessible" - light so bright and dazzling that no one can ever reach it, for He is in the sun of heaven. Indeed the sun of heaven is the love and wisdom which go out from Him. Of course the angels see that sun. We cannot see it; no man on earth can, unless the Lord mercifully opens the eyes of his spirit. When this is done, the eyes of the body are closed. This was the case with the three disciples when they saw Him on the Mount of Transfiguration, and also with John when he was "in the spirit" on the Island Patmos, where he saw the wonderful visions described in the Apocalypse, or Revelation.

Today we read about another man, the eyes of whose spirit were opened. But he did not see the Lord, but the light that comes from Him. This was Saul of Tarsus. Saul was not one of the disciples. On the contrary, he had been a great enemy of the disciples, having been a witness of the stoning of Stephen, and being active in persecuting the Christians. The Lord converted him by showing him the bright light that comes from Him. Saul saw this light with the eyes of his spirit and not with the eyes of his material body, for we read afterwards that he opened his eyes but was blind, showing that they had been shut while he saw the vision and heard the voice of the Lord Jesus. The ears of his spirit had been opened as well as the eyes of his spirit, for he heard the voice of the Lord.

Why do you suppose the Lord said that Saul was persecuting Him, although he was persecuting the disciples? Because while the Lord was still on earth He had told His disciples that whatever is done "unto the least of His brethren," that is, to anyone who is His disciple, is done to Him. Read this in Matthew 25:31-46.

Whatever happens in the spiritual world can be witnessed by people only to the extent in which their spiritual senses are opened to notice. You will see this in John 12:28, 29, where, when the Divine spoke to the human, the Lord permitted some of the people to hear it; some heard it as thunder, while others heard it as the voice of an angel.

As there is a correspondence between the sight of the spirit and the sight of the body, no doubt the bright Divine light from the Lord Jesus affected Saul's spiritual eyes, and through them his natural eyes. A friend of Swedenborg's, Dr. Beyer, who was one of the first and most earnest New Church people, and who suffered persecution because of his belief in the Doctrine of the New Church, relates having been told by Swedenborg how he saw the Lord. He says that he saw Him "in imperial purple and in majestic light, seated near his bed, while He gave Assessor Swedenborg his commission. I remember that I asked him how long this lasted; whereupon he answered, 'About a quarter of an hour'; also whether the strong light did not affect his eyes, when he said, 'No.' "

Swedenborg was a good man, a lover of truth, and so he was prepared to see the Lord, and the Divine light would not hurt his eyes. Paul, on the contrary, had been occupied with the wicked

persecution of the Christians and was even then bent on persecuting the Christians in Damascus. He did not see the Lord, and the light blinded him for three days, and it was only when he had prayed, and Ananias, at the Lord's command, went to him and laid his hands on his eyes, that he recovered his sight.

Saul was afterwards called Paul, and became a very active missionary of the Christians. As did Philip, so did Paul, "he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God" - and, as we saw in the story of Philip, this is the first thing of the Christian faith. It was not the healing of people that was of greatest importance - that ceased after a while, after faith in the Lord had become established, for the healing of the body through religion may become a great snare to people, so that they become religious for the purpose of having healthy bodies, and thus become evil like Simon Magus. The most important and the first thing that the apostles did was to preach the Lord Jesus Christ risen from the dead, in His glorified body.

As Saul, or Paul, had been one of the principal agents of the high priests in persecuting the Christians, his conversion to Christianity made a great change in the way the Christians were treated, so that "they had rest in Judea, Samaria and Galilee."

In verses 32 and 41 the Christians are called "saints." That means that they had accepted the holy truth regarding the Lord Jesus Christ. This truth in them made them holy. The word "saint" comes from the Latin word for "holy." But do not imagine that these saints wished to be worshiped, or ever accepted worship, as many in the Roman Catholic Church think. Everyone who receives the truth in his heart is holy or a saint. But the moment that he thinks that it is his own truth and forgets that it is the Lord's with him, then he no longer has the truth, and so is no longer a saint. You will now understand why the church is often called "the communion of saints."

## **Lesson 38**

### **Acts 9:32-43: Peter at Joppa and Caesarea**

**Study in connection with Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 24:45-47**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

Now we leave Paul for a time and learn about Peter. The story tells of two miracles which were done by him, not in Jerusalem, but in Lydda, a town in the flat meadow country toward the sea, and in Joppa, the landing place on the seashore. Read of the first miracle in verses 32-35. The name Saron is the same as Sharon. This northern part of the Philistine country was called the "plain of Sharon." At Lydda he healed by the Lord's power Eneas who had been long sick with the palsy, and many people in Lydda heard, and in the country around. This healing of the man sick of the palsy and Peter's words to him, "Arise and make thy bed," remind us of the Lord's healing a man sick of the palsy in Capernaum. (Matthew 9:2-8)

The group of Christians in Joppa heard that Peter was in Lydda and sent asking him to come to them. Joppa was by the sea. A good woman named Dorcas had died, and they hoped that Peter could help them. It is a beautiful story. We will read it. (Acts 9:36-43)

The names Tabitha and Dorcas have the same meaning, a "gazelle." This miracle also reminds us of one of the Lord's miracles, the raising of the little daughter of Jairus, as we read how Peter put out those who were weeping and said, "Tabitha, arise." He too must have remembered what the Lord did and said at the house of Jairus, for he was one of those who were with Him there; and he knew that it was the Lord's power now which brought Tabitha to life.

If we should make a journey to the Holy Land we should very likely land at Joppa, or Jaffa, as it is now called, and should then ride across the green meadows and up into the hills to Jerusalem. There is no harbor where large ships can go in, but a reef of black rocks makes a shelter for boats. The boatmen in large boats with long oars row out to the ship and pull us in to the landing.

If you look on your map of Palestine and follow up the seacoast from Joppa, you will find Caesarea, the city where the Roman governor of the country lived. There were Roman soldiers there, and among them an officer, a centurion, named Cornelius. He was a good man; he prayed to God, and his family and the soldiers about him did the same; and he asked that God would show them what they ought to do. He gave much help to the Jews, though he was not a Jew. One day when Cornelius was at prayer an angel of the Lord came to him and told him to send men to Joppa to call for one Simon, whose surname was Peter, who lodged with one Simon, a tanner, whose house was by the sea. "He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." So he sent three trusted servants, one of them a soldier, telling them what the angel had said.

At the same time the Lord, also by a vision, made Peter ready to receive the messengers and to go with them. He was on the housetop for prayer, the flat earthen roof which was often reached by outside stairs, a quiet place used for sleeping and often as a place of prayer. Peter was hungry, and in a vision he saw what seemed like a great sheet let down by cords at the four corners. In it were animals and creeping things and birds of all kinds. A voice said, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." But Peter said, "Not so, Lord." For the rules of the Jews were very strict about what was clean to eat and what was not. There were only certain kinds of animals and birds that were used for food. But the voice said again, "What God hath cleansed that call not thou common." This was done three times, and the sheet with the animals was drawn up again to heaven. What could this vision mean? Peter was wondering what it could mean when three men stood at the gate asking for him. Who do you suppose they were? Once more the voice spoke to Peter, telling him to go with the men, for the Lord had sent them. So he went down from the housetop and brought them in and kept them over night, and the next day started with them and six friends from Joppa to go to Caesarea. He saw then that the vision had been sent to teach him that all people are the Lord's, Gentiles as well as Christians, and that he should go with these men.

It was quite a long journey from Joppa to Caesarea, farther than they could go in one day. It was the next day when they reached the home of Cornelius. He was ready and waiting for them, and had called together a company of his family and friends to hear what the man would say whom the Lord had sent to them to teach them. At first Cornelius worshiped Peter, but he told him to stand up, and went with him into the house. Peter then told how the Lord had told him to come. Cornelius told how the angel had told him to send for Peter. And Peter began to tell them about the Lord Jesus of Nazareth. They were very glad to hear, and as they listened the Holy Spirit came

upon them. Then they were baptized, and Peter stayed with them some days. Cornelius and his family were the first Gentiles to be received as Christian disciples. When the other disciples in Jerusalem heard of it they were troubled and thought Peter had done wrong in going to the Gentiles, but Peter showed them how the Lord had told him to go. So they began to learn that all people are the Lord's children, and they went out to teach not the Jews alone, but everybody, about the Lord. As we read on in the story we shall learn of long journeys which they took to teach people in countries far away.

## Junior

It is a beautiful story. You will want to read the whole of Acts 9 and 10. See what I have told the younger children, and study our map and little picture. Saron, or Sharon (Acts 9:3 5) was the name given to the Philistine meadows from Joppa northward to Mount Carmel. Joppa was the nearest landing place to Jerusalem. The cedar logs for Solomon's temple floated down from Mount Lebanon were landed here. There is no real harbor, but reefs which give shelter to small boats. The raising of Dorcas to life reminds us in several ways of the Lord's raising the daughter of Jairus. (Mark 5:35-43) Tabitha is the Hebrew name for a gazelle, and Dorcas is the name in Greek. Have you heard a society of women who sew for poor people called a Dorcas Society? You know now where it gets its name.

You remember the Lord's saying to the disciples in Acts 1: 8, that they should be witnesses unto Him "both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." How much of this promise has been fulfilled in the story so far as we have gone? We have learned of their teaching in Jerusalem, and Judea, and Samaria, and as far away as Damascus. Now it was time for them to go out more widely, to countries far away, and to Gentile people - to people who were not Jews and who were despised by the Jews because they did not have their religion. You know how the Jews thought that they were defiled if they touched a Gentile or went into a Gentile's house. It was why the priests who took the Lord to Pilate would not go into his palace, and Pilate came to them outside the gate. So far all the Christians were persons who had been Jews; all the preaching of the disciples had been to Jews; and we can hardly understand how hard it was for them to forget the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, and to go alike to all people, and to receive them alike into the Christian Church. The Lord had told them that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:47) He had charged them, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." (Matthew 28:19) But they were slow to remember and to grasp the meaning of many things that the Lord said. Our story today tells how the beginning was made of preaching to the Gentiles, and how the first converts from the Gentiles were received.

Caesarea was another town on the seashore, the home of the Roman governors of the country. We shall be in Caesarea again with Paul. But now we come to make acquaintance of the Roman centurion Cornelius. As we read what is said of him, we are reminded of the centurion whose servant the Lord healed, in Capernaum. (Matthew 8:5-10) There were among the Gentiles kindly devout people who were ready to learn of the Lord Jesus and to become His disciples.

What is said of Cornelius, that he was a devout man, giving much alms to the Jews, also reminds us of the centurion in Capernaum, of whom the Jews said that he was worthy, "for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue." (Luke 7:5) The centurion in the Gospel also had his

obedient servants and soldiers whom he could send on his errands; he, too, was modest in receiving the Lord into his house; and the Lord said of him, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." We find the same devout spirit and ready faith in the house of Cornelius.

Read now of the vision shown to Peter on the housetop in Joppa. (Acts 9:9-23) Do you see at once the meaning of the vision and why it was sent now to Peter?

The Lord in His own ministry had set aside some of the laws and traditions of the Jews, as those about keeping the Sabbath and about washing. He had ministered to the Gentiles, as to the centurion at Capernaum, to the Syrophenician woman, and probably to many in the country beyond Jordan. He had told the disciples that the gospel must be preached in all the world to every creature. Now He gave this vision to Peter to help him to begin this wider mission. The narrow and selfish spirit could have no place among Christians, who have the Lord's example of tenderness to all, and His command to preach to all nations.

It is hard to realize the hold which laws of defilement and rules of their own making had upon the Jews and upon the Lord's disciples, although the Lord said that nothing from without defiles, but what is from within. (Mark 7:2-5, 14-23) The Jews also had been taught to keep apart from other nations, and this was exaggerated to forbid entering a Gentile's house. (John 18:28) How much they had to learn before they could believe that the religion of Jesus Christ was for all nations and peoples of the earth! They were just beginning to learn this lesson, and we may remember Cornelius as the first Gentile to be received into the Christian company. You will want to read Peter's words to Cornelius and his family and friends gathered to hear him. Notice in Acts 10:38, Peter's brief description of the Lord, "who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him." We know how true this was, from the story of the Gospels. Can you think what occasion or occasions are referred to in verse 41, by the words, "who did eat and drink with Him, after He rose from the dead"? Compare Acts 10:26 with Revelation 19:10.

The Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius and his company, and they were baptized in the name of the Lord.

1. Who were the first Gentiles to be received as Christians?
2. How was Peter taught that it was right to receive them?
3. Tell me about Peter's visit to Cornelius.

## DEEPER STUDY

### Intermediate

The realization that Gentiles also could receive the Holy Spirit and become Christians came slowly. We see the beginning in the experience of Peter at Joppa and Caesarea, and we shall trace the development in following chapters of the Acts until it became the conviction of the Church. The Lord had foretold it in His final charge (Matthew 28:18-20), and in His words at the ascension. (Acts 1:8) But the great truth was slowly learned.

Our lesson brings to notice two respects in which the custom and even the law of the Jewish Church differed from the law for Christians. One was the Jewish law about animals that were clean or unclean for food. A distinction between clean and unclean beasts is made in the story of Noah (Genesis 7: 2), where it was commanded to take into the ark clean beasts by sevens and those not clean by twos. The law with regard to animals that were clean or unclean for food is given with great fullness of detail in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. No animal was clean for food which creeps upon the ground. They must also both divide the hoof and chew the cud. Of sea creatures only those might be eaten which have fins and scales. Like all requirements of the Jewish worship, these laws were given because they are representative of essential truths of spiritual life. All animals represent human affections. The general distinction of clean and unclean beasts means that there are both good and evil affections, some which are strengthening to the spiritual life and some which are not. (A.713-721)

Animals for food were especially distinguished by their chewing the cud and having divided hoofs. The chewing of the cud represents a careful examination of what is received into the mind. The first hasty swallowing is like an intellectual acceptance, but the second chewing is a careful search for goodness in all that is received. The hoof, like the hand, represents expression of the life in its contact with the world. The single hard hoof represents a contact which is satisfied to be true, but the divided hoof represents a contact in which there is also care for what is good and kind. Only affections for good in what is received and expressed are real food for the soul. This spiritual law can be kept without the literal observance, and perhaps was more truly kept by many Gentiles than by the Jews.

Another custom which also was in part a matter of law in the Jewish Church is changed with Christians, that which related to keeping separate and apart from other nations. The Jewish people were called the Lord's peculiar treasure (Exodus 19:5; Psalm 135:4, etc.) not because they were better than other peoples, but because they had the Scriptures, and represented a spiritual and heavenly life. (A. 8768) This life must be kept free from commingling with the natural and evil life represented by other nations. The principle of separation went even further. In A. 471 it is explained that in the most ancient times people were separated into houses, families, and tribes, each dwelling apart from the rest, not only to represent the order of heaven, where they live in societies, but also to keep distinct and to develop the kind of spiritual life which was characteristic of each family and tribe. "For this cause also it pleased the Lord that the Jewish Church should be distinguished into houses, families, and tribes, and that they should contract marriages within their families." External distinctions and separations which were merely representative have passed away with other representative things, but the spiritual order in our own lives and in the relations of our lives with others which these represented have eternal force and value. Peter and the Jewish Christians needed to lift their thought from the natural brotherhood of the Jews to the larger brotherhood which it represented, the spiritual brotherhood among all who are willing to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ. (Matthew 12:46-50)

The Jews took pride in being children of Abraham, in belonging to a tribe of Israel. What is really of value is to be children of the Lord, living in His ways. When we rise above material distinctions of race or nationality or caste or wealth, to the qualities of spiritual life, we may recognize children of the Lord and brethren in all races and religions, as the disciples in Jerusalem, on hearing Peter's story, "glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted

repentance unto life." (Acts 11:18) Read also Paul's words in Romans 10:12, 13. Read H. 318-328 on "Gentiles in Heaven."

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Heathen Converted to Christianity

We learned that a new church is established mainly among the heathen, comparatively few of a former church becoming members of the new church. There is generally, among those of an old church, a prejudice against heathen, because they do not believe as the church does. This prejudice was very strong among the Jews. Remember that they had "no dealings with the Samaritans," and that at the trial of Jesus the Jews did not dare enter the judgment hall of Pilate, he being a Roman and so a heathen, as it would defile them or make them unclean, and so unfit them to take part in the great feast of the Passover.

It almost looks from our today's chapter in Acts as if Simon Peter, who had been a Jew, shared this prejudice, and thought that only Jews would become followers of Jesus the Christ. He probably did not fully understand the Lord's injunction to "teach" (or, more literally, to "make disciples of") all nations; nor that the Lord's saying that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations" meant among the Gentiles. He may have thought that it meant those Jews who lived in other lands and spoke the tongues of the nations of those countries. Be that as it may, it was evidently necessary for Simon Peter to be taught by means of the vision, and also by means of the coming of the three men by Divine direction, that the "unclean," or heathen, were to become Christians as well as the "clean," or the Jews.

What a beautiful story this is in the Acts! See how the Lord hears the devout prayer of this good heathen, who believes in God, even though he may not have had a true conception as to who or what God is. For you know that the Romans worshiped many gods. Yet the Lord had respect to this Roman centurion, Cornelius, because he was an earnest and good man and wanted to know the truth. Indeed the Lord began with him to establish the Christian Church among the heathen.

Once before, during His presence on earth, the Lord had come in touch with a Roman centurion. Can you find the place in the Gospels? You will notice that the Lord had laid the foundation of all His subsequent work among Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles by His own acts, while He was still visibly among men.

In the second chapter of Acts the story is told how the Holy Spirit came down upon the disciples like cloven tongues of fire, which sat upon them, and, being filled with the Holy Spirit, they began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now we read how, when Peter visited Cornelius at Caesarea, and preached to the company of relatives and friends whom Cornelius had invited to hear Peter, the Holy Spirit came down upon these Gentiles, and they also "spake with new tongues."

All this was in fulfillment of what had been foretold by John the Baptist and by Jesus Himself. When John the Baptist called upon the people to repent because the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and when he baptized people, thus preparing them for the coming of the Lord, he told them, "I indeed baptize you with water, but there cometh one after me.... He shall baptize you with the

Holy Spirit and with fire." And Jesus Himself, after His resurrection and before His ascension to heaven, when commissioning the eleven apostles to go into the whole world and preach the gospel, said that those who would believe in Him would "speak with new tongues."

The coming down of the divided tongues as of fire upon the apostles was a Divine miracle. Being such, although it is told in the book of the Acts (which is not an inspired book of the Word, and does not contain a continuous internal sense), the miracle nevertheless signifies spiritual and heavenly things. This is what distinguishes Divine miracles from miracles that are not Divine. The fire signifies love. Here it signifies the love of truth. Their being filled with the Holy Spirit signified their receiving the Divine truth from the Lord. The new tongues signified their confessing the Lord from the love of truth. To love the truth is to be zealous for it.

It was similar with Cornelius and his company. They were in a state of mind ready to listen to and receive what Simon Peter said, and as they heard and believed what he said, the truths they heard became part of their minds, and from these truths, which were new to them, they confessed the Lord. Their speech thus was new.

It matters little whether or not we speak foreign languages, but it does matter a great deal whether we think from the heart the truths of genuine Christianity.

At the present day the Lord has very kindly and mercifully and lovingly given us genuine truths in abundance, so that we may and do "speak with new tongues." Sometimes other people do not understand us when we speak of our religion. The ideas we have and even the terms we use to express these new ideas are a "foreign tongue" to them. But if they are really in search of the Truth and pray to the Lord, as Cornelius did to God, then they will learn to understand and speak the new tongue; that is, think the new thoughts which the Lord reveals to us out of heaven from Himself, in the Writings of the New Church.

## **Lesson 39**

### **Acts 12: Peter Released from Prison**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

When Peter came back to Jerusalem he had a most interesting account to give of his experience at Joppa and Caesarea. What did he have to tell? Some of the disciples contended with him. They thought that he had done wrong in going into the house of a Gentile and in receiving Gentile people into the Christian company. Peter told them about his vision and about his visit in Caesarea, and the gift of the Holy Spirit to Cornelius and his family, and they felt that it was the Lord's will.

And now a new trouble came upon the disciples in Jerusalem. James, the brother of John, one of the Lord's twelve apostles, had been killed, and Peter was in prison. In the prison he was guarded by four soldiers. He slept between two soldiers, his hand on either side being chained to the hand

of a soldier. Two other soldiers guarded the door. But read what happened. (Acts 12: 5-10) Some of you have a picture of Peter being led by the angel out of prison.

When Peter found that he was really free he went to the house where he knew that Christian brethren were gathered in prayer for his safety. Read about his coming to the house and the opening of the door to him. He told what had happened. Soon he went away from Jerusalem. (Acts 12:11-17) This release of Peter was a new sign of the Lord's care for His disciples, and "the word of God grew and multiplied."

## **Junior**

In Acts 11 we read of Peter's return to Jerusalem to tell of his experience at Joppa and Caesarea. Why did some "contend" with Peter about it? (Verse 2) Note in verse 26, "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." You find Antioch to the north of Palestine, an important city. The name Christian was no doubt first applied, by others, and probably at first in scorn. Acts 12 tells of new trouble for the disciples in Jerusalem. The priests and leaders of the Jews had tried to stop their preaching and had failed. Their work prospered, and the company of disciples kept on growing. Now trouble and persecution came from "Herod the king." This was not the Herod who was king in Jerusalem when the wise men came seeking for the Lord, but a grandson of that king, Herod Agrippa I. He had powerful friends in Rome and ruled all Palestine for three years with the title of king, living some in Jerusalem but more in Caesarea. He was friendly to the Jews and their religion, and to please them he was against the Christian disciples. Finding that the killing of James pleased the Jews, he planned also to kill Peter when the celebration of the Passover and Easter should be over. "Four quaternions" in verse 4 means sixteen soldiers who guarded the prisoner four at a time, each quaternion for six hours. Peter slept between two soldiers, chained to one on either side, and two soldiers kept the door. Read the account of the release (verses 1-10). The home where Peter found the disciples gathered praying for him, was evidently a familiar meeting place. John, whose surname was Mark (verse 12) is one whom we hear more of in the Acts, and we know him as the writer of Mark's Gospel. James (verse 17) known as "brother of the Lord," was prominent among the disciples and was soon recognized as leader of the Church in Jerusalem.

The chapter tells also of the sudden death of Herod, which was recognized as punishment for his irreverence. On a state day in Caesarea he arrayed himself in a magnificent glittering silver robe and spoke to the people. Some flatterers suggested that he was more than human, and he did not rebuke them. The chapter shows how the Lord was protecting His disciples, not only from persecution by religious leaders, but from persecution by civil powers.

## **DEEPER STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

Watch the growing conviction with the disciples that Gentiles could become Christians without first conforming to the Jewish law. Peter himself at first doubted and must be prepared for his visit to Cornelius. We see the same reluctance in the brethren in Jerusalem, who argued with Peter for what he had done. The same chapter reports the same doubt among the brethren in Jerusalem in regard to the reception of many Gentile converts in Antioch, and they sent Barnabas

to examine the situation. See a further consideration and decision of the subject in Acts 15. The question comes before the Church presently in a larger way in connection with Paul's conversion of Gentiles to Christianity. Paul's conviction that the Christian gospel is for all is made clear in Romans 10:12-13. It should be clear to us what Paul means by teaching that Gentiles are "justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (Romans 3:28-31) He means that Gentiles can become Christians without assuming first obedience to the Jewish law. Paul always strongly taught the need for good life and charity. (Romans 2:6, 13; 1 Corinthians 13) Swedenborg recognized and all careful readers of Paul recognize that it was an utter misunderstanding of Paul's meaning to think that he taught salvation by faith alone, without good life. (R. 417, 675) Read again Romans 3:28-31 and make sure that you understand Paul's meaning.

We learned in Acts 4:17-20; 5:40-42, of the opposition of leaders of the Jews to the Christian disciples and their effort to stop their preaching. Now Acts 12 tells of persecution from civil powers. The Lord had foretold opposition from both sources. (Matthew 10:17-18) He was Himself condemned by the priests and by Pilate. There is in us hostility to the Lord both spiritual and worldly, to meet and overcome. In all these conflicts the Lord promises His help.

Imprisonment was among the persecutions which the Lord told the disciples that they would suffer, but He would be with them and protect them. "There shall not a hair of your head perish. In your patience you shall win your souls." (Luke 21:12-19) The release of Peter from prison was strong proof of the remembrance and safe-keeping of the Lord. We shall read also of the deliverance from prison of Paul and Silas in Acts 16:19-40. The persecutions predicted by the Lord were also spiritual persecutions, which all suffer from evil and selfishness in themselves. Spiritual imprisonment is the restriction and oppression of life arising from false hard thoughts and prejudices which we cherish toward other people. The Lord charged us to be well-minded toward others, or we shall build prison walls about ourselves from which there is no escape except by complete repentance. (Matthew 5:25, 26) From this more serious imprisonment of the soul we need deliverance by the Lord's help. May we find this help and enjoy the freedom of kind feeling and true thought! It is among the blessings which the Lord came into the world to bring. (Luke 4:19; A. 5096, 4956)

## **Lesson 40**

### **Acts 16; 17: Paul's Journeys in Asia Minor and Greece**

**Study in connection with John 1:18**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

The journeys of the disciples were now taking them to countries and cities far away from Jerusalem. Paul was one of those who took long journeys. On one of his journeys he came to Greece and to Athens. It was a beautiful city. Its finest buildings are now in ruins, but they are still wonderfully beautiful. There were, too, many beautiful statues. Some of the most lovely buildings were grouped together on a hill called the Acropolis.

The most beautiful buildings were temples, and were named for different gods and goddesses whom the Greeks believed in - the temple of Athena, the temple of Olympian Zeus, and many more. Paul saw these buildings in their glory, and many shrines and altars. There were altars along the road by which Paul came from the harbor, "to the unknown god." It was all very beautiful, but it must have made Paul sad to see such labor and skill spent in building temples to gods who were not really gods. "His spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry."

Paul soon was talking with the people of Athens, first with the Jews in their synagogue, and with the Greeks as he met them in the market place. The Athenians were people who loved to learn. "For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing." There were always people ready to listen to the great teachers, sitting about them in convenient places in the city or walking with them in the groves. They were glad to gather around Paul, to hear what he had to say.

They brought Paul to Areopagus, or Mars' Hill. A large rock at the top of the hill, and a level place before it, made this a convenient place for many people to hear him. He preached to them about the Lord Jesus Christ. They need not build altars to the unknown god, for they could now know and worship the real God who had come and lived with men. He did not dwell in temples made with hands, but was near to every one of them; they ought not to think of Him as an idol of gold or silver or stone. We can imagine as Paul said these things, that he pointed to some of the beautiful temples and statues of which the Athenians were so proud. Some mocked; some wished to hear more; some believed. (Read Acts 17:15-34)

## **Junior**

Much has happened between the first preaching in a Gentile's house, by Peter in Caesarea, which we learned of in a recent lesson, and Paul's preaching in Athens, which we read of today. At first when the apostles and brethren at Jerusalem learned that Peter had gone to the Gentiles, they contended with him; but he told them how the Lord had shown him that it was right to go, and they were glad. (Acts 11:1-18) Soon after, we find disciples preaching in Antioch, a city to the north of Palestine. (Have you your map before you? You will need it.) "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts 11:26)

In chapters 13 and 14 we learn of the first long missionary journey of Paul. Barnabas was his companion. They set out from Antioch, sailing from the seaport Seleucia. They passed through the island of Cyprus, which had been the home of Barnabas. (Acts 4:36, 37) Then they sailed north to the coast of Asia Minor, and visited especially the cities of Perga, Antioch (in Pisidia), Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, returning again to Antioch where they started. There were many things to encourage them and also persecutions on this journey. Read of their experience at Lystra. (Acts 14:8-20)

After this there was a serious contention among the Christians at Antioch whether Gentiles in becoming Christians must first become Jews, and observe all the ceremonies of the Jews. Paul and Barnabas and others were sent to lay the question before the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. They decided that the Gentile converts should be required to keep only a few necessary rules. (Acts 15:28, 29)

Now Paul started from Antioch on a second missionary journey, which proved to be much longer than the first, though it began by revisiting some of the cities which were visited on the first journey - Derbe, Lystra, Iconium. This time Silas was Paul's companion, and Timothy, whom he baptized and took with him from Lystra. They went by land to these places visited before, coming first to Derbe, and the journey reached to new places in central Asia Minor. Then guided by a vision, they crossed to Macedonia, and were the first to carry the Christian teaching into Europe. You will be interested to read about their experience in Philippi. (Acts 16:9-40) They were not well treated at Thessalonica, and unfriendly ones followed them to Berea. You begin to recognize the names of persons and churches to whom Paul addressed some of his Epistles: Timothy, Philippians, Thessalonians. From verses 13-15 of our chapter you learn how Paul came to Athens, and of his teaching while he was there alone, waiting for Timothy and Silas to come.

We must look at pictures of Athens, and read in your Greek history about the temples and the statues that made the city so beautiful. From the ruins of the temples which are still standing we can get a good idea of their wonderful beauty, the grace of their lines and the delicacy of the carving; they were standing in all their glory when Paul saw them. A group of buildings standing up above the city on the rocky hill of the Acropolis were among the most beautiful of all. One of these was the Parthenon, the temple of Athena, the goddess of war. In this temple was a most beautiful statue of the goddess, very large, the parts of the body that showed being of ivory, and the clothing of gold. On the Acropolis, near this temple, was another still larger statue of the goddess made of bronze, which overtopped the buildings; the spear and helmet could be seen by sailors out at sea. This was the city "wholly given to idolatry" or "full of idols" in which Paul found himself.

The chapter also gives a glimpse of the character of the people of Athens, always ready "to tell, or to hear some new thing." You have heard the names of some of the famous teachers, who used to gather groups of disciples about them in Athens, and their names are connected with the philosophy which they taught. You have heard of the wise old Socrates, and of his disciples Plato and Aristotle. Two other schools which grew out of the teaching of Socrates were the two named in our chapter - the Epicureans, named from their master Epicurus, and the Stoics, founded by Zeno. The word "epicure" now means one who is over-fond of good food, but the old Epicureans looked for the highest good in happiness of mind rather than in bodily pleasure. They denied the immortality of the soul. The Stoics taught temperance and self-denial, and the name is now applied to those who make nothing of suffering. Followers of both these kinds of thought were among those who gathered about Paul to hear what new thing he had to say about Jesus and the resurrection.

We are with Paul and the company on the Areopagus, or Mars' Hill. The name was also given to the higher council or court of Athens, which sat either on this hill or in a hall near by. A member of this council is named in the last verse of our chapter as one of those who believed Paul's teaching. The city was below them, and the Acropolis near by with its beautiful temples and great statue of Athena. Paul's words have new force if you have the scene in mind. How empty, how hollow, it all was, the temples and the philosophy. Paul told them of the One who came into the world to make religion real and living.

1. Where is Athens? For what was it famous?
2. What signs of idolatry did Paul see?

3. What in our chapter illustrates the inquiring mind of the people?
4. What was Paul's message to the Athenians?
5. How was it received?

## **DEEPER STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

In these accounts of Paul's journeys we make the acquaintance of churches and persons to whom Paul addressed epistles. We meet today Timothy, the Philippians and Thessalonians.

Paul's words in Acts 17:22, 23 are not intended to be disrespectful to the Athenians. He evidently wished to be conciliatory. He recognized in them an effort to reach the Divine, but neither with the Stoics nor the Epicureans, the two leading schools of philosophy, was the effort successful. The Stoics thought of God as a living force, and sought a freedom in soul by cultivating indifference to external pain or pleasure. The Epicureans thought of gods quite apart from human life, and for themselves sought happiness in pleasures, chiefly of a refined and cultured kind. Their philosophies gave them only vague thoughts of God. Paul wished that they might know Him as He had revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. Interesting things are told in Heaven and Hell about wise Gentiles of ancient days, showing how easily in the other world they learned about the Lord and His Divine Humanity. (H. 322, 323) The description of the Athenians as desiring above all things to tell or to hear some new thing (Acts 17: 21) touches a conspicuous trait of their character. In three Relations (T. 692, 693, 694) Swedenborg gives a picture of some Greek philosophers and their disciples in the spiritual world. They still keep their interest in learning something new. "What news from the earth?" they ask. They are still fond of discussing to learn the truth; and the good-hearted become wise in regard to the Lord and heaven, wiser than many Christians.

Idolatries came from perversion of the wisdom of the Ancient Church and of their knowledge of correspondences. Statues and pictures which to the wise ancients represented qualities of God were afterward regarded by worldly people as Divine and were worshiped. Read of the origin of idolatry in S. 23. Something of the ancient wisdom came from Asia into Greece, and much of correspondences was preserved in the Greek myths. (A.2762; T. 693; W. H. 4) But the temples and idols which surrounded Paul in Athens were beautiful forms that had largely lost their spiritual content. It would change religion from a form to a living reality and would satisfy the yearning for God, if the Athenians could know Jesus as the Christian disciples knew Him. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." (John 1:18)

## **TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES**

### **Leading Thought: The Unknown God**

If you will read the chapters which intervene between the last lesson and this, you will read the very interesting history of the conversion of many others, Jews and Gentiles, in various lands,

through the efforts of the apostles. The present lesson tells us of Paul's work at Athens, and we want to stop and know something about this celebrated city.

You will remember that the Ancient Church which had revelations from the Lord very much like those we of the New Church have, was established in a number of countries of Asia and Africa, among them being Phoenicia and Egypt. All Europe was Gentile. History records that the learning of Greece came originally from these two countries, and Athens became the principal seat of the arts and learning and wisdom of Greece. It was so celebrated that in the decadence of the Ancient Church, it had become the resort of philosophers and students from all the countries of the then civilized world.

The mythology of Greece, that is to say, the worship of the gods and goddesses, and the stories told about them, were all modeled upon the original true doctrines of the Ancient Church, only that in passing out of the Egyptian and Phoenician churches they became changed.

"But," you may ask, "since the Ancient Church worshiped only one God, how did the Greek mythology come to have so many gods?"

In the Ancient Church, the different attributes of the Lord, that is to say, the different good and true things which come from the one God into the hearts and minds of men, were personified: they made pictures of them. They knew that innocence was a holy virtue inspired by God, and so, because a babe shows forth innocence more than anyone else, they made pictures of babes, to designate innocence. Because men are intelligent, they made statues of strong men to represent intelligence. Because women are governed more by love than by truth, they made statues of women, and represented love by them. Because wisdom guards and defends man from evil, and repels assaults of falsity, they portrayed it by a statue clothed like a soldier. They had a great variety of pictures, some of which were in the forms of statues of stone or porcelain, or wood, or gold, or silver, some were carved in relief upon the temple walls, some were painted, etc. They were all helps in devotion to think about the things which the Lord God gives men.

But in course of time, as the Ancient Church declined, that is, as the people of the Church became less spiritually-minded, caring less for the things of heaven and more for the things of the world, loving money, and fame, and power, and pleasure, better than the Lord, and heaven, and usefulness, and the neighbor, they were no longer interested in knowing what the beautiful relief work and statues and paintings meant spiritually, but they worshiped the images themselves, and so made idols of them.

The Gentiles who received their religious ideas from them, did likewise. And yet the wisest among the Greeks knew that there is only one God, and that the gods and goddesses and lesser divinities represented the Divine things that come from that one supreme God. They also knew that God as He is in Himself could not be thought of or known. So men can see the sunlight in the clouds, and in objects on earth, but they cannot look into the sun itself. This was something which the wise Greeks had likewise learned from the Ancient Church.

The Old Testament teaches, "No man shall see Me and live." And the Gospel declares, "No man hath seen God at any time, the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath brought Him forth to view." (John 1:18) "To be in the bosom of" someone, does not mean to be in his bosom, but it means to be as close as the body is to the soul. So "the only-begotten Son," which

means, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ, is "in the bosom of God," meaning that the Infinite Divinity is His soul.

It is with the Lord as it is with man. We do not see each other's souls, but we see the body in which the soul manifests itself. That is, we know of the soul of another through his body in which the soul is.

Just so the soul of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the Invisible Deity and is called "the Father" in our Word, is made visible, or knowable, through His body, which is called "the Son." When we think of the Lord Jesus Christ as He was seen after His resurrection, then we think of the Lord our God. "In Christ Jesus dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead (this word means 'Divinity') bodily." (Colossians 2:9)

Now, something like this was what Paul was led to teach the people of Athens. He saw the altar dedicated to "the unknown god" and felt that he was sent by the Holy Spirit to tell people that the Lord had known of their ignorance of Him, but that now the time had come for them to remain ignorant no longer, but to know Him, by knowing the man-form with which He had clothed Himself, so that all people might see and know Him. Paul began telling them about God creating all things, and that men live from Him. This was something that the people of Athens had heard before, for the Greek poets and philosophers taught it and, in fact, Paul quoted their language, "in Him we live and move and have our being," "we are also His offspring." Now they must learn to realize that God, whose offspring they are, cannot be like "gold or silver or stone graven by art and man's device." Therefore they must no longer worship such idols, but "repent" of this worship, and know that God has manifested Himself by means of a Man, and that Man is Jesus Christ. The world is judged by Him, and they might know this from the fact that this Man was raised from the dead.

When Paul had reached this part of his speech, he was evidently not permitted to continue, for he was interrupted by men who mocked at him because he spoke of the resurrection. Yet some said that they would hear him again; and he had said enough to interest some people, among them being persons of high standing in the city.

Notice particularly, that Paul first urged them to repent, and then told them about "the Man" who was to judge the world. Herein Paul did as John the Baptist and the Lord Himself had done, and also as the other apostles did. They all preached "repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand," or "repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ."

We are told that the doctors of the Christian Church have not as yet known "that the one God, who is invisible, came into the world and assumed the Human, not only that He might redeem men, but also that He might become visible, and thus capable of being conjoined; for it is read, The Word was with God, and the Word was God; and the Word became flesh (John 1: 1, 14); and in Isaiah, A Child is born to us; a Son is given to us, whose name shall be called God, Hero, the Father of eternity (9:6); and in the prophets many times that Jehovah Himself was to come into the world, and to be the Redeemer; which also He became in the Human which He assumed.

"This church is the crown of all the churches that have hitherto been in the world, because it will worship the one visible God, in whom is the invisible God, as the soul is in the body." (T. 786, 787)

Before we leave this chapter read verse 21 again, "All the Athenians and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing." Other writers of antiquity speak of the same trait of the Athenians. People retain their characteristics after death, and we learn in the Writings, that the ancients from that part of Greece still retained their desire to know about things new, thousands of years later when Swedenborg visited them in their eternal homes in the spiritual world. Read in M. 182, 207, or in T. 692, 693, 694, how they repeatedly asked him, "What news from the earth?" This was not from idle curiosity, but from real desire to learn something new that is worth while knowing.

## **Lesson 41**

### **Acts 19: The Holy Spirit**

**Study in connection with John 11:15-18**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We were with Paul in Athens, a city where there were many great and beautiful temples and statues and altars; but they did not know about the Lord, and Paul told them about Him.

Today we go with Paul to another city, Ephesus. It was across the sea from Athens, one of the most important cities of Asia Minor. There was there a great temple to the goddess Artemis, or Diana, which was the pride of the city. There was in the temple an image of the goddess, which they said had fallen from heaven. Ephesus was the center of this worship for the country all around. It brought a great many people to the city, and made much business for the silversmiths and other workmen, for they made little shrines of Diana - little images of the goddess seated in a niche or shrine - and sold them to those who came to worship.

There were some Christians in Ephesus when Paul came on this visit, for other teachers had been working there. Paul lived with them a long time and taught and helped them. For three months he taught in the synagogue of the Jews and then for two years in a school. He worked early and late at his trade of tent-making. "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them."

There were troubles for Paul and the Christians at Ephesus; you can perhaps think why. Especially because their teaching began to interfere with the worship of Diana in the great temple of the city. The craftsmen made the trouble, especially the silversmiths, who thought that Paul was taking their trade away. They brought the people together in a great outdoor theater, cut out as such theaters used to be in the hillside. There they shouted long and loud for "Diana of the Ephesians." Let me read you a part of the story. (Acts 19:23-41)

The church in Ephesus grew, and the apostle John, who so dearly loved the Lord, became its much-loved leader. When the Lord gave to John messages to the seven churches in Asia, the first message was to the church in Ephesus. (Revelation 2:1.)

## **Junior**

Again a good deal has happened between Paul's preaching in Athens, and his work in Ephesus that we learn about today. From Athens Paul went on to Corinth (you will need your map), and a church was established in that city. From there he sailed to Jerusalem, stopping on the way a short time at Ephesus; and from Jerusalem he went to Antioch, the city from which he had set out on his journeys. Before long he started again from the same place on a third journey. He went by land, and after visiting old places and new places in Asia Minor, he came to Ephesus and stayed there more than two years. This is where we find him in our chapter.

The position of Ephesus made it important, for it could be reached by ships from the sea, and was at a point from which important roads led up into the highlands. The city was the center of the worship of a goddess whom the Greeks identified with their goddess Artemis or Diana. She was in Asia thought of as the goddess of life and fruitfulness in nature, and was represented by a figure with many breasts. Ephesus had the great temple of the goddess in its charge, and the worship was also, as our story shows, a source of profit to the people.

In regard to the beginning of Christian teaching in Ephesus before this visit of Paul, we learn something in Acts 18. A Jew from Alexandria named Apollos had been preaching there, who had now gone on to Corinth. The church in Ephesus had also had the help of Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, with whom Paul had lived at Corinth, working at the same trade of tent-making. They came with Paul to Ephesus when he passed on his way to Jerusalem, and remaining there they taught the people. This beginning had been made before Paul came and lived two years and more in Ephesus.

We begin our reading at chapter 19. Paul found some in Ephesus who knew about John the Baptist and his baptism, but not about the Holy Spirit and the wonderful power which it had brought to the Lord's disciples. Remember what John the Baptist himself said: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: . . . He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." (Matthew 3: 11) When they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came to them. The sign of its coming, the speaking with tongues and prophesying, reminds us of its coming upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. (Acts 2:1-13)

It was Paul's custom in any new place to begin his teaching among the Jews, his own people, and he did so in Ephesus. But afterward he separated the Christian disciples, and their place of meeting was in a school, where apparently both Jews and Greeks heard his instruction. The miracles of healing (verse 12) remind us how people were healed by touching the hem of the Lord's garment (Matthew 14:34-36), and how others wished that the shadow of Peter might fall on them. (Acts 5:15)

We learn now of opposition of two kinds which met the Christians, first from the exorcists, and second from the silversmiths and craftsmen. The exorcists claimed power by repeating of words to cast out devils and heal diseases. Certain incantations of this kind were believed to have come

down from Solomon; and the old historian Josephus, after speaking of these, adds, "And this method of curing is very prevalent among us up to the present time." "Vagabond" means "wandering" or "strolling." The public burning of the books - written scrolls - suggests what a quantity of formulas, etc., was used by those who claimed this power. This silver piece, no doubt, is the Attic drachma, worth about twenty cents. How much do you make the whole value?

And now the opposition of the craftsmen, who felt that their business was being taken away. Notice the name "that way" by which the Christian teaching was known. (Verse 23; Acts 9:2) Workmen of like occupation are mentioned with the silversmiths. Besides other workmen in metal, this may include workers in marble and terra-cotta, for many little shrines of these cheaper materials have been found. Even at that time workmen of one kind were banded together in a guild. Two of Paul's companions were hurried by the mob to the theater. You know what such theaters were, open to the sky, with row above row of stone seats - something like our baseball or football fields. Every city had such a theater for all great games and shows. Paul would have gone in to them, but his friends and the officers of the city both kept him back. The mob drowned all words with their cries, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." At length the town clerk, or secretary of the city, gained a hearing. He showed the people that there were right ways of settling any complaints which they might have against Paul, and dismissed them.

After Paul left Ephesus, it appears that Timothy remained for a time in charge of the church. Besides Paul's Epistles to the Ephesians, his Epistles to Timothy were written to him there. Ephesus was later the home of the apostle John. It was not far from Ephesus to the island of Patmos, where the Lord showed John the visions of the Revelation, and gave him the messages to the churches, among the rest to John's own church in Ephesus. You will like to read again the message. It is really a message to people of a certain quality, wherever they may be, but it interests us also as a little picture of the church which we are learning of today. (Revelation 2:1-7)

1. What idolatry had its seat in Ephesus?
2. Why were the Christians in Ephesus violently opposed?
3. What leaders of the church in Ephesus do you remember?
4. Where in the Bible do you find a message to the church in Ephesus?

## DEEPER STUDY

### Intermediate

The early verses of the chapter distinguish sharply between the baptism of repentance of John the Baptist and the Christian baptism with which came the Holy Spirit. In T. 690 it is explained that John's baptism represented the cleansing of the external man, but that Christian baptism represents the cleansing of the internal man, which is regeneration. "That they who were baptized with John's baptism became internal men when they received faith in Christ, and were then baptized in the name of Jesus, may be seen in the Acts of the Apostles 19:3-6." The difference between the external and negative work of reformation represented by John's baptism, and the internal and positive work of regeneration accomplished by the Lord in those who sincerely believe in Him, is further explained in E.475. The double phrase "baptism with the Holy Spirit and

"with fire" is used to indicate the operation of the Divine truth and the Divine love in the work of regeneration. (A. 9818) You remember how the same was represented on the day of Pentecost by the rushing mighty wind and the cloven tongues of fire.

The speaking with new tongues and prophesying (verse 6) reminds us of the day of Pentecost and of the promise in Mark 16:17. The promise is spiritually fulfilled in all sincere disciples of the Lord, as their minds are opened to new light and they are able to perceive and to express new truth about the Lord and heavenly life. The power then to receive and acknowledge the doctrines of the Christian Church, and the power now to receive and acknowledge the doctrines of the New Church, is a gift of new tongues. (E. 455, 706)

In the notes for younger classes we have referred to the ministry of the Apostle John in Ephesus as an interesting and important part of the history of the church in that city. The reference to the message to the church in Ephesus, in the Revelation, we have made with some hesitation, lest we might seem to limit to those in the natural Ephesus what is abundantly shown in E. 93, 95; R. 73; etc., to be a universal message to all who are in a certain spiritual state - "who primarily regard truths of doctrine and not goods of life." We may, however, assume that the church in Ephesus had something of the quality described in the message, which made that church a type of the class to whom the Lord is speaking.

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: The Holy Spirit

During our reading of the Acts we have learned much about the Holy Spirit, for the Christian Church was established by the Lord Jesus Christ, and after His ascension to heaven, by the Holy Spirit, which goes forth from Him. We learned that on the day of Pentecost it came upon the disciples like the rushing of a mighty wind, and rested upon each like cloven tongues of fire. We read about the apostles being filled with the Holy Spirit, and thus enabled to preach zealously, and to heal the sick and raise the dead. We read about the Holy Spirit coming down upon the Roman, Cornelius, and his company, at Caesarea, when Peter had preached to them, and even before they were baptized. And now we read about some people in Ephesus, who had been baptized with the baptism of John the Baptist, but as yet did not know anything about the Holy Spirit. Paul baptized them again, but this time with the baptism of the Lord, that is, "in the name of the Lord Jesus," and then when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied.

As we have read so much about the Holy Spirit, let us try to understand a little better what it is.

The Holy Spirit, as you have doubtless noticed from all these stories, is the emanation and influence which comes from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As we learned once before, it is like the influence of the sunshine from our sun, which lights up the world, warms it up, and gives life to all plants, and to the bodies of animals and men. Just as without sunshine our bodies could have no life, so without the Holy Spirit our souls could have no life.

We see objects in the world owing to the sunshine; we understand truth owing to the Holy Spirit. Our bodies are supple and able to move, owing to the sunshine; our souls can love what is good

and plan out what is right, owing to the Holy Spirit. Indeed, in heaven the Holy Spirit looks and feels like sunshine, for it is the spiritual sunshine coming down from the sun of heaven, in the midst of which is the Lord.

Now, the heavenly sunshine, or the truth and good which comes down from the Lord Jesus Christ, enters into the minds of angels; it warms their hearts, and lights up their understandings. But they do not keep it to themselves, but pass it on to others. Indeed, all the angels of the highest or celestial heaven pass on the warm love and bright wisdom to the angels of the middle or spiritual heaven; these pass it on to the angels of the lowest or natural heaven; these pass it on to good spirits in the world of spirits; and these pass it on to men on earth!

And, wonderful to tell, although the angels pass it on from one to another, they do not lose it, but it stays with them! For the Lord's Love and Wisdom are inexhaustible, and He keeps on continually and forever giving it to angels and men - the more they give to others so much the more they receive from Him.

But you must clearly understand that, although one angelic heaven passes the love and wisdom which the Lord gives them, to another heaven, the Lord also gives these directly to each heaven, and to men on earth. This is what is called "mediate" and "immediate" influx. That is, the Lord's Divine sunshine inflows into men by means of angels and spirits, and also directly from Himself.

Anyone who receives this wonderful Divine influx from the Lord is just as much in the Lord's presence as if he were living in the time when the Lord was on earth, and heard the Lord speaking to him. He tells us this in the Gospel according to John. There the Holy Spirit is called also by other names, besides "the Holy Spirit." It is called "the Comforter" (or "Paraclete"), and also "the Spirit of Truth." Promising that it will come after He Himself should have ascended to heaven, the Lord said that the world will not be able to receive it, "because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (John 14:17)

People may misunderstand this language, as if the Lord were speaking of the Comforter as another person. But the Lord here used figurative language; and in order to correct any misunderstanding, He added, "I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you," that is, this Paraclete that would come to them is not another person, but is Himself, His own personal influence.

A child needs to have a father to teach him the truth and to guide him to be good. So we all need our heavenly Father to teach us the truth and to guide us to be good. A child that has no father or mother is an orphan. People are orphans when they have not the Lord as their father. And though the Lord was going to leave the world, yet He was going to be with all who look to Him as their father. While He was with them, He taught them the Truth. Now that He was going out of the world, He would not leave them orphans - without His truth. He gave and gives men His truth, and He also led and leads them to be good. That is what He meant by saying, "I will come to you."

When a candidate for the ministry or priesthood is introduced into the priesthood, the Lord promises him the Holy Spirit. He promises to be especially with him and give him such special gifts that he may be able to see and understand the truth, and to preach it with zeal. And just as in the story in the Acts, Paul laid his hands on the people in Ephesus, and the Holy Spirit then came

down on them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied, so nowadays the ordaining minister lays his hands on the candidate's head to represent that the Holy Spirit will be passed on to him.

And whatever truth the minister preaches is not his own truth; it is not his property; it still belongs to the Lord. It is the Holy Spirit. And by the minister's preaching, this truth passes on to the people. But at the same time, the Lord also influences the people directly from Himself.

It is of especial interest to know about the beginning of the Christian Church in Ephesus, because it is the first of "the seven churches which are in Asia," which are described in the Book of Revelation. (Revelation 2 and 3) This book, as you know, is part of the inspired Word of the Lord, containing an internal sense. It has been very carefully explained by the Lord through His servant Swedenborg, in the two works, *The Apocalypse Revealed* and *The Apocalypse Explained*.

You may read more about the beginnings of the Church in Ephesus in Acts 18:18-28; 20:16-38.

## **Lesson 42**

### **Acts 21:30-40; 23:22-35; 24: Paul Seized at Jerusalem Before Felix**

**Study in connection with John 15:18-21; 16:1-3**

## **THE STORY**

### **Primary**

The Lord's disciples had been taking journeys far away from Jerusalem to tell people about the Lord. The Twelve whom the Lord especially chose and sent out were called apostles. (Luke 6:13) Afterward Paul and other leaders among the disciples were also called apostles. Paul especially had traveled far away. We have heard of him at Athens and Ephesus and other places. Now he was coming back to Jerusalem from one of his long journeys to tell what he had done and how the Lord had given His blessing to many Gentile people in far-off places. For Jerusalem was still like the home of the Christian Church, and coming to Jerusalem was like coming home to tell what they had done. It was a little like the coming back of the twelve apostles to the Lord when He first sent them out, to tell Him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. (Mark 6:30)

As Paul was journeying to Jerusalem, he knew in his heart that he would never see again the friends that he was leaving in the cities that he passed. The friends knew it, too, and in some places they would have hindered Paul from going to Jerusalem, but he felt that his duty called him there. There were touching farewells as they said, good-bye to Paul, or kneeled and prayed with him on the shore.

When he reached Jerusalem, the leaders among the Christians came together to listen to Paul's story, and they were very glad. But there were Jews who were angry with Paul because he had been so friendly to the Gentiles, and because when he received them as Christians he did not require them to keep all the many rules of the Jews about washings and sacrifices and a hundred other things. Many Jews, and Christians who had been Jews, were angry with Paul for this, and

they said that he was turning Jews against the law of Moses and the temple. There was great excitement about it in, Jerusalem, until these enemies of Paul seized him one day in the temple and dragged him out and began beating him, and would have killed him, as you remember Stephen had been killed long before.

But Paul was not killed, for the chief captain of the Roman soldiers in Jerusalem heard of the disturbance, and came running with soldiers and took Paul and bound him and carried him to the castle, the strong building where the soldiers lived near to the temple. The soldiers carried Paul to the castle; the angry people followed. The captain let Paul speak to the crowd from the steps of the castle, and he told them who he was and the story that you know about the vision as he went to Damascus, which led him to become a Christian. They listened to his story until he told how the Lord had sent him to the Gentiles. At that word their anger broke out again, and the captain had to take Paul inside the castle for safety. The soldiers had respect for Paul when they knew that he was a Roman.

But Paul's enemies did not rest; some of them were determined to kill him. So the captain sent him away by night with a strong guard of soldiers, to the governor, Felix, at Caesarea.

We follow Paul to Caesarea, where we were once before with Peter, the home of the Roman governor of the country. The governor now was Felix. He knew that Paul had done nothing wrong, but he kept him a long time a prisoner. His friends were allowed to come and see him, and Paul was allowed to speak for himself before the governor. Paul was still a prisoner when Felix handed over the office to Festus, a new governor. Still Paul was kindly treated and might have been set free, but he had appealed for trial before Caesar, the emperor at Rome, and Festus was waiting for a chance to send Paul to Rome. Read about Paul and Felix in Acts 24:10-27.

## **Junior**

If we pick up the thread of our story where we left it, we find Paul in Ephesus and visit with him again the churches in Macedonia and Greece. Then we hasten back with him to Jerusalem, which he was anxious to reach by Pentecost. Notice a number of times in this story the expressions, "We sailed," "We abode," etc., showing that Luke, who writes the narrative, was one of the party. Paul felt that danger awaited him, and that he was saying farewell for the last time. Read of his last words with the elders from Ephesus, and with his friends at Tyre and at Caesarea. (Acts 20:17-38; 21:4-14) The James mentioned in verse 18 is mentioned also in other places as the head of the church in Jerusalem. (Acts 12:17; 15:13) He is believed to be the James named in the Gospels as a brother of the Lord. (Matthew 13:55) These leaders of the church were glad to hear Paul's story, but they knew that there was much angry feeling against Paul - the report had been spread that he was not only friendly with the Gentiles, but that he was teaching Jews to neglect the law of Moses and the temple. This will help you, to understand what they advised Paul to do. (Acts 21:23-29) They wished him to join a little company of Jewish Christians who were keeping a Nazarite vow, and were performing in the temple the acts that belonged to the last days of that vow. (It was common for one to join others in these ceremonies even when he had not kept the full period of the vow himself.) This public observance of a Jewish ceremony they thought would reassure those who had heard that Paul was teaching neglect of the Jewish law. But it did not have this effect, and the disturbance arose that we read of in our story. Begin to read at verse 30.

Paul would probably have been killed as Stephen was, had not the Roman captain and soldiers rescued him from the crowd and hurried him to the castle of Antonia, where Roman troops were quartered, overlooking the temple, and ready in case of trouble.

Notice Paul's claim to Roman citizenship (Acts 21:39, and more fully in 22:25-29), and the magic effect that it had in gaining respectful treatment from the Roman soldiers. The Roman citizenship, with the privileges that came with it, was sometimes bought, as by the captain, but it was Paul's by birth. Probably, for some reason not told, citizenship had been conferred upon his family. You read with interest Paul's own account of his conversation. (Acts 22:1-16, and again in 26:1-8) Notice how the confusion broke out at the word Gentiles (Acts 22:21), as it broke out in the crowd at Athens, at the mention of the resurrection. (Acts 17:31, 32)

The captain brought Paul once more before the Jews, this time before formal council, for he saw that the trouble was upon religious matters. (Acts 22:30-23:10) The meeting broke up in disorder - Pharisees against Sadducees - and the captain took Paul again to the castle for safety. Paul's saying in verse 5, "I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest," is thought by some to mean that Paul did not have good sight, but for other reasons he might not have known. Then follows the story of the conspiracy to kill Paul, and of his being sent at night with a strong guard to Caesarea. He spoke there before Felix, the governor, and again before Festus, who followed Felix in the office, but appealed his case, as a Roman citizen had a right to do, to Caesar. The emperor at this time was Nero. This led to his being sent to Rome.

The effect of Paul's preaching upon Felix, "as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," reminds us of the effect of John the Baptist's preaching upon Herod. (Acts 24:25; Mark 6:20) Paul's speech before Festus and Agrippa (one of the family of Herods) in chapter 26 you will like sometime to read. Agrippa was not a man to be deeply influenced by Paul's preaching. His words, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," are more truly translated in the Revised Version, "With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian." And remember the tone of scorn in which the word "Christian" was spoken; for as yet it was used only by their enemies in contempt. Next time the voyage to Rome.

After running over this story of Paul, telling some and reading some, read carefully the Lord's prediction of these things in John 15:18-21; 16:1-3. The Lord who foretold the disciples' trials was with them to strengthen and comfort them when the trials came. When Paul was in the castle of Antonia, "the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."

1. Why was there an outbreak against Paul on his last visit to Jerusalem?
2. Of what use to him was his Roman citizenship?
3. How did the Lord strengthen him?
4. How did this violence against Paul lead to his going to Caesarea and to Rome?

## DEEPER STUDY

### Intermediate

We have kept ourselves reminded of the Lord's predictions of persecutions which the disciples would suffer. He made such predictions when He sent out the twelve on their first mission in Galilee (Matthew 10: 16-22). These were not immediately fulfilled, but had fulfillment when the disciples went out on their larger mission into the world. (See also John 15:18-21 and 16:1-3.) With these predictions were joined promises of the Lord's presence with the disciples, protecting them and teaching them what to say. We do well to note the many passages in the Acts which tell of the Lord's presence with the disciples, guiding and strengthening them. Besides the evidence of His presence in the power given to the disciples to do miracles and to preach (Mark 16:20), there are many instances of visions instructing them where to go, the opening of prison doors and the word of cheer to Paul imprisoned in the castle. In this story of the apostles we see fulfillment of the Lord's promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:20) The Lord's presence and help are no less real with us. We know that it is so, and we must go forward meeting trials and duties in the courage and strength of this knowledge. More and more we shall be conscious of the Lord's deeper blessings of guidance and protection. The promise is still in force, "Lo, I am with you always."

We have thought of the Lord's predictions of opposition and persecution and of His promises of protection and guidance as applying personally to the apostles. They have also a wider meaning and a meaning for all time, for the apostles in an impersonal sense are the Christian truths which the Lord sends into the world. This wider and more impersonal meaning is a help in understanding the Lord's words in Matthew 16:28, "There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom"; and again in John 21: 22, when the Lord said, concerning the apostle John, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" The same thought helps us to understand the Lord's saying that the twelve apostles should sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matthew 19:28) It helps us also to see why the names of the twelve apostles were seen written on the foundations of the holy city. (Revelation 21:14) The Lord's protection and power were not only with the apostles, but are always with His truth. The Lord's providence and power have been and still are over the Bible in its wonderful preservation and distribution. They are over true doctrines revealed from His Word. The Word and the doctrines will meet with persecutions. Some will think that in opposing them they are doing God service. The Lord's power, not ours, protects His truth and gives it success as it goes forth into the world. "So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isaiah 55:11; R.903; E. 137; A. 10683)

We have learned that "the Father" means the Divine goodness, and "the Son," the Divine truth. The Jews were not good and they were not true. They did not "know"- that is, they did not love - the Divine goodness, and they did not know the Divine truth. They did not love the Lord God Jesus Christ, because He is the Father and the Son: the Divine good and the Divine truth. Now, Paul had preached the Lord Jesus Christ and His resurrection, and had converted many people of the Jews and of the Gentiles, in other countries. And as the Jews hated the Lord, of course they hated Paul, who preached the Lord. In wishing to kill Paul, they showed that they wanted to bind the truth, and to kill out the Lord's influence.

Agabus, as a prophet, represented this by binding his hands and his feet.

But, although the prophet forewarned Paul as to what would surely happen to him if he went to Jerusalem, and although the Christians at Caesarea pleaded with him not to go, until he felt broken-hearted over their affectionate anxiety, and although he was free to go or not to go, he declared his willingness not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

As we follow the story in today's lesson, where Paul takes some men with him to the temple, to observe the law of the Nazariteship (Numbers 6) (see also Acts 18:18), we see that those of the early Christians who had been converted from Judaism, still continued to perform the rites prescribed by the Jewish Church. This probably continued until, as the Lord had predicted, the city of Jerusalem was destroyed, which was done by Titus the Roman general, about ten years after the arrest of Paul, which we are reading about. With the destruction of Jerusalem, of course, the temple was also destroyed. The Roman soldiers carried away the sacred furniture, and a picture of the candlestick and of the table of showbread carried in triumph by the Romans, was sculptured upon the Arch of Titus in Rome, where, although much defaced, this bas-relief can be seen to this day. With the destruction of the temple, the Jewish representative worship came absolutely to an end, for they could worship according to "The Law" only where the temple was. And the Jewish converts to Christianity doubtless then ceased performing any of the distinctive Jewish ceremonies, retaining only the two representative rites which the Lord Jesus Christ had instituted: Baptism, to take the place of the numerous washings that had been observed in the Jewish Church, and the Holy Supper, in place of their many sacrifices.

Since our next lesson will be about an adventure that happened to Paul while he was being taken by ship to Rome, we will take a look ahead at the intervening chapters, where we see that the reason Paul repeatedly gave for his persecution by the Jews, was: "Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." (Acts 23:6; 24:15, 21; 26:6, 8, and on) He laid great stress on the fact that he preached the resurrection from the dead, and bore witness, from his own experience, that the Lord Jesus Christ was risen from the dead.

As it was in the beginning of the First Christian Church, so it is now in the beginning of the New Christian Church. One of the chief reasons why more people do not accept the Doctrines of the New Jerusalem seems to be that they tell plainly about man's resurrection, and what he then does. Swedenborg tells us, from his own experience, and from the internal sense of the Word, very much about the life of spirits and angels in the other world: what they look like, how they live, what they love, and think, and say, and do. Moreover, the chief teaching of the New Church is that the Lord arose from the dead with his whole body completely made Divine or "glorified," and that in this His glorified body He rules heaven and earth.

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### **Leading Thought: Seeking to Kill the Lord's Apostles**

"The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." (John 15:20) "The time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God

service. And these things will they do unto you, because they know not the Father, nor Me." (John 16:2, 3)

Although, when the Lord spoke these words, He referred to His second coming, and meant them to be understood spiritually, yet we have seen from the early history of the Apostolic Church, as told in the Acts of the Apostles, that they also were fulfilled literally. We have another instance of such literal fulfillment in the present story of Paul. For today we read how the Jews tried him, and even after the Roman soldiers arrested him and so rescued him from the Jewish mob, they continued their efforts to have him punished.

In subsequent chapters we read that King Agrippa and Festus the Governor were convinced of his innocence, and would have set him free, had he not appealed to Caesar, the Emperor. He was therefore taken to Rome, where the Emperor was. Was he set free there? The last that the Acts tell us of him there is that he waited for two years for his trial, during which time he was permitted to live in his own rented house and live as he wished, only that a soldier kept guard over his dwelling. Many would come to see him, and he continued preaching. No one knows what became of him at last. There are traditions that he was beheaded, but there is no authentic record of this fact.

But to return to our lesson. On a former occasion we learned that the prophets of old, representing the Lord and His word, used to teach people about the state of the church - that is to say, how the church really felt toward the Lord - by doing things to themselves that represented it. And they also foretold things to come. In the Acts we read about a prophet in the days of the apostles, who did something of the kind. Agabus was his name. We first read about him in the ninth chapter, verses 28 and 29, that he foretold a dearth, which led the Christians at Antioch to send relief to their brethren in Judea. Now we read about him again. He came to Caesarea, to the house of Philip the evangelist (this was the deacon Philip who had converted the Ethiopian eunuch), where Paul was stopping on his way to Jerusalem, and he foretold from the Holy Spirit, that Paul would be bound and delivered to "the Gentiles," meaning the Roman authorities.

Now, why did the Jews at Jerusalem wish to kill Paul? The Lord had foretold the reason: "Because they know not the Father, nor Me."

## **Lesson 43**

### **Acts 27, 28: Paul's Voyage to Rome**

**Study in connection with Luke: 10:18-20**

## **THE STORY**

### **Primary**

We have been with Paul on long journeys, when he went to far-off places to tell people about the Lord. Today we are, with him on another long journey. He was being sent as a prisoner to Rome. The Lord's power had been with him in all his journeys, and it was with him now, protecting him

and helping him in wonderful ways. They went by ship from Caesarea on the coast of Palestine. The ships in those days were small and were often driven much out of their way by winds and storms; very different from the great ships that we have now, which keep straight on their course through all kinds of weather. On one of the ships that sail the Mediterranean now it would be an easy voyage of a few days. from Caesarea to Rome, but the ship in which Paul sailed was driven here and there, sailing under the shelter of some of the islands, and stopping at a number of places, and, worst of all, they were shipwrecked on the shore of Melita, which is now called Malta, a little island south of Sicily.

At one time they had found shelter in a harbor called Fair Havens. It was autumn, a season for storms, but the south winds blew softly and they left the harbor. Paul warned them not to go, for the Lord showed him that there was danger both to the cargo and to the people on the ship. And so it was, for soon a great storm struck them and the ship was driven by a northeast wind. As the storm continued they lightened the ship by throwing overboard some of the cargo, which seems to have been grain that they were carrying from Alexandria to Italy, and tackle belonging to the ship. Still the storm continued, neither sun nor stars were seen for many days, which made it hard to know which way they were going, and they lost all hope of being saved.

But now Paul spoke again to them. Before he had warned them not to leave the harbor; now he told them to be of good cheer. The ship would be lost, but all the people on board would be saved; for an angel of the Lord had stood by Paul in the night, saying, "Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." What Paul told them before of the danger had come true, so now they were more ready to believe him, and to do some things that Paul told them to do.

Now they were drifting on a shore. They put out anchors to try to hold the ship off the rocks. But with the daylight seeing a creek or bay with a beach, they took up the anchors and spread the sail and drove the ship ashore. The bow stuck fast, and the people all got safely to the land - there were in the ship two hundred and seventy-six persons - some swimming and some on pieces of the ship. "And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land," as the angel of the Lord had told Paul it would be.

The story speaks of the people of the island as "barbarous people," for the Greeks and Romans called all people by that name who did not speak their language. They showed the shipwrecked people no little kindness, at first by building a great fire for them on the beach, and afterward by making them comfortable for three months, until there was a chance for them to continue their journey to Rome in another ship. They also saw wonderful things that the Lord gave Paul power to do. One wonderful thing happened as Paul was throwing on the fire a bundle of sticks that he had gathered. A poisonous snake, feeling the heat, sprang away from the fire and fastened itself on his hand. Those who saw it thought that his hand would swell up with the poison, or that he would quickly fall down dead. But "he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm." The Lord had once promised among signs that should follow those that believed on Him: "They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." (Mark 16:18) At another time He had said: "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." (Luke 10:19) The people of Malta also saw the Lord's power with Paul when he healed the father of the chief man of

the island, and others who were sick. So the Lord was with His disciples wherever they went on sea and on land, protecting them from harm and giving them power to do good.

The Lord kept Paul and his companions safe and brought them to their journey's end. They landed near Naples and then went to Rome by the Appian Way. Paul was a prisoner, but was allowed to live in his own rented house and to teach the many people who came to him.

## **Junior**

We have the interesting story of Paul's voyage from Caesarea on the coast of Palestine, where he was kept a prisoner by Festus, to Rome. He was being sent because he had appealed his case to Caesar, had claimed the right to have it decided in Rome. The story of the voyage shows us how primitive ships and sailing were in those days, reminding us of the adventures of Odysseus in these same waters. Have the little map before you, which helped us in Paul's missionary journeys, and draw as well as you can the line of the voyage.

The voyage began at Caesarea on the coast of Palestine. They sailed in a ship of Adramyttium, which was a seaport in Mysia in the northwest corner of Asia Minor. This would take them to ports where they could change to some ship going to Italy. The first stop was at Sidon. They sailed north of Cyprus, under the shelter of the island, and changed at Myra, in Lycia, to an Alexandrian ship loaded with grain for Italy. You find Cnidus at the extreme southwestern point of Asia Minor. Now look southward, for we find the ship with difficulty passing Cape Salmone at the eastern end of Crete, the modern Candia, and finding shelter at Fair Havens (still so called) at the middle of the southern shore. Sailing was now dangerous "because the fast was now already past" - the fast of atonement day, in September or October. Phenice, to which place they intended to go, was a little farther westward on the shore of Crete. Clauda is a little island to which they were carried by the northeast wind that drove them off shore. In verse 16 we read of the difficulty that they had in hoisting on board the small boat that they towed in good weather. The next verse refers to the old custom of drawing strong cables around the hull of the vessel to help hold it together. The quick-sands, which they feared, were the shoal Syrtis Major, lying off the north coast of Africa, east of Tripoli. Now they were caught by the winds and driven helpless before the storm, and ran the ship ashore on the island of Melita, today called Malta. When the voyage was resumed, after three months, in another ship, they passed up between Sicily and the toe of Italy, touching at Syracuse on one side and at Rhegium on the other, and landing at Puteoli, near Naples. They were met by friends as they went on to Rome by the famous Appian Way. There was already a Christian Church in Rome, to whom Paul's Epistles to the Romans had been written. Now, although a prisoner, he was a power in the Church. There is no certain knowledge of Paul beyond the record of Acts. There is a tradition that he was killed in a persecution of the Christians, but it is only a tradition.

Notice especially in this story how the Lord was with Paul in this dangerous journey. His providence was over all the events which led to the taking of Paul and sending him to Rome, for there was a work for Paul to do there. (Acts 23:11) And now we see His care all the way along. He gave a word of warning to Paul to speak before they left Fair Havens, and afterward words of encouragement in the storm, and made him also the means of saving the company. (Verse 31) Through it all we see the Lord's providence bringing Paul to Rome to do the work that was needed of him there. (Verse 24) The lesson of the Lord's care in the storm is very plain and

important; the necessity for faithfully doing our part with all human skill, but of the Lord's overruling power, accomplishing His good purpose. We learn also of the Lord's power over the storm, in a Psalm and in the Gospels. We should remember it in a thunderstorm, and in any time of danger on a journey or at home. If we are doing our duty we need not fear; the Lord is with us to protect us; whatever happens will lead to good.

See also the power of the Lord in protecting Paul from the bite of the poisonous snake, and in healing people of the island. You have been told, too, that there are temptations which creep upon us like a snake, to bite us and destroy our spiritual life. They are the temptations to indulge the pleasures of the senses, pleasant things of sight, and taste, and touch. They creep upon us very stealthily, but they fasten themselves upon us with such power that it is almost impossible to shake them off. But the Lord gives us power to shake off these venomous beasts, to refuse to look at or taste or touch things that we know we ought not; and if we do it promptly and bravely, He protects us so that we take no harm. It will help you to be prompt in dealing with any such temptation, to know that it is a viper, a poisonous snake, coiling about you or fastening upon your hand. Shake it off.

Remember the Lord's promise for those who believed on Him: "They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them." (Mark 16:18) At another time He said, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." (Luke 10:19) In the story of Paul we have traced the fulfillment of the Lord's words to Ananias in Damascus, "He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15); and the words spoken to Paul in Jerusalem, "Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." (Acts 23:11)

1. How did the conditions of Paul's journey to Rome differ from the conditions of his other journeys?
2. Trace me the voyage on the map.
3. How was the Lord's care shown on the voyage?
4. What sign of the Lord's power with His Apostle was seen on the beach where they were shipwrecked?
5. When had such power been promised?

## DEEPER STUDY

### Intermediate

The story shows clearly the watchful and protecting presence of the Lord in the storm, making possible a calmness and cheerfulness in the presence of danger. What we are taught about the providence of the Lord in every smallest circumstance of life and about the sphere of Divine protection that is about us, especially when we are going about our duty, should give us always this same calmness and cheerfulness. (A. 5508, 6493; M. 386)

Keep in mind the thought that we had in a previous lesson, that the promises of protection given to the Lord's disciples are in a broader sense promises of the Lord's care for the principles of Christian truth and goodness for which the disciples stood. The Lord is always with truth and goodness to protect them, to make them powerful and successful. "So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I, sent it." (Isaiah 55:11) In the Revelation one was seen upon a white horse who "went forth conquering and to conquer." "And His name is called The Word of God." (Revelation 6:2; 19:13)

Make a special study of the promise to them that believe in the Lord that they shall have power to take up serpents. Find help in God's Explanation of Bible Symbolism [originally titled The Language of Parable], pp. 150-157. All animals represent affections. Serpents represent affections which are nearest to the world, affections for pleasant things of sense and confidence in the appearance of things to the senses. These are good in their place, but the serpent is more subtle than all beasts. They creep in almost unnoticed; they charm even while they get their coils about us, and benumb us with their bite. This was the temptation that crept into Eden and led men to judge for themselves good and evil. Study especially the story of the fiery serpents that bit the children of Israel in the wilderness, and of the brazen serpent raised on a pole which healed them. (Numbers 21:5-9; John 3:14, 15) The serpent of brass raised upon the pole is the emblem of our Lord's victories over all temptations of the senses and of His power to give us victory in our temptations if we look to Him for help. We see then the meaning of the promise to them that believe (Mark 16:17, 18; Luke 10:19); and to those who are children in their innocence and trust. (Isaiah 11:8-9) Find much help in E. 581; A. 194-197; R.455.

While we have been studying the story of Paul, a question has been asked about notes in Swedenborg's Spiritual Diary which seem unfavorable to the character of Paul. They do show that Paul took with him to the other world desires for eminence and rule which are not heavenly. It is not said that this is his final state.

## TOPICAL AND DOCTRINAL NOTES

### Leading Thought: Power over Serpents

The Lord sent out twelve apostles. He also sent out seventy others. After His resurrection still others were sent out. On the occasion when the seventy came back from their first tour, they told Him how even the devils were subject to them through His name. He told them that this was in consequence of His having overcome Satan, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." And He continued, "I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you." (Luke 10:17-19)

This story tells us that this power was also granted to Paul, who had become His apostle after His resurrection. Though the viper bit him, yet greatly to the surprise of the people who felt sure that he would swell up and die from the poison, the bite did not hurt Paul. And we are also told how he healed many of their sicknesses. While reading all this, let us remember what the Lord told the seventy, after speaking of the power He had given them, "Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

The power over diseases of the body and the performance of other miracles was granted by the Lord to the apostles in the beginning of the Christian Church, because in no other way could they be brought to believe in the Divinity of the Lord. But after belief in Him was once established, miracles ceased. And this was because true belief comes through the reason. Miracles compel people to believe, and forced belief is not true belief, although it may lead to it.

When the Lord raised up Swedenborg as His servant at His second coming, people maintained that if his revelations were Divine, he should perform some miracle or show some sign so that they might be sure that the Lord had appeared to him and appointed him to the office of revelator. But Swedenborg showed them that the New Church is to be built up through a rational belief, and therefore such miracles as "healing the sick, raising the dead to life, driving out evil spirits, and having power to tread on serpents and scorpions and being hurt by nothing" would not be performed in the New Church. Instead, people would come to understand about the Lord and His Word, and the holy life of regeneration, because they earnestly wish to know God, and therefore study the revelations made to the New Church.

He referred them to the miracles that were performed by Simon Magus, of whom we read in the Acts, and also by many people in the Roman Catholic Church, where thousands of people have been cured; which shows that those who are in false beliefs can also perform miracles, and that miracles make people believe what is false as well as what is true.

Once, when Swedenborg was visiting in a society of angels (M. 532-535), some of the wise angels of that society asked him what news there was from the earth, and he told them about the many revelations the Lord was then making through him, Swedenborg. After he had a long conversation about them, and they rejoiced that now men on earth can know what angels in heaven know, there were some spirits below who spitefully said:

"Perform miracles, and we will believe."

He asked them whether the revelations the Lord made through him were not miracles? And they answered, "No."

"What miracles, then?" he asked.

"Manifest and reveal future events, and we will have faith," said they.

"Such things are not granted from heaven," answered Swedenborg, "since, so far as man knows future events, his reason and understanding, with his prudence and wisdom, become inactive and torpid, and decay." So he again asked, "What other miracles shall I perform?" And then they cried out:

"Do such miracles as Moses did in Egypt." To this he replied:

"Perhaps you will harden your hearts at them, as Pharaoh and the Egyptians did?" But they retorted, that they would not. Again Swedenborg said:

"Assure me that you will not dance around a golden calf, and adore it, like the posterity of Jacob, who did this within a month after they had seen the whole Mount Sinai burning, and heard Jehovah Himself speaking out of the fire, thus after a miracle which was the greatest of all." (A golden calf, in the spiritual sense, means the pleasure of the flesh.)

But the answer came from those below, "We shall not be like the posterity of Jacob."

But at that moment they were told from heaven:

"If you believe not Moses and the Prophets, that is, the Word of the Lord, you will not believe from miracles any more than the sons of Jacob in the desert; nor more than they believed, when with their own eyes they saw the miracles performed by the Lord Himself while He was in the world."

The last work which Swedenborg wrote was The True Christian Religion, and this, together with his other books that give the Lord's new revelations, exist in the other world as well as here.

It will interest you to know, now that we have finished the story of the Acts of the Apostles that on the 19th day of June in the year 1770, the Lord called together His twelve apostles, who had followed Him in the world. The next day He sent them out throughout the whole spiritual world, as he had before throughout the natural world, with the command to preach the Gospel that the Lord Jesus Christ reigneth, whose reign will be for ages and ages (according to the prediction in Daniel 7:13, 14; and in Revelation 11: 15) and that, "Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." (Revelation 19:9)

This was meant by these words of the Lord: "He will send His angels, and they shall gather together His elect from one end of the heavens even to the other." (Matthew 24:31) Each apostle had a district assigned to him, and they are executing the Lord's command with all zeal and industry. This calling together of the apostles in the spiritual world, took place after Swedenborg had completed The True Christian Religion, which contains the universal theology of the New Church. (T. 791)

## **Lesson 44**

### **Revelation 1: Appearing of the Lord to John**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

What is the last book in the Bible? The Revelation. And we believe that John who wrote it is the same John who wrote the Gospel and whom we have known as one of the Lord's disciples. He loved the Lord, and taught other people to love Him.

When John was an old man he was in charge of the church in Ephesus, and at one time he was banished by the Romans to the island of Patmos. See if you can find these names on the little map which helped us in the story of Paul's journeys. Patmos is a pretty island with pointed hills. It was Sunday, the Lord's day, when the Lord opened John's eyes to see Him and to see things in the spiritual world and gave him messages to write and send to seven of the churches in Asia. The church in Ephesus was one, and the others were near by. The churches were having a hard time. They were being persecuted by the Romans, and many Christians were killed because they would not worship heathen gods and images and the emperors of Rome. There was little in this world to encourage them, but the Lord gave them by John a message of encouragement from heaven.

In the beginning of the vision the Lord showed Himself to John. John recognized Him as the Lord whom he had known and loved, but He was now glorious, much as John had seen Him when He was transfigured in the mountain. In His hand were seven stars, and He walked in the midst of seven golden lamps. This was to show that He was near to His church in heaven and in the world, and was caring for both.

The Lord spoke to John and gave him a message of comfort and encouragement to send to the people of the churches who were suffering and discouraged.

The Lord knew also of trials which would come years afterward to His church, and He made the message one of encouragement to them. Revelation contains comfort and encouragement that we need and that the whole world needs today. That is why it is important to study the book.

#### Junior

We have studied the Gospel of John, and now we have a few lessons from the Book of Revelation, which John also wrote. First recall what we know about the disciple John from the Gospels: his call to be a disciple, his following of the Lord, his love for the Lord, and the Lord's love for him. The Lord's love is revealed with wonderful tenderness in John's Gospel.

After the Lord's resurrection John lived and worked with others of the disciples in Jerusalem, as we learn from the book of Acts of the Apostles. Read the story of a miracle done by Peter and John in Acts 3: 1-11. There are also three Epistles or Letters of John's included in our Bible. We find in them the same loving character which we have found in John's Gospel. (1 John 4:7, 8, 19-21.) We see also how real the Lord's life was to John, and how real he made it in his teaching. (1 John 1:1-3)

From other early writers we learn that John's home in later years was Ephesus. You will find the city near the west coast of Asia Minor. It was an important center of trade and religious life. Paul preached at Ephesus, and a Christian church was founded there of which John was afterwards the leader. There are records of John's life and ministry at Ephesus, which show the same characteristics that we have seen in the Gospel and the Epistles. He lived to a great age, and it is said that when he was too feeble to do more, he used to be carried to the church, and would say, "Little children, love one another." When they grew tired of hearing always the same words, and asked why he always said this, John answered that it was the Lord's command, and that if this were done it was enough. That John still loved to make the Lord's life real to his hearers is shown by a letter written about A.D. 177 by Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons (France), referring to his old teacher Polycarp, in Smyrna, who had been a disciple of John. "For I remember," wrote Irenaeus, "the occurrences of those days better than the more recent; so that I can tell even the spot in which the blessed Polycarp sat and conversed, and his outgoings and incomings, and the character of his life, and the form of his body, and the conversations which he held with the multitude; and how he related his familiar intercourse with John and the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he rehearsed their sayings, and what things they were which he had heard from them with regard to the Lord and His miracles and teaching." (Letter of Irenaeus to Florinus)

It is also told us by old writers that John was for a time banished by the Romans from Ephesus to an island. It is perhaps this banishment that is referred to in Revelation 1:9, as the cause of John's being in Patmos where the vision and message of the Revelation were given to him by the Lord.

To one passing on a ship, the island of Patmos appears high and bold. It is now mostly barren, having lost the palms for which it once was famous.

We are with John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, in the island of Patmos. It was Sunday, the Lord's day, the day on which the Lord arose and came to the disciples, and on which they felt that He was with them more than on other days. There the Lord spoke to John as He had in old days spoken to the prophets, and gave him a message to the churches. The churches named were all in Asia Minor, near to John's home, but they stand for different kinds of people in the Christian Church everywhere. The message is to us all. The Lord also appeared to John with a glory somewhat like that which John, with Peter and James, had seen when the Lord was transfigured on the mountain. (Matthew 17:1-8) John was at first overpowered by the glory, as the three disciples had been, but the Lord laid His hand upon him, as He had touched the three disciples, and gave him courage. Listen, and I will read the chapter.

1. What writings of the Apostle John are included in our Bible? Which of these are strictly of the Lord's Word?
2. What is the quality of John's teaching? and what element in the church and in Christian character does John represent?
3. In what towns of Asia were the seven churches? Which of these was John's own home?
4. What appearance of the Lord described in, the Gospels does this appearance to John remind you of?
5. What were represented by the seven lamps? What by the seven stars?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The Revelation is called also the Apocalypse, which means an unveiling or revealing. There were many apocalypses in the later Jewish and early Christian time, for the name was given to writing which in dark days for the church gave comfort and encouragement by opening things of the future and of the other world. They urged patience with assurance that the Lord and His kingdom would prevail. You recognize these characteristics in the Revelation. Modern interest in the Revelation has centered largely in discovering how the symbols of the book were understood by those who first heard the message, and what encouragement it brought to the Christian Church in days of affliction and persecution by heathen religions and by Rome.

Without lessening the interest of this historical study, the spiritual opening of the book through Swedenborg shows a more far-reaching message of spiritual instruction and encouragement to the church in heaven and on earth. Swedenborg made two studies of this book of Scripture. The first, the *Apocalypse Explained*, was made before the great judgment which occurred in the spiritual world in the year 1757, and the other, the *Apocalypse Revealed*, after the event. It is evident that the spiritual message of this book was a needed help in accomplishing the judgment which brought order in the other world, and the same book must be the guide and power in

bringing the order of the Lord's kingdom into this world. The book as now opened should be our inspiration and our working guide.

Have first in mind the general message of the Revelation. In the first chapter the Lord reveals Himself risen and glorified as He stands with angels and with men. Chapters 2 and 3 are His appeal to all who will to repent of the evils which keep them from Him, and to live in the sunshine of His presence. The full realization of the promise is pictured in the last two chapters of the book in the holy city. The chapters between are scenes of judgment describing the false and evil things which keep men from the Lord and must be rejected by His help before the blessed life can be realized. The dragon represents the evil of faith alone, and Babylon the evil of self-love. Yet the darkness of these chapters is relieved by several foregleams of the victory and blessing to come. See chapters 7 and 14. All this is essentially what was accomplished in the judgment in the spiritual world among those who had come from the Christian Church. Now that the spiritual skies are cleared, the same book shows what must be done to realize the order and blessing of the Lord's kingdom in this world. It keeps before us the Lord's appeal and the blessed life possible in the sunshine of His presence.

With this general message of the book in mind, read the description of the Lord as He revealed Himself to John in the first chapter. We are prepared to see reason for the importance which the book attaches to its message, here and in later chapters. In the description of the Lord's appearance some particulars emphasize the Divinity and some the Humanity of the Lord, the greatness of His power and its nearness and availability to men. You will recognize as emblems of Divinity the golden girdle about the breast, the head and hairs white like wool and snow, the eyes as a flame of fire, His countenance as the sun shineth in his strength; and as emblems of Humanity the garment down to the foot, the feet of fine brass as if they burned in a furnace, the voice as the sound of many waters, and the sharp sword. Each detail of the description needs careful study. The stars and the lamps are beautiful representatives of the Lord's church, lights of heaven and of earth. The care of the Lord for both brings them near in companionship. Find help most readily in R., chapter 1.

The Book of Revelation is very different in style from the Gospels, more like the Prophets in the Old Testament. John was "in the spirit"; his eyes and ears were opened to the spiritual world, and he was there shown scenes which "signified" events which would afterwards take place in the spiritual world and in the spiritual states of men on earth. The things described are the state of the First Christian Church at its end, the last judgment in the spiritual world, and the establishment of a New Church in heaven and in the world. The last judgment, took place in the year 1757. Before the event the meaning of the Revelation had been opened by the Lord through the instrumentality of Swedenborg in the Apocalypse Explained, and after the event the shorter exposition, the Apocalypse Revealed, was published. (E. 1; R. 2, 36)

"Things which must shortly come to pass"; "the time is at hand." (Compare Revelation 22:7, 10, 12, 20.) It was nearly seventeen hundred years before the events signified actually came to pass. The spiritual thought is not of time, but of the certainty of the events. (E. 7; R. 4)

"He cometh with clouds." When had the Lord spoken in the same way of His coming? (Matthew 24:30; 26:64) What are the clouds which have been dark and obscure, but which are now opened to reveal the Lord? The opening of the Lord's Word brought light to eyes that were ready to

receive it, but exposed and condemned those who were in false and evil states. So the kindred of the earth mourned. (E. 36-39; R. 24-27)

The visions were given to John, which means also that those who are in love for the Lord, who are they who are represented by John, are open to enlightenment from Him. (E. 8, 11; R. 32)

In the isle of Patmos. Places represent states. Islands represent states somewhat external and remote; but this island near to Asia and Greece represents a state open to enlightenment from religion and the Word, for which Asia stands, and from natural knowledge and intelligence, which is represented by Greece. The state described is such as Swedenborg was in when the spiritual meaning of the Word was opened to him, and such as all to some degree must be in to receive intelligently the spiritual meaning. (E. 50; R. 34)

John's turning to see the voice that spoke, like Mary's turning to the Lord at the sepulchre, represents the turning of the mind to acknowledge the Lord and to receive His truth. The Lord was seen in the midst of seven golden lamps and with seven stars, which are said to be the seven churches and the angels of the churches - the church in earth and heaven. Seven is applied to holy things. The gold represents the goodness which the church has from the Lord, and the lamps its truth. The garment to the foot, in which the Lord was clothed, represents His truth which comes down to the natural life of men, and the golden girdle about the breast is the Divine love from which it flows. The purity of the Divine love and wisdom is represented by the head like wool and like snow. Wisdom and providence which are from love are represented by eyes like a flame of fire. The Divine goodness and truth on the plane of natural life are represented by the feet like brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and by the voice like many waters. The sword suggests the power of the Lord's truth to disperse falsities, and the sun shining in his strength is a type of the infinite wisdom and love. John's falling at the Lord's feet as dead represents the state of humility toward the Lord which enables us to be strengthened by Him, and to receive His message. (E. 60; R.42-56)

## **Lesson 45**

### **Revelation 2; 3: Appeal to the Seven Churches**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

When the Lord appeared to John in the island of Patmos He told him to write what he saw in a book and to send it to the seven churches which are in Asia. (Revelation 1: 11) A special message was given for each of the seven churches, and these fill the second and third chapters. The Lord knew the people in each of the churches and sent to each just the message that they needed.

What a wonderful encouragement it must have been to the churches in Ephesus and in other cities to receive these letters by John, whom they all knew and loved. They were messages from the Lord that showed that He was near them in their trials and would save them if they would leave the evil ways which He pointed out and keep near to Him. Read the letter to Ephesus, John's own church and city; and to Philadelphia, one of the most beautiful of the letters; and to Laodicea.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." (Revelation 3:20)

## **Junior**

Remember the command to John in Revelation 1: 11, to write to the seven churches in Asia. We find also in chapters 2 and 3 a special message which was given him for each church. First we must notice on our map, the same that helped us with Paul's journeys, where the cities are. Find Ephesus, where John lived in charge of the church, and Patmos, where John now was, a little island near the shore. Another of the seven cities was Smyrna. All seven of the cities were in a little group quite near to Ephesus. Find also Laodicea below Ephesus. Between Ephesus and Smyrna are Sardis and Philadelphia. Above Smyrna are Pergamos and Thyatira. The churches in these and other cities were having a very hard time, often tempted to join the heathen people about them in their evil ways and worship, and often persecuted and killed if they refused and stood faithful to the Lord. Ephesus saw many Christian prisoners put on ships for Rome to suffer in the Coliseum.

Look now at the messages. Each message is addressed to the angel of a church. That is beautiful as suggesting that the church in heaven was near to the church on earth in its trials. "For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." (Psalm 91:11, 12) The Lord describes Himself to each church by some particular of the description of His glorious appearance to John in the first chapter. Then He commends some good qualities of each church; then faults are pointed out, and a beautiful promise is made to each if it will repent. You will like to compare the messages, in this way, reading especially the messages to Ephesus and Philadelphia and Laodicea.

The messages interest us further because the churches to which they are addressed stand as types of people everywhere of many kinds, to whom the Lord appeals to leave their evil ways and to be of His holy city. For seven means all.

1. What two things was John commanded by the Lord to send to each of the seven churches in Asia? What is the significance of the number seven?
2. What was the temptation which these and other churches were facing, and which must be overcome?
3. What is the general arrangement of each particular message to each church?
4. Why was it of especial encouragement to the churches to receive letters from John? What did the letters teach them about the Lord?

## **SPIRITUAL STUDY**

### **Intermediate**

The thought last suggested to the juniors is a good point of departure for spiritual study of these chapters. The general truth is well expressed in this note in the "New Century Bible": "In order to secure a full understanding of these Letters, it is necessary to look at each of them in a double

aspect, first, as addressed to an individual, historical church, and reflecting the character and situation of the church to which it is addressed, and secondly, as directed to these churches in a representative capacity, and together standing for the whole church, and reflecting the strength and weakness, the victories and shortcomings, which characterize the church of Christ wherever it may be found."

For definite recognition of the qualities of life represented by each of the churches, we find help in Swedenborg's two expositions of the Revelation: *Apocalypse Explained* and *Apocalypse Revealed*. *Apocalypse Explained* is the earlier work, written before the last judgment in the spiritual world, in the year 1757. It is a very full opening of the meaning of the words and symbols that form the letter of the book, an opening which one feels was necessary for the accomplishment of the judgment. The *Apocalypse Revealed* is a shorter book written after the last judgment, showing especially the application of the Revelation to the events of the judgment in the spiritual world and to the slower accomplishment of like changes in this world.

These chapters of the Revelation contain a message to the churches which collectively represent all the kinds of people who can be prepared for the life of the Holy City which is described later in the book. The message is to seven churches in Asia, to John's own church in Ephesus and to the others near by. But these stand as types of character among Christians everywhere. Seven means all - "all who are in the Christian world where the Word is and consequently the Lord is known." The kind of character represented by each church can be learned from the special way in which the Lord describes Himself to each one, the good things which are commended in each church, the faults which are pointed out in each, and the promise to each church if it will repent. Each message closes with the appeal, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." It is an appeal, so far as we are able to take the Lord's message to heart and obey it. (R. 10; E. 20)

The comparison of the messages to the several churches, suggested to the juniors, will be of interest; and then select perhaps Ephesus, Philadelphia and Laodicea for special study.

The church in Ephesus represents persons who care much for truths of doctrine but too little for charity. The Lord, who holds the stars and walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks, is the Source of all light to the church in heaven and in earth. The good work which the Lord commends is the diligent learning of truth. The fault which He points out is the too little care for charity. Unless truth is joined with charity, its light will soon go out. The Nicolaitans are explained to mean those who pride themselves on good works and take credit for them. It is not such works that the Lord desires. Heeding the warning and repenting of their fault, the people who have been strong in faith will receive in abundance the satisfaction of love and charity that are a part of real wisdom. (R. 73-90; E. 95-110)

Read what is said to the church in Sardis. The church in Sardis stands for those whose religion consists of formal piety - going to church, reading the Bible, saying prayers - without care for spiritual truths and the life according to them, which make heaven. The Lord announces Himself to such persons as the Source of the heavenly spirit and knowledge which they need; "He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars." He warns them that their religion is dead! That they need to awake and put life into these empty forms. If they do not, in the other world, if not before, the outward forms of sanctity will be taken from them. Some have not defiled their garments; with them the forms of worship are the clothing of a heavenly spirit; and the forms of

worship will become white raiment with those who love and seek the heavenly spirit in them. Those who thus overcome have in them enduring heavenly life; they are brought into close and lasting union with the Divine love and goodness of the Lord (the Father), and with the angels. The message is practical as we take to ourselves its warning and its promise. (R. 154-171; E. 181-201)

The message to the church in Philadelphia is in some respects the most beautiful of all. There is in it no rebuke, but only the exhortation to "hold that fast which thou hast," with promises of the Lord's protection and of enduring strength from Him. The message is to those who love what is true for the sake of good life. The Lord announces Himself as "He that is holy, He that is true," meaning that He is the Source of the truth which these persons love. This truth also brings with it the power of the heavenly King to protect from evil; and it opens the doors of the soul to the blessed influence of heaven and the Lord. The saying that they of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews but are not, will worship at the feet of the church in Philadelphia, means that they who are in falsities from ignorance or misinstruction will be led to feel the Lord's love in those who are in genuine faith and charity, and will desire to learn the truth by which such love is found. The wisdom of good life that is here described will stand the test of the Divine light in this world and the other, and will be a lasting crown. To be a pillar in the temple of God is to have a permanent place and use in heaven, strong in the Divine truth established in the life. The name of God is written upon one as he lives more and more in the truth and love received from Him; and the name of the Holy City that comes down from heaven is written as the principles of heavenly life are received and lived here in this world. The new name of the Lord is new wisdom about the Lord and heavenly life continually received from Him. (R. 172-197; E. 203-225)

The name by which the Lord announces Himself to the church of the Laodiceans: "the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God," is a reminder of the certainty and unchangeableness of the Divine truth. The Lord announces Himself so to those who are inconstant, who at one time acknowledge His truth, and at another time deliberately choose evil and deny and argue against the truth. This inconstancy is meant by their being neither cold nor hot. Such persons may call themselves rich, may pride themselves on their knowledge, but because of their inconstancy their knowledge has no value, and good is profaned with evil. The charge is to get wisdom that is made truly precious by an ardent and constant love, which will be a pure garment and a protection against evil. The change cannot be made without struggle (rebuke and chastening) for the evil which has made one inconstant must be overcome. But the Lord is at the door of the soul, and waits only for an earnest and constant effort on our part, to make His presence felt and to unite us to Himself. To those who overcome, being patient and faithful to the end of life in this world, the Lord gives heavenly strength and blessing - the fruit of the patient faithfulness of His own life. (R. 198-223; E. 226-255)

## **Lesson 46**

### **Revelation 5; 6: Judgment: Seals, Trumpets, Vials**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

John was in the island of Patmos and the Lord was teaching him a lesson for the churches. The Lord showed John visions that he has described. We must try to see the visions with him. There was a throne, such as a king or judge might sit on. It was the Lord's throne, and it meant that the Lord is King and judge of all. And then a book was seen, perhaps a roll written within and on the back side, rolled up; or possibly a book like our books, with leaves, sealed with seven seals. It meant the Lord's Word, in which is truth to judge all things and to show what is good and bad. But no one could open the book until the Lord Himself, Who is called both the Lamb and the Lion (the Lamb because He is so innocent and gentle, and the Lion because He is so strong and brave), took the book and opened the seals. Then John heard great rejoicings by all the creatures and elders about the throne, and by thousands upon thousands of angels. Some heavenly rejoicings, as those in Revelation 4:8, 11, and 5:12, we sometimes sing in church.

Now the vision continues, and as each seal of the book is opened some new thing is seen. At first a white horse and his rider, who goes forth conquering and to conquer; then a red horse, then a black horse and then a pale horse. Afterward the sun was darkened and the moon became as blood, and stars fell to the earth. The heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled together. Kings and rich men of the earth fled from the presence of the Lord. Six seals have now been opened; only one remained, which would be opened soon. The vision must have seemed to John very holy, even if he could not understand all its meaning. It must have given to John and to the churches an assurance that the Lord knew their trials and the cruelty of their enemies, and that He would expose their wickedness and save His people from them.

##### **Junior**

As we read in chapter 5 of the throne and the book with seals which must be opened, and then in chapter 6 of the opening of the seals, one after another, and the appearing of horses of several colors and of other things, we realize that the vision is giving a picture of judgment in which by truth from the Lord's Word the secrets of all hearts and lives are revealed. Evil things are exposed and flee away from the Lord's presence.

You may be asking when and where the judgment which was pictured by the vision would take place. One answer is that it would take place in the spiritual world among multitudes of people who were coming from the earth, calling themselves Christians. Some of them were coming with very false ideas of what it is to be a Christian and a follower of the Lord; some thinking that they were very wise and deserved honor for their learning, some that they were holy and should be given rule over others. The real quality of these people could not be known and they could not be separated from simple good people until there should be a new opening of the Lord's Word and new light should shine to reveal all hearts and to distinguish good and evil. The new opening of the Lord's Word was given to Swedenborg and to angels, and the judgment took place in the

spiritual world in the year 1757. There came order and peace, where confusion and anxiety had been.

There is another answer to the question when and where the judgment would take place. The judgment in the spiritual world, of which we have been thinking, was a clearing of the skies to us on earth, letting the new light shine also into this world. The result is a judgment here. The light shines which is exposing hidden selfishness in slavery and war, in our ways of living in our homes, in our treatment of our neighbors, in our business methods, in our government, and in our churches. This exposure will lead to the recognition of evils in this world and their removal, with the Lord's help. The judgment pictured in John's vision has taken place in the spiritual world and is more slowly taking place in this world. The Revelation tells us toward what the Lord is leading through the confusion that is about us. It gives us courage and faith in the final establishment of the Lord's kingdom in this world. It shows us what to hope for, what to pray for, and work for, that we may be with the Lord and not against Him. The Lord's message of warning and encouragement to the churches of John's time is also a message of warning and encouragement to us and to all followers of the Lord.

1. Why is the Lord sometimes called "the Lamb"? Why is He sometimes called "the Lion"?
2. With how many seals was the book sealed which John saw in his vision? Who alone was able to open the book?
3. How many different numbers are mentioned in chapter 5? What do they signify?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

You have in mind that the Revelation opens with the Lord's revealing Himself to John and with the appeal to all who will to live in the sunshine of His presence. The realization of the promise is found in the Holy City. The scenes of judgment which come between describe the exposure and removal of the false and evil things that keep us from the Lord. Scenes of judgment begin with the fourth chapter, and first the exploration of the evil of faith alone. The progress of the exploration is pictured in the opening of seven seals (Revelation 6 and 8); the blowing of seven trumpets (Revelation 8, 9 and 11); and the pouring out of seven bowls (Revelation 15 and 16).

The throne in chapter 4 is the announcement that judgment is at hand. The sealed book means that the light for judgment must be from the Lord's Word, but that He Himself must open it, that the light may shine and judgment be effected. At the opening of the first four seals, horses are seen: white, red, black, and of deathly pallor. We are told that this represents exploration, first of all, of those to be judged as to their understanding of the Word. Recall what you know of the correspondence of a horse with the faculty of spiritual understanding and especially understanding of the Word. The white horse must represent a true understanding of the Word which will bring victory. Note again the appearance of the white horse and of other white horses in Revelation 19, and note in verse 13 of that chapter what the rider on the white horse is called. The red horse represents an understanding of the Word destroyed by evils; and the black horse

an understanding destroyed by falsities; and the horse whose rider is death, an understanding utterly without truth or goodness.

Verse 6 means that more external kinds of goodness were destroyed by those in falsity and evil, but that interior forms of goodness and truth were saved from profanation by being hidden from their consciousness. So at the cross the soldiers rent the outer garment but not the inner garment of the Lord.

The souls under the altar, in verses 9-11, represent simple good people who are kept in the protection of the Lord while falsity and evil are active and liable to deceive and harm them. There were very many such in the spiritual world at the time of the judgment who after the judgment were brought into the freedom of their life.

The darkening of the sun and moon and the falling of the stars we easily understand as describing the loss of heavenly light in all its degrees; and the rolling up of the heavens represents the complete separation from heaven and conjunction with hell. The hiding of kings and rich men from the Lord is the fleeing from the Lord's presence of those who before had seemed wise and powerful but whose evil hearts are now revealed. Find help in R. and E. on chapters 5 and 6.

## **Lesson 47**

### **Revelation 7: Foregleams of Blessing**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

John was in the island of Patmos, but he says that he was "in the spirit" on the Lord's day. His eyes and ears were opened to see and hear things of the spiritual world, as was the case with Abraham, when heavenly visitors came to his tent door (Genesis 18:1, 2); with the parents of Samson, when an angel told them how to do for the child (Judges 13:15-23); with Elisha's servant, when his eyes were opened and he saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire (2 Kings 6:17); and you will think of others. Do you remember some in the Gospel who saw angels of heaven, especially near the beginning and near the end of the story? It was also with their spiritual eyes that the women and the disciples saw the Lord after His resurrection. (T. 793)

In the same way John's eyes and ears were opened, and the things that he saw and heard were in the spiritual world. In that world people are taught in wonderful ways; a scene is presented before their eyes, all of which represents important things. The things that John saw were of this kind; they were not the usual happenings of the spiritual world; but things were shown to him which "signified" important lessons which the Lord wished to teach.

Some things that John saw in the visions were not beautiful. There were pictures of bad things which must be overcome. But the Lord did not wish John or the churches to whom John was writing to be discouraged by these things, and every now and then there was a beautiful vision of people who were saved from evil and were prepared for heaven; and every now and then John heard songs of angels and the rejoicing of great multitudes. The 7th chapter and 14:1-3, 13 are

such bright places in the vision. These chapters must have helped John and the churches, and they help us, not to be discouraged by the dark chapters, but to look forward to the blessing coming when evil is overcome and people live in the sunshine of the Lord. In reading Revelation, you will watch for the bright chapters. Today it is chapter 7.

## Junior

The 7th chapter is one of the most lovely in Revelation, almost a glimpse of the sunshine and blessing which fill the vision of the Holy City. Notice points of likeness, in places even the same words, in our present chapter and in chapters 21 and 22. Our chapter describes the gathering of a heavenly multitude. First we read of a gathering from the tribes of Israel, twelve thousand from each tribe. In the Old Testament also the tribes of Israel were a type of the heavenly people. The Lord's care for them in their journey to the promised land pictures His care for those whom He is leading on the heavenly journey. And the tribes as they camped in order about the tabernacle and as they took the places given to them in the Holy Land were a picture of the societies of heaven. Remember how Balaam looking from the hills of Moab "saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes," and how the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he blessed them with a beautiful blessing. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel." (Numbers 24:2-6) "Inasmuch as the encampments of the children of Israel represented the arrangements of the angelic societies of heaven, therefore Balaam, when in vision he saw their encampments, saw as it were heaven, and prophesied and blessed them." (E. 431) The tribes have the same meaning in this chapter of the Revelation, and the twelve thousand of each tribe mean all of each heavenly kind.

Besides the tribes, we read of a great multitude, which no man could number. From their own words, and from what is said about them, we learn that they too are people who have repented of wrong with the Lord's help, and can come into heaven. When have we heard before of a multitude who waved palms, and cried, Hosanna! to the Lord? Have you ever thought how many people there must be in heaven? All the good people who have ever gone from this earth; and not only from this earth, but from all the countless earths! We cannot think of so many. Still less can we know the quality of each one and all. Only the Lord knows every one, and loves and cares for every one. Wonderful things about the immensity of heaven, and the multitude of angels, are told in H. 415-420.

And in heaven all is safe and peaceful. They have food and all things that they need. Their hearts are satisfied. The hard and painful things are over and are remembered only by the greater trustfulness or gratefulness which they have added to the character. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." The Lamb is the Lord so Divinely innocent and kind. Remember when John first heard Him called by this name, when John the Baptist pointed Him out at the Jordan, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" (John 1:29, 36) Teachers should read about the state of peace in heaven (H. 284-290); and about heavenly joy and happiness (H. 395-414). Compare Revelation 21:3, 4. The same sunshine fills the 7th chapter.

1. How did John see the things that are described in the Revelation?
2. What names are missing in this list, which you usually find among the tribes?

3. What scene in the Gospels do you think of when you read of the multitude with palms in their hands?
4. What are our spiritual robes? and how are they made white?
5. What makes the lives of angels happy? Are there temptations there?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The things which John saw were not in themselves important events, but they represented events of great importance that were afterwards to take place in the spiritual world and in the spiritual states of men on earth. Many chapters of the Revelation describe as in a parable a judgment that would take place in the spiritual world in the year 1757. Then with a new opening of the Lord's Word there would come new light and power. The evil character of many persons in the spiritual world would be revealed and innocent persons would be freed from their power and find their home in heaven. In the chapter which we are reading, who represent the good who were set free and taken into heaven? See the summary of the spiritual sense, at the beginning of chapter 7, *Apocalypse Revealed*.

The account of the tribes and the multitude is introduced by three verses about the winds, the four angels holding them, and the angel ascending from the east who charged them to hurt nothing. We have often found the wind used as a type of the unseen but powerful influence of the other world, and especially of the Divine influence of the Lord. Remember how the Lord breathed on the disciples, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22); and how on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came with a sound as of "a rushing mighty wind." (Acts 1:2) Here the winds are the influence from the Lord by which evil would be exposed and condemned, and the good would be saved. The holding of the winds by the four angels, represents the care of the whole heaven lest harm might be done by the coming of influx too soon or in too great strength. The angel ascending from the east represents the Lord Himself, and the angel's words represent the Lord's care that the Divine influence should be restrained and regulated so as to do only good. A similar restraint was exercised by the Lord in His coming into the world, or needless suffering would have been caused to the evil, and the good also would have been overpowered and destroyed. (R. 342-347; E. 415-427)

The tribes and the great multitude both represent the good who could come into heaven; the tribes represent those of an interior, spiritual kind, the multitude those of an external, natural kind. Twelve thousand, like twelve, means all of each kind, and the twelve times twelve thousand has the same meaning made more strong. If we should study the several tribes, we should find that they are here arranged in groups of three, the first in each group having reference to some kind of heavenly love, the second to corresponding heavenly wisdom, and the third to heavenly use. (R. 348-362; E. 430, 431)

To number or to weigh spiritually is to know the state or quality of a thing. The Lord numbers the multitude; He knows each one, what his difficulties are of heredity and circumstance; and He

provides for even the man of the most limited and troubled life, that he may come, if he will, by repentance and experience of His saving power into the happiness and peace of heaven.

Think more carefully of the meaning of the palms, grateful acknowledgments of the Lord's power to save; of the white robes, the pure, true thought and life of angels; of the blood of the Lamb, the Divine truth from the Lord, by which they are made pure; great tribulations, the temptations in which they have been faithful, and have learned to know the Lord's saving power. Think also of the several things which represent the happiness of the angels' life: no hunger nor thirst, no lack of good affection or true thought; no hurt from the sun nor any heat, no disturbing influences of evil; food and living waters, the Lord's instruction and guidance, never failing; the wiping away of tears "signifies, that they shall no longer be in combats against evils and their falsities, and thereby in sorrow, but in goods and truths, and thence in celestial joys from the Lord." (R. 363-385; E. 484)

## Lesson 48

### Revelation 18: Babylon is Overthrown

#### THE STORY

##### Primary

Our chapter in Revelation tells of the overthrow of Babylon, which is described as a great and wicked city. Do you remember the name Babylon? It was the name of the great city where the proud king Nebuchadnezzar lived, where the people from Jerusalem were taken as captives, where the three friends of Daniel were thrown into the fiery furnace, because they would not worship the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and where Daniel was thrown into the den of lions because he would not pray to Darius but to the Lord. The Bible calls any great selfish city Babylon, which is proud of its power and loves to rule over others and is cruel to those who oppose it.

No doubt when John in his vision learned of the destruction of Babylon he thought of Rome, the great city which was then so proud and strong and was ruling the world. It was especially cruelly persecuting the Christians, because like Daniel they worshiped the Lord and would not worship the Roman emperors. The vision promised the destruction of the great proud city and the deliverance of those who had been in its power and suffering its persecutions. There would be wailing by those who had been enjoying the evil power, and there would be great rejoicing by those who had suffered and would be set free.

##### Junior

The book of Revelation gives most beautiful promise of life with the Lord in heaven and in this world when the evil things which separate us from the Lord are removed. In the vision shown to John, the evil things were pictured especially by the dragon and the city, Babylon. No doubt John and the churches in Asia thought of the dragon as meaning for them the evil spirit prompting the idolatries that were so hostile to the Christian faith, and Babylon as the great city, Rome, so proud

in its power and so cruel in its persecutions. John's visions told them that these powers were being overthrown in heaven and would lose their strength in this world. This gave hope and patience, and the vision brings us the same encouragement, for our dragon is a conceited mind which thinks it is enough to know things without living a good life, and our Babylon is a selfish heart which loves to rule over others. We can think of Rome and we think of the proud, selfish spirit which often has ruled us, as we read Revelation 18.

The great voice means that the Lord shows how foul and hateful the proud, selfish spirit, represented by Babylon, is in His sight. The call, "Come out of her," is the Lord's call to all who will to get free from the hateful spirit of selfish pride. At verse 5 we begin to read of the selfish pleasures which the proud spirit enjoyed when it was ruling over others, but now its pleasure and its power are taken away. The kings (verse 9) are those who have especially ruled over others with selfish power. The merchants (verse 11) are those who have profited in higher and lower ways by selfishness. The sweet odors (verse 13) are the showy worship of the selfish heart, which now is seen to have no worship in it. The shipmasters and traders (verse 17) are those who have profited by serving the proud spirit in others and have received their selfish favors. All this is gone when the wickedness of the proud spirit is exposed and its power is taken away.

The evil spirit is sad to have its evil pleasures taken away, but heaven is glad and all in us that is on the side of good is glad when it is set free from the evil power. The great millstone cast into the sea means the great mass of falsity and false reasoning by which the proud selfish spirit has justified itself. This spirit and its falsities flee from the presence of the Lord and heaven, and find their place in hell, as the devils cast out by the Lord into the swine rushed into the sea. (Matthew 8:32) Verses 22 and 23 give a graphic picture of a deserted city from which all life and signs of life are gone. No more the sound of the little millstones, with which every woman in an eastern city grinds her meal. The desolation pictures the spiritual desolation of one who has lived in pride and selfishness when his pride is exposed and his selfish pleasures are taken away. Who will tell us the meaning of the last verse of the chapter? We must read the chapter. It is very powerful and dramatic.

1. What great city of the world in John's day would be thought of as "Babylon"?
2. What is the Lord's call to all who desire to be free from the spirit of selfish pride represented by "Babylon"?
3. What universal lesson does this chapter teach us regarding the Lord's power and purpose? Does it have application also to ourselves?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

The 18th chapter of Revelation has close relation with the chapters of Isaiah and Jeremiah on the destruction of Babylon (Isaiah 57, Jeremiah 51), and with Ezekiel's chapter on the destruction of Tyre (Ezekiel 27) which teach a similar lesson.

The two great obstacles to acceptance of the Lord's invitation to blessed life extended in chapters 1-3 of Revelation are seen in John's vision as the dragon and Babylon, which represent pride of

intellect or faith alone, and self-love with delight in ruling over others. The association of Babylon with pride and self-love has been well established in earlier Scriptures, especially in the account of the Tower of Babel and in Daniel. It has the same meaning here.

John and the churches of his day saw the spirit of the dragon, called also the devil and Satan, especially in the hostile idolatries about them, and they saw the spirit of Babylon in Rome, with its proud rule and cruel persecutions. The Apocalypse Revealed describes the relation of Revelation to the judgment in the spiritual world, of which Swedenborg was a witness. In that judgment the dragon spirit was seen especially in the spirit of faith alone, as developed in the Reformed Churches, and the Babylon spirit was seen in the love of rule by the use of holy things, as developed in the Roman Church. Both these evils had reached a terrible development before the judgment. By the judgment they were exposed and removed from power. This was represented in John's vision by the overthrow of Babylon in Revelation 18 and the casting out of the dragon in Revelation 20. What persistent enemies of mankind these two had been! The dragon spirit, called also "that old serpent," appeared in Eden (Genesis 3), and the spirit of Babylon appeared in the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11); and it is almost the end of Scripture before these enemies are cast out. By the judgment the skies were cleared of these storm clouds, and the same evils will be overcome more slowly but surely in this world. "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever." (Revelation 11: 15) "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." (Revelation 21:3) When we find the Revelation interpreted in Apocalypse Revealed with special reference to the judgment in the spiritual world, we are not to think of this as its only application. A strictly spiritual interpretation of Scripture is not limited to one time or place, but is of universal application. The chapter describing the fall of Babylon declares the Lord's power and purpose to expose and condemn the evil of pride and self-love in any city or in any church or in any heart. Read Revelation 18, with its application to ourselves in mind, giving special attention to the verses to which I have directed the thought of the juniors. Find help in R. 753-802 and E. 1090-1194.

## **Lesson 49**

### **Revelation 21: The New Jerusalem**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

John was shown by the Lord in his vision a beautiful city. We know as we read about it that it describes the home of happy people who love the Lord and keep His commandments. That God is with them, we know from Revelation 21:3, and that they are happy people we know from verse 4. John was shown the city from a mountain, as he had often looked upon Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. It was shining with light and beauty. It was built of lovely stones. Its streets were like gold, but clear as glass. Its wall was of a clear stone called jasper, and stones of beautiful colors were in its foundations. There were twelve gates, three on each side of the city, and each gate was

made of one pearl. (Have you seen pearls?) The angel who showed John the city had a golden reed, or measuring stick, to measure the city and the wall and gates. The light shining in the city was more beautiful than sunlight. It was from the Lord, and there was no dark night.

## Junior

Who saw the things that are described in the Revelation? Where was he at the time? How did he see them? John was "in the spirit," and the things that he saw were a kind of picture lesson, a parable, and represented changes that were coming in the other world and in the minds and lives of people in this world. John says, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth." It meant a new and happier state of life which was coming in heaven and in this world. As we read the chapter, you will understand many things in the picture; you will see that the state described is a strong and beautiful one. In the opening verses of the chapter you will see the secret of the new happiness. It comes from a new knowledge of the Lord, and a new sense of His presence, comforting and strengthening His people.

In the first chapter of Revelation the Lord appeared to John and sent His appeal to the churches, to all who would come to Him and enjoy a blessed life in the sunshine of His presence. The last two chapters of Revelation describe this blessed life as a beautiful city which was shown to John in his vision. The blessed life is for heaven, and it is also for this world. The city was seen descending out of heaven from God. The voice said, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men."

Let me ask you a few questions, and find the answers if you can in Revelation 21 and 22. What was the name of the beautiful city? Do the people of the city know that the Lord is with them? Are they happy people? Notice another name by which the city is called. (Revelation 21:9) The clear precious stone called "jasper" may perhaps mean "diamond." What shows that the people are protected from all harm? How many gates had the city? How were they placed? Of what was each gate made? Who were at the gates?

John was shown a Holy City coming down out of heaven from God. The city is called Jerusalem, and perhaps as John saw it from the high mountain, it had some likeness to Jerusalem in the land of Palestine, which he had so often seen from the Mount of Olives. The Jerusalem that John had known stood on its hills, with strong walls and towers, and high arched gateways by which the pilgrims entered. The city that John now saw had its wall "great and high," but the wall was of a precious stone, and its foundations were of twelve precious stones of beautiful colors. The city that he saw had its gates; but these were gems, each gate was of one pearl. Three gates were on each side of the city, always standing open as if to welcome all of every kind who would come into this beautiful home. The tribes of Israel used to be seen gathering at Jerusalem for the feasts, and in the city that John saw the names of the tribes were written on the gates.

In one way the heavenly city was very different from the Jerusalem that John had known. There on the hilltop facing the Mount of Olives, the temple stood with its great open courts. But of this new Jerusalem John says, "I saw no temple therein for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

The city was always bright; "her light was like unto a stone most precious"; "there shall be no night there." But it was not bright with any earthly light: "the glory of God did lighten it, and the

Lamb is the light thereof." And all within the city was safe and peaceful, for all evil things must stay outside, and no one could enter who would do harm.

The picture here given of the New Jerusalem is the Lord's own picture of the New Church, of the beauty and strength of its doctrines and of the life which rests upon them. We should keep the picture before our minds, and be humbly grateful that we are allowed to live in the light of this Holy City.

Let us read the description together.

1. What else is the church twice called in this chapter besides a city? (Verses 2, 9)
2. What is the meaning of the names Alpha and Omega?
3. Why are the "fearful" classed with the evil doers? (Verse 8)
4. What can you tell me about the walls of the city?
5. What can you tell me about the gates?
6. What is said about the light of the city? What about the temple?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

When countries are mentioned in the Word, the spiritual thought is not of places, but of different states and qualities of human life. Cities represent the true or false principles that belong to various states and give them strength. Especially the foundations and walls of a city represent such principles or doctrines. Of all the cities of the Word, Jerusalem especially is the type of a heavenly faith resting upon and protected by principles of Divine truth. "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth truth may enter in." (Isaiah 26:1, 2) "Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth." (Zechariah 8:3)

Jerusalem everywhere in the Scriptures is a type of the Lord's church. Here in Revelation it represents the New Church in heaven and in this world, established as the judgment is effected and the hindering evils are removed. It is called both a bride and a city: a bride as to its life, and a city as to its doctrine. It is because the Holy City represents the New Church as to its doctrine from the Lord's Word that so much is said about its foundations and wall, its light, its river. (R. 194, 881; E. 223; N. 1; T. 781-784; A. 8988)

The wall of the city had foundations of precious stones. Stones represent sure, unchanging truths or facts. There are common stones, like the facts of science and history; and there are precious stones, which represent holy truths about the Lord and heaven. These are transparent to heavenly light and shine with various colors more or less fiery according to the degree and kind of love which they express. Such holy truths are the foundation of the city's walls. (R. 914, 915)

And what are the gates? They are a part of the wall; but they are the ways of entrance and represent truths that relate to life and give protection in a faithful life. They are especially the

truth of the Lord's presence and saving power, which grows with one as he faithfully keeps the Lord's commandments. The gates were of pearl. This beautiful substance ranks with the gems, but it is a product of life, and is formed by the effort of the oyster to exclude particles that disturb its peace. In the highest sense it represents the knowledge of the Lord's saving power, which grows, as the pearl grows day by day, in faithfully keeping the commandments, and comes as a gate of protection from all things that would disturb our spiritual peace. (A. R. 727, 916)

There were twelve gates: why twelve? Three were on each side, east, north, south and west. In heaven a certain quality of character is associated with each quarter: interior affection with the east (why?), and goodness of an external kind with the west; the brightest intelligence with the south, and obscure intelligence with the north. What is the meaning of open gates on every side? Compare Matthew 8:11. (R. 901, 906)

The direction east and west in the spiritual world is length, and the direction north and south is breadth. What does it mean, that the length and the breadth of the city were equal? An equal development of what is good and what is true. The height means these two in all degrees. The measure was a hundred and forty-four - a full and perfect development; "the measure of a man, that is, of an angel." (R. 906-910)

The names of the twelve apostles were on the foundations, and the names of the tribes were on the gates. Both the apostles and the tribes stand for all the various elements of the Lord's church. The apostles are strictly guiding, governing principles of truth, and the tribes the developments of good life in obedience to the truth. Compare the Lord's promise to the disciples, that they should sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matthew 19:28; R. 900, 903)

What had the tabernacle and temple of the Jews represented? The Lord once said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," and He spoke of the temple of His body. (John 2:19-22) In their highest sense, the tabernacle and temple represented the Lord's own Divine Humanity, the perfect dwelling-place of God with men. This is the meaning where we read in this chapter, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men." No temple building was seen, because the Lord would now be present and would be known in the fuller, truer way, which the temple only represented. "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." (R. 918)

## **Lesson 50**

### **Revelation 22: The Time is at Hand**

#### **THE STORY**

##### **Primary**

We have read together about the Holy City, which John saw coming down out of heaven from God. What do you remember about the city? What was its name? Was there a wall? What were the foundations made of? What names were written upon them? Were there gates? How many? Where? What were they made of? What names were on the gates? Who measured the city? With what did he measure it? Did John see a temple in the city? Was there light in the city? What could not enter?

There was, too, a beautiful river from the Lord which ran through the street of the city. The tree of life was growing on the banks, with fruit every month and healing leaves. How had the people found their way to this beautiful and happy city? By keeping the Lord's commandments. "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." The book ends with the benediction with which the service ends in church: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

## **Junior**

Look again in verse 21 of chapter 21 and tell me what is said about the street of the city: "pure gold, as it were transparent glass." What more do you find about the street, in verses 1 and 2 of our new chapter? The prophet Ezekiel also saw waters coming out from the temple, bordered by trees. "And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat: . . . it shall bring forth new fruit according to the months: . . . and the fruit shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine." (Ezekiel 47:12) Look back still farther in the Bible to the story of Eden in the second chapter of Genesis. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and a river went out of Eden to water the garden." (Genesis 2:9-10) The vision of the Holy City at the end of the Bible takes us back to the garden of Eden at the beginning. The tree of life is in both, and the river of life, but the garden has become a glorious and beautiful city.

Several times in chapter 21 the angel is spoken of who showed John the Holy City and who measured the city. (Verses 9, 15) In our new chapter the angel speaks from the Lord's Spirit the Lord's own words, as if he were the Lord: "Behold, I come quickly" (Verses 7, 12); "I am Alpha and Omega" (Verse 13); "I Jesus have sent Mine angel." (Verse 16) At one moment the angel spoke in this way from the Lord's Spirit, and another moment he spoke simply from himself, as an angel, a brother and a fellow-servant of John, worshiping the same Lord. (Verses 8, 9)

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still." Read verses 10 to 12 very carefully. If you or I have done something wrong today, we can repent of it, can be sorry for it and with the Lord's help not do so any more. Or we may have done right today, and if we are careless we may fall back into bad ways again. But our lesson tells us that this will not always be so. There is a time for each one when the Lord comes and takes him to the other world, when he cannot change from evil to good or from good to evil. When we die our character is essentially fixed, and it will not be changed from evil to good or good to evil. If at heart one is good, the wrong things that have clung to him are then taken away; if he is evil, the good things that have been only on the outside are dropped off. This world is the place, and now is the time, to choose between good and evil. The other world is the place for the great increase of the good that is chosen here.

Verse 14 is one that we ought to learn by heart. We might say it whenever we recite the Ten Commandments.

Near the end of the chapter there is a very solemn charge not to add to or take away from "the words of the book of this prophecy." It is true of this Book of Revelation, and it is true also of the whole Bible, that every word is holy and full of power. You remember how the Lord said, "Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." (Matthew 5:18) We should remember that every word is holy; when we learn it we should be careful to learn it and say it just as it is. Let us read the whole chapter.

What way of life leads to the beautiful gates and into the Holy City? The Lord in the beginning of Revelation invites all who will to come. Now at the end of the book He pleads still more tenderly, and asks all those who know of Him to help others to come. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen." It is the Lord's promise to live with us, if we are willing. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." It is our prayer that He will come.

The book ends still looking forward with a wonderful promise and hope.

1. What did John see growing in the Holy City? Where were they growing?
2. How were the trees watered? What is said about their fruit? their leaves?
3. Who talked with John? Why would he not let John worship him?
4. What determines what one's life and home in the other world will be?
5. Who will enter in, and even now are entering in, by the gates into the city?

## SPIRITUAL STUDY

### Intermediate

We will take up the same points that have been spoken of in the talk with the younger students, and give them a little fuller study.

"The street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." The city and its gates and walls were measured with a golden reed, and the whole city was "pure gold, like unto clear glass." The same is now said particularly of the street. Gold is the symbol of the highest principle of life, love to the Lord. The city is measured with a golden reed because the truths that are represented by its walls are such as can be perceived by one who loves the Lord and not by others. The city is of transparent gold, because the blessed state that it pictures is all from love to the Lord. The street is the doctrine that guides the steps of daily life. This especially is the expression of love to the Lord, bright with the light of that love. (R. 904, 912, 917) The pure river of the water of life flows through the street. It is the Lord's truth that teaches the ways of goodness. The tree of life on either bank means intelligence and power from the Lord to do heavenly uses. The fruits are the heavenly uses. The leaves that heal the nations are rational truths that have power to correct evil and bring soundness to affairs of natural life. (R.936)

In H. 116-125, we learn about two ways in which the Lord is seen by angels; as the sun of heaven, and in an angel who is filled for the time with His Spirit. Of this latter kind of presence it is said, "The Lord does appear to the angels in heaven, but then it is under an angelic form; for He fills an angel with His look, and thus with His presence from afar, and this in various places, but everywhere accommodated to the good of love and faith in those to whom He thus appears." (E. 412. See also H. 55, 121; R. 938; E. 1228.)

The quality of one's life forever is determined by his life in this world -whether good or evil, and the kind of good or evil. His central or ruling love cannot be changed in the other world. There is however great development in the other world of the beginnings of heavenly life that are planted here. Life in this world is like the seed in the ground; life in the other world like the tree with

blossoms and fruit. Remember the saying to the rich man :in the parable: "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from us to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." (Luke 16:26) "The life of man cannot be changed after death, but remains then such as it had been in the world. . . . Hence it is plain that they who come into hell remain there to eternity, and that they who come into heaven remain there to eternity." (N. 239) Man must be withdrawn from hell and led into heaven in the world; "for such as man is in the world as to his spirit, such will he remain forever, with the sole difference that his state becomes more perfect if he has lived well." (R. 937 end)

The warning against adding to or taking away from the words of this book is a warning against adding to or taking from the doctrines concerning the Lord and concerning faith in Him, which all the Revelation teaches, with intent to destroy them. If these truths are willfully denied, there is no power to protect from the evils that are represented by the plagues in the Revelation, or to lead into the strong and blessed state represented by the Holy City. (R. 957-959)

The Lord again declares His purpose to come to us, and He desires our response, praying for His coming. (Revelation 22:20)