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### CONTENTS—

**Words in Season**—R. H. B. .................................. 321
**News and Notes**.......................................... 326

**Articles**—
- "The Servant of Jehovah"—G. A. Klingman .............. 329
- The Work of Modernism—R. H. B. ......................... 331
- Patience—W. J. Johnson ................................... 336
- Another Scrap of Paper—D. C. J. ......................... 337
- "The Old Time Ring"—Chas. M. Neal ..................... 338
- America's Favorite Hymns ................................. 340

**Missionary**—
- Who Should Give Nothing to Missions .................. 344
- Sinde Mission Letter—Ray Lawyer ........................ 344
- Report of Hebrew Mission ................................ 343
- A Little Bird Told Me—W. N. Short ...................... 344

**Lord's Day Lessons**—R. H. B. ............................ 345

**Miscellaneous**—
- Jewish Colonies in Palestine ............................ 341
- Tennessee Orphan Home ................................... 342
- Eliza Ann Catlett ......................................... 342

**Read "The Work of Modernism,"** page 331.
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WORDS IN SEASON.

R. H. B.

"I AM THE VINE, YE ARE THE BRANCHES."

There are figures that merely illustrate, and there are figures that set forth pictorially the truth as it is. Of the latter sort is the allegory of the Vine and the Branches in the fifteenth chapter of John. A whole theology is there crowded into a few simple words, so simply that a child can grasp it. The work of the Father, and the work of the Son, in reference to His own disciples; yea, and, though not mentioned by name, the work of the Holy Spirit in them; the Christian's high position in union with Christ, the immeasurable privilege of it, the great responsibility; the Divine care and discipline; and the object and purpose of the whole—all this is luminously set forth in the little parable.

First, there is the Husbandman, the Father. He provided the Vine for us. He planted it. He is the Author and the Planner of the whole wondrous arrangement, and He sees to everything.

Then, there is the Vine. That is our Lord Jesus Christ. What a vine does for the branches, that He does, constantly and perfectly, for His own. It is not the vine's province to bear fruit, but to furnish life and sap and power to its branches that they may bear fruit. This function the Lord Jesus continually performs for His disciples.

The branches are the "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26, 27), Christians. By virtue of their actual union with Christ they draw upon His infinite resources. In Him they have life from Him they draw all power and every supply to meet every purpose. The Vine has nothing the branch cannot have. The Vine lives in the branch, as the branch abides in the Vine.

THE LIVING CHRIST.

Here we must mark a thing or two. First of all, the necessity of the living Christ in Christianity. Mohammedanism can flourish with Mohammed dead and gone. Buddhism loses nothing though Buddha solemnly assured his disciples at his death that never should they see him again. Confucianism can exist and prosper though Confucius himself lie mouldering in the tomb. But the essential thing in Christianity is the living Christ. "Because I live ye shall live also." A benefactor bestows his gift, and goes his way; and the gift is the same though the giver himself disappear. A doctor may heal, and though he himself perish, the benefit of his good work remains. A teacher
inculcates his lesson, and may leave us for ever: we have all we want and need of him. A deliverer, even, may rescue us out of great peril, and we are saved though he himself be never again heard of. But Christianity demands the living Lord. He is more than a benefactor, more than a teacher, more than a deliverer. It is only in Him, by Him, through Him, the Living One, that we can have life and growth and power, or any sort of ability and prospect. He is the Source to us, as the Vine is to the branches, of vitality, of spiritual life itself. In Him and from Him only have power to bring forth fruit. "For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fullness dwell." "For of his fulness we all received, and grace for grace." (Col. 1:19; John 1:16). Christianity is not a documentory religion: it is the living faith in, and union with, the living Christ. In saying this we are as far as possible from disparaging the Divine authority and necessary place of God's word. It is only through the gospel record that we can at all get acquainted with Jesus Christ. It is only through that word that we can believe in Him (Rom. 10:17). It is through that word that He is communicated to us and enters into our hearts. The man who discredits the word throws Christ and the branches all, is as it is in nature, except (as far as possible from) nothing is passive and automatic, but everything is volition­ally: it is a continual work of love on His part, and comes to us in answer to prayer. For love gives—gives itself out to the beloved. Therefore He says, "Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide ye in my love" (v. 9): and, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will and it shall be done unto you." (v. 7. See also v. 16, "that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.") Finally, neither does the fruit grow on the branch of itself: it is borne intention ally, by the branch's will, in faith and obedience. And therein finally, hinges the whole matter.

FRUIT.
The object of the whole wonderful arrangement—the Father's love and wisdom, the living Vine's self-communicating grace and power, the branch's life and privilege—is FRUIT. Doth a man light a candle and put it under a bushel? Does God give the branch its high and blessed place for its own benefit and enjoyment merely? Nay, but that it may bear fruit. If it bears none, the Husbandman takes it away. (There is the secret of many a disappointing career, and the reason of "dead" Christians!) If there is fruit the Husbandman prunes for "more fruit." That is discipline. If there is more fruit, straightforward He wants "much fruit." No fruit—fruit—more fruit—much fruit. Abounding more and more. For in fruitbearing we find our own fullest joy (v. 11) and blessedness, and the Vine the reward of His travail, and the Father His glory.

WHAT IS FRUIT?
The fruit is four-fold. There is first of all the FRUIT of the Spirit. This is that which the Holy Spirit (who by virtue of our oneness with Christ dwells in us) brings forth in our lives, not without our willing, but by stirring up in us the will to will and fulfilling our desire of goodness with power (Phil. 2:13; 2 Thess. 1:11). These are the distinguishing graces of the Christian character, the lineaments of the likeness of Christ in us: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, meekness, self-control"—not the purely human virtues of that name, but that higher thing which is the product and fruit of the Spirit.

There is "the fruit of the lips which make confession to his name." "Through him then," says the writer of Hebrews, "let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of the lips which make confession to his name." (Heb. 13:15). That is His fruit, for thus it is written of Him, "In the midst of the congregation will I sing thy praise." (Heb. 2:12). And it is our fruit, insomuch as through us He bears it.

The very next verse (Heb. 13:16) mentions the third sort of fruit: "But to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." This is the fruit of good works, unto which we were created in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:10) unto which we were redeemed (Tit. 2:14). When the brethren of Macedonia and Achaia sent aid to the saints of Jerusalem, Paul called it "this fruit" (Rom. 15:28). When the Philippians sent once and again to relieve Paul's necessity, he rejoiced over it—"not that I seek for the gift; but I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account." It was a sweet-savor of
ferring to God, “an ador of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.” (Phil. 4:18-19).

THE GREAT FRUIT.

But the chiefest fruit in the end is that to which every other sort contributes, fruit in the gospel the saving of souls. Thus Paul wanted to go to Rome that he might have some fruit among them even as among the rest of the Gentiles. (Rom. 1:13). This is “fruit from my work,” as he calls it in Phil. 1:29. In the end all our fruit, the fruit of the Christlike character, the fruit of the lips, the fruit of good works, tend to magnify our Lord and to bring Him to favorable notice among men, that they may see and believe in Him, as manifested in His people, be drawn to Him and saved. Every Christian should bear forth the gospel among men, both in life and in word. And every Christian will bear fruit in the whole “Great Commission,” by prayer, by using his means to sustain the work of preaching the gospel, not at home only, but somewhere where it has never been heard, and by carrying it himself as he is able. This is fruit.

BEARING FRUIT TODAY.

First see to your relation with Christ and to your fellowship with Him. For we do not bear fruit in order to get into the Vine:—“apart from me ye can do nothing.” You must be in Christ first. If the fellowship between you and Him is broken, it must be restored (1 John 1:7, 9).

Then, in dependence on Him, in your faith in Him, in your love of Him who first loved you, go forth today to bear the fruit—fruit of the Spirit, fruit of the lips, fruit of good works, fruit in the gospel—seeking opportunity, praying for open doors. Thus you will find a stronger faith, a deeper joy, and a new realization of Christ and His love will come to you, and a sense of power in Him. For with what measure you mete it will be measured unto you and more shall be given you. And in this you will be God’s instrument for saving others, while being saved yourself.

These are “the fruits of righteousness which are through Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.” (Phil. 1:11).

HUCKSTERING.

“We are not as many,” says Paul, “corrupting the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ.” (2 Cor. 2:17). In the marginal note the Revised Version has an alternative rendering of the word “corrupting”—“making merchandise of the word of God,” and refers to 2 Pet. 2:3 where the same term occurs in the original: “And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you.” In both passages the same parties are seen in the same business; only Paul represents it that they are making merchandise of the word of God; and Peter that they are making merchandise of their hearers. In the one case they sell the word of God for human favor and earthly gain; in the other they sell the people for the gain they can get out of it to themselves. It comes to the same thing. But the word that signifies “making merchandise of” gains a new and additional significance when applied to the word of God: they not only sell the word (which would not be the worst thing, if it were sold pure) but inevitably and invariably they adulterate it to the taste of the customers (hence translated “corrupting” in 2 Cor. 2:17). For there is no popular demand for the word as it is, and no thriving trade in the word of God, could be established, if it were set forth in faithfulness. From the days of the prophets of old down to our day it has never found large patronage nor much earthly recompense. So, as the hucksters of old (who proverbially adulterated their wares—the literal meaning of the word is really, “huckstering”) these caterers to prestige and gain have to use much “tact,” and all abounding “wisdom” lest happily they lose trade. They are great “workers,” and “soul-winners” in a way, and they command popular prestige, these hucksters of the Word, and all men speak well of them. They, like their predecessors of old, come in sheep’s clothing and have their reassuring message of peace—“Peace, peace, when there is no peace”; and they know how to comfort men in their sins. For which benefit men are grateful and willing to pay. That was a trade Paul washed his hands of. But he went on and shrank not to declare the whole counsel of God, until in the Roman prison he wrote these last words: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith.” For such remains the crown of righteousness.

CORRUPT CHURCHES.

The corruption in many of the “churches” of Christendom is almost incredible. There are some that stand for nothing except sociality, amusement, club-activities. They are really a kind of community-center for a select crowd. There are “churches” which offer membership, and a religious standing with the pitiful false comfort that goes with it, while the person accepting may go right on in his path, after the world, the flesh, and the devil as he has always done—with the limits of common decency of course, and not always even that. Above all arguments one feels the necessity of going back to primitive simplicity of worship and service. For the logical consequences of human departures, as demonstrated in the prevailing corruptions in Christendom, makes one appreciate the simplicity and the purity that is in Christ. Let us prize it; and may all our life and faith correspond with it.

Yet one notes in the worst of places (as in Sardis there were those who had not defiled their garments) men and women who love the Lord from the heart, and who are quite out of tune with their environment. Could those stray sheep be brought together?

The best possible inheritance is that estate, “incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven.”
WORD AND WORK

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE WHOSE PURPOSE IS TO DECLARE THE
WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD.

R. H. Boll, Editor-in-chief.
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NEWS AND NOTES.

Wait! Late this month our Annual Book Number, the December Word and Work, will reach you. Hundreds of readers have formed the custom of ordering all their holiday books, Bibles, magazines, mottoes, calendars, and cards from this office. Our treatment suits them, and their orders help us carry on. We are going to put this book number out earlier than usual this year, to give good time for Christmas selections.

"Please note that my address hereafter will be Jasonville, Ind. I am to give my whole time to the work there.

"After having rounded out two years of work with Fifth and M Sts., Church, Louisville, I leave with keenest pain. I have come to love each one as a very dear friend. I am leaving only in order that I may be in position to give my whole time to the work of the gospel."—Kenneth C. Spaulding.

From Union City, Tenn., (Belated): "Brother Coleman Overby and I are in a meeting here with great interest. This is my thirteenth engagement for the season.

"It was my pleasure to examine and use your book, 'Great Songs of The Church,' first at Murfreesboro in 1922 and 1924, and then at New Orleans in 1924 and 1925. I am to be in two engagements in Detroit in October and November where I understand they use the same book. In my humble judgment, it is as good as the best, and in many respects, the best song book that I have met."—Ealon V. Wilson.

W. J. Brown, writing October 6: "I intend to start tomorrow on my way back East, with a stop-over for a few sermons on the way. My son, Paul, has returned to Philadelphia from his trip to Europe."

Don Carlos Janes began a two-week’s meeting at Ataliah, Ohio, on Oct. 16. Before that he was in Tennessee visiting nine churches in the interest of missions. From Ohio, he goes to Philadelphia, and Tabernacle, N. J. R. H. Boll and E. L. Jorgenson have just closed a two-week’s meeting at Albion, Nebraska. A real revival spirit was awakened, and 25 souls were added to the Lord in baptism.

Brother Boll preached at St. Louis and Odessa, Mo., on the way, and Brother Jorgenson at St. Louis on the return trip.

"We are pleased with our new location at Horse Cave, and the attendance at meetings is encouraging. Brother Olmstead and family are held in high esteem by all in the town."—J. Scott Greer.

E. H. Hoover was in a good meeting at Worthington, Ky., in October.


S. L. Pope held a good meeting at Bales, near Elnora, Ind., with 3 baptisms.

We can furnish any map published, $2 and up. Maps of Palestine (Old or New Testament), The Exodus, Paul’s Journeys, and others.

The Ormsby Ave. meeting in Louisville in which E. L. Jorgenson assisted this good church, resulted in 16 additions to the congregation.

We can supply Bibles and Testaments in almost any foreign language. Prices upon request.

Baptismal pants, best grade, cloth covered, $22.50, from this office.

The Louisville Winter Bible Classes open Nov. 8. The second course begins on Jan. 3; the third course on Feb. 14.

During the 1926-27 session, the lessons will include—in the Old Testament, Exodus to Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and Minor Prophets; in the New Testament, Mark, Ephesians, Hebrews, Revelation.

From New Orleans: "Closed an interesting meeting at Independence, La. Three baptisms and a congregation of fifteen brought together and set to work on the New Testament plan. Numbers of the Oak Grove and Amite congregations have agreed to assist them in their new efforts. The encouragement and assistance given by Brother Ramsey was a big help in these meetings.

"Since that, I was at Jackson, assisting J. Porter Sanders and the congregation with a tent meeting on Bailey Avenue. Attendance and interest encouraging.

"The New Orleans work is doing nicely. Am just entering my fourth year’s work with the church there."—Willis H. Allen.

Tuning forks, 25c each, key of C.

"We expect to go to Moundsville, W. Va., for a meeting and three months stay beginning about November 15."—R. A. Zahn.

From Dallas Hebrew Mission: "In the continued Providence and goodness of God another special blessing has been ours. That others may be made to rejoice with us, we are giving this brief report of the meeting at the Dallas Hebrew Mission, Friday night, October 1.

"The service was a glorious one, and was conducted by Brethren O. E. Phillips and John E. Dunn. A goodly number of Jews attended. Their hearts seem hungering and thirsting, and they listened with marked attention as the Messiah was held up in all His worth, and as they magnified His substitutionary death, and His glorious resurrection.

"Every one present was stirred by the message stressing a fuller acceptance on our part with respect to the obligation laid upon us by our Lord Jesus, and a clearer vision of the opportunities of evangelism among the brethren after the flesh.

"We are impressed with the steady and increasing interest on the part of the Jews. They want something real, something hopeful, comforting and satisfying. Those who come daily to the Mission are brought under the influence of the Dynamic Gospel. We shed forth the light and continue to pray, feeling assured that in due time we shall reap if we faint not."—Stephen D. Eckstein.

From F. L. Young, 4514 Abbot Ave., Dallas, Texas: "My health has improved very much. I am preaching nearly every Lord’s day now. The Lord has abundantly blessed me in my work."

From Mangum, Okla.: "The summer meetings are past and regular work resumed. Some are growing spiritually, and enjoy feasting on the whole counsel of God. Two confessions at our regular services at Granite last Lord’s day."—C. T. Clay.
“The meeting at Winter Haven, Fla., resulted in 5 baptized and 28 found to start a church meeting in a home until they can build. The meeting at Wellborn has one addition to date. I go from here to Dowling Park with the tent. My home address is changed to 2816 Oseola Ave., Columbus, Ohio.”—J. Madison Wright.

From H. N. Rutherford: “I am now at St. Augustine in a tent meeting, one baptism to date.”

From Center, Ky.: “The meeting here is one week old, 4 baptisms and good interest. I left Sellersburg, Ind., after the third Lord’s day in September. Four were baptized there the last three Lord’s days I was with them. In August, during Brother Moore’s meeting, 13 were baptized.

From Amite, La.: “We press on in hope. One confessed Christ third Lord’s day, and one renewed his covenant. Our new song books (‘Great Songs of The Church’) stimulate the singing.

“I preached last week at Big Creek, encouraging and strengthening the brethren. We hope to have these brethren put foreign missions on their program. We are to be at Oak Grove this week in a similar work.”—A. K. Ramsey.

From South China: “Miss Mattley has arrived. I think we shall like her very much. She is very earnest and energetic, and is proving a big help to us in the language study just now.”—Geo. S. Benson.

From Pulaski, Tenn.: “The work here held up pretty well during the summer months. We hope to have one of the returned missionaries with us some time this year.”—Maurice Clymore.

“Great Songs of The Church’, E. L. Jorgensen, Compiler, alphabetically arranged. Here are 450 hymns, including the largest number of the good old hymns ever contained in one song book. One could sing nine different hymns every Sunday in the year without repetition, if desired. The index is remarkable, consisting of ‘Index of Hymn Tunes’, ‘Scripture Index’ (from Genesis to Revelation), ‘Index of Titles’, ‘Index of First Lines’, making it unusually easy to find the particular hymn desired for any occasion. It is without question the most desirable and satisfactory hymn book ever prepared for general Church and Sunday School services.”—The King’s Business, June, 1926.

“We value it very much.”—Editor Sunday School Times.

“Received song books, and the church well pleased.”—S. L. Pope.

“I should like to see the ‘Great Songs of The Church’ used everywhere, so that at Wellborn as well as other meetings, there would be no mistaking the tune of a hymn when visiting in sister churches. I think it a wonderful collection for all purposes.”—C. Cameron, Toronto, Canada.

“I will recommend it to any church that I may work with as being one of the greatest hymn books published.”—G. B. Derryberry, Columbia, Tenn.

“In my humble judgment it is as good as the best, and in many respects the best song book that I have met.”—Ealon V. Wilson, Union City, Tenn.

“The new books have arrived, and our folks seem to be pleased.”—J. W. Dollison, Rector, Ark.

“We like ‘Great Songs of The Church’ very much.”—Chas. Herndon, Franklin, Ky.

“Some didn’t see how we could get such a book at so low a price.”—Maurice Clymore, Pulaski, Tenn.

“We use ‘Great Songs’ in Corsicana and wish it could be adopted by our people everywhere.”—Mrs. T. A. Miller.

“As a collection of the very best there is in the church’s hymnology, ‘Great Songs of The Church’ stands unsurpassed.”—R. H. Boll, in Editorial, October Word and Work.
been revealed” Paul quotes this in part in the 10th chapter of Romans, the 16th verse: “But they did not all hearken to the glad tidings. For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?” It is difficult for some to believe in a “suffering” Messiah; the disciples of Jesus could not understand why the scriptures concerning his death and resurrection and all of them had to be convinced that “the Christ should suffer, and rise again on the third day.” To this day the preaching of the cross is a stumbling-block to the Jews. They are not looking for that kind of a Messiah. Isaiah states the reason for the rejection of the message, in these words: (1) For he grew up before him as a tender plant (sapling) and as a root out of a dry ground; (2) he hath no form nor comeliness; (3) and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. (5) He was despised, and rejected of men; (6) a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; (7) and as one from whom men hide the face he was despised; (8) and we esteemed him not.

The highest note in this grand prophetic song is struck in the third stanza. All the suffering of the Servant of Jehovah was for others; and not only was it vicarious but meritorious; here is the hope of the human family; here find the gracious word of reconciliation. In reading this stanza emphasize the pronouns: Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. We like sheep have gone astray; we have turned “every one to his own way;” and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

In the fourth stanza the prophet shows that the suffering is voluntary. This is the “passage of the scripture” the Ethiopian officer was reading when Philip joined himself to the chariot and said to the eunuch, “Understandest thou what thou readest”? And when the eunuch said to Philip, “I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other”? Philip began at that scripture and preached unto him Jesus. Thus, for all those who believe the New Testament scriptures, the question regarding the identity of “The Servant of Jehovah” is definitely settled.

The joyous strain is reserved for the last stanza. In God’s plan of redemption the Servant of Jehovah was bruised and put to grief; sin called for suffering and death, law pleaded for justice, and by the “sacrifice of himself” Jesus fully met every requirement; therefore, “he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.” When the Savior looks upon the great multitude of souls redeemed through his travail and sufferings, “he shall be satisfied”; yea, “for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross.”

In the autobiography of the noted evangelist Charles G. Finney, relating his experiences in Boston, he says that Dr. Lyman Beecher told him, “Mr. Finney, you cannot labor here as you do anywhere else. You have to pursue a different course of instruction, and begin at the foundation; for Unitarianism [prevalent there, then as now] is a system of denials, and under its teaching the foundations of Christianity are fallen away. You cannot take anything for granted, for the Unitarians and Universalists have destroyed the foundations and the people are all afloat. The masses have no settled opinions, and every ‘lo here’ and ‘lo there’ finds a hearing, and almost every conceivable form or error may get a footing.”

To this Mr. Finney himself adds, “I have since found this to be true . . . . The mass of the people in Boston are more unsettled in their religious convictions than in any other place I have labored in, notwithstanding their intelligence; for they are surely a very intelligent people on all questions but that of religion. It is extremely difficult to make religious truths lodge in their minds because the influence of Unitarian teaching has been to lead them to call in question all the principal doctrines of the Bible. Their system is one of denials. Their theology is negative. They deny almost everything and affirm almost nothing. In such a field error finds the ears of the people open, and the most irrational views on religious subjects come to be held by a great many people.” (Italics mine).

That was more than eighty years ago, but my own limited acquaintance with religious conditions in some of the New England states exactly confirms Dr. Beecher’s and Mr. Finney’s summation. New England has indeed been the hot bed of the wildest cults. “Christian Science” and “New Thought” sprang from Boston since Finney’s day. There Wm. Miller starter of the Seventh Day Adventist delusion, exercised his greatest power. There Theosophy and Bahaism and various other heathen religions have found welcome. It has been stated that in and around Boston there are more esoteric Buddhists than in any Asiatic city. Personally I have found and heard of more religious cranks and freaks, seers of visions, Spiritualists, glemchasers, and numerous other sorts of religious perverts, than anywhere else I have been, with the possible exception of the Pacific coast (which, has had large influx and influence from New England); but little ear for the simple truth of the gospel.

I would call especial attention to the lines italicised in the quotations from Dr. Beecher and C. G. Finney. Both, quite justly, lay the blame of this condition at the door of the Unitarians and Universalists (the two largely overlap—whose infidel
teaching undermined the fundamental convictions of Christianity, and set the people adrift to the mercy of every wind and tide of error. Now precisely this is being done not in New England only, but in the country at large by the so-called "Modernist" preachers and teachers who themselves have lost (or have been robbed of) their faith in the Bible as the authoritative Word of God, and whose business it now is to destroy the faith of all whom they can reach with their propaganda of darkness.

What is Modernism? There are many shades of it, but it is all of one piece. There are really but two sorts of Modernists—the radical and the conservative, which really are the consistent Modernists who follow out their principles to the logical issue, and the inconsistent sort who from policy or timidity try, however illogically, to hang on to some of the fundamentals of the faith. Modernism is the "scientific" attitude toward the Bible. And that calls for further explanation. By "science" is meant that which has been verified by man's observation and research—the classified knowledge of facts of things men have seen, heard, perceived through their senses, aided more or less by efficient instruments; and the results also of reflection upon the facts thus observed. That is all, and it is good in itself and in its own place and sphere. Man is supposed to use his eyes and ears and his reasoning faculty. But the trouble arises when the "scientific" principle is carried beyond its sphere and endeavors to intrude into things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which never have entered into the heart of man, the things of God, which can be known only through His revelation and taken hold of only by faith. Now the Bible professes to deal with those things. It declares that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps (Jer. 10:23). It claims to be the light of our feet. It is set forth as a revelation from God of things that are beyond our ken; and upon grounds which its Author deems good and sufficient, it demands our faith and obedience to the message of God.

Modernism approaches the Bible with certain pre-judgments that nullify the whole of it before ever the book is opened or a page of it examined. First among these preconceptions is the axiom of uniformity and constancy of natural law. Nothing, nothing can be accepted that would contradict this. If then in the Bible there are accounts of things miraculous, of arbitrary interference on part of God, of any interruption of the laws of nature or the natural sequence of cause and effect,—these things must be read out of the book, or "explained away" is not equivalent to the defense of the faith, we must reply that in Bible deals chiefly with the supernatural working of God, and in fact claims to owe its very existence to God's sovereign intrusion into the affairs of our world. If then these things be denied, the Bible is discredited before it is ever heard. The modernist ap-
Testament; it reduces Christianity to the level of heathen religions; it denies the distinctive element of the Christian faith, it contends that the Virgin Birth is not an essential doctrine of the faith; it holds miracles as incredible and indeed unnecessary to real religion; it denies the actual bodily resurrection of the Lord (for what has that to do with a “spiritual” religion); likewise His ascension to the Father, His literal return (“I agree with Swedenborg” says the voluble Francis Parkes Cadman, “in regarding the Second Coming of Christ as a purely spiritual event”); it denies the real inspiration of the Scriptures and their Divine supernatural origin; it endeavors to explain the Bible upon a purely naturalistic basis, eliminating all that is distinctively Divine and supernatural. The “scientific” viewpoint demands this. And yet its whole treatment of the Bible is as unscientific as would be the attempt to appraise a master painting by processes of chemical analysis. But, however it be, the faith is destroyed; and though they still speak of Christ and of Biblical themes, their phraseology misrepresents their thought. Their god is not our God, their christ not our Christ, their bible not our Bible, their gospel is no gospel. It is not just a difference of views and of personal judgment in things pertaining to the religion of Christ, but it is a different religion. It is a modern form of paganism.

Someone said that an infidel is a man who believes anything and everything except the truth. He believes in Buddha, in Mohammed, in Confucius, in Plato, in Nietzsche, in Mrs. Eddy, in short in anything except the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. So will it be unto this generation when Modernism has accomplished its object. Seven devils will come into the vacant house. It is the judgment of God. For the “falling away,” the apostasy, “must come first,” which is the rejection of God’s revealed word and will by those who have once known it. Then comes “the Lawless one,” the “man of sin,” who sets himself up as the one supreme object of worship, to whom they will give that fervent faith which they refused Jesus. And this cometh to pass because they had not the love of the truth and God in righteousness—retribution sends them the strong delusion that they might believe the lie and be judged. (2 Thess. 2:8-12). The present invasion of Christendom by Modernism, which like the Wormwood star is poisoning the rivers and fountains of waters so that the many who drink thereof die, is of the nature of that great final delusion. “Nevertheless the firm foundation of the Lord standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his, and let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

Teaching and counter argument to combat the encroachments of this modern-dressed but age-old unbelief is needful and indispensable. But its importance must not be overestimated.

Going back once more to Finney, he adds that what Unitarians really needed is “to see Christians live out the pure gospel of Christ. They need to hear them say and prove what they say by their lives, that Jesus Christ is a Divine Savior, and able to save from all sin... There is needed the testimony of God’s living witnesses, the testimony of experience, to convince the Unitarians; and mere reasonings and arguments, however conclusive, will never overcome their errors and prejudices.”

In the same strain, Dr. Hallesby, a Norwegian writer (to whom I am indebted for his clear definition of Modernism) concludes his polemic against Modernism thus:

“I must add that I do not overrate the significance of this fight against rationalism... We shall never be rid of rationalism in our churches simply by theoretical argumentations. It is overcome only by a great, profound and wholesome revival of true Christianity. Hans Nilsen Hauge did not possess many qualifications for theoretical assault upon the dominating rationalism of his time. Nevertheless he became the slayer of rationalism by virtue of the deep and wholesome revival which by the grace of God he was enabled to kindle in the people of Norway. As the awakening progressed the rationalists disappeared quietly and noiselessly... It appears to me that this awakening must first of all be an awakening of the preachers. We frequently complain of the secular, ungodly, and even anti-Christian world, and of lukewarm Christians in our congregations. But I have the temerity to say that we theologians and ministers constitute the greatest hindrance to the progress of the church today... By our lukewarmness and worldliness, our selfishness and vanity, our wilfulness and love of power, our lack of self-renunciation, of faith and prayer, we are a greater obstacle to the kingdom of God than it is possible for anyone else in the congregation to be. The day in which a revival breaks out among the ministers will be a red letter day in the history of the church... So far as we now can see the world is facing terrible catastrophes. Nothing but a great and deep Christian revival can help our race, which is sick unto death. Even prominent politicians and national economists concede this. That revival must come through us. We cannot produce it, but we can in humility pray it down upon ourselves and our fellowmen. Are we all willing thus to pray? Are you willing to do so? A great deal is expected of us in heaven at this time. Here on earth much depends on us now.”

“Personally, I believe in the Pre-millennial coming of our Lord. I never understood my Bible until I got that view-point, and it has been a blessing in my life. To me it is as fundamental as His birth in Bethlehem, His death on the cross, or His resurrection from the tomb; and there is more said about it in the Scriptures than on all these subjects combined.”—Peter Ainstie, Baltimore.
PATIENCE.

W. J. JOHNSON.

"And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose." Rom. 8:28.

"Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptation, knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing . . . . Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him." Jas. 1:2-4, 12.

In these scriptures we find the help that we so greatly need to encourage us in exercising patience in our race to the goal set before us. Our conception of God's wisdom in allowing us to undergo hardships, trials, and tribulations for His name enlarges, as we learn more of His providential care for us. Our faith in Him increases and we feel more the importance of imitating our Savior, who yielded to the Father in everything. "I am come down from heaven not to do mine own will but the will of him that sent me." (John 6:38.)

From His life we learn many valuable lessons that set forth the admirable traits of His noble character. His patience in obedience to the Father enabled Him to live a life free from sin. He placed a high value on the scriptures and relied on them when Satan placed before Him the three great temptations; to use His power for selfish purposes; to prove the Father's care for Him; and to receive the highest honor of this world for reverencing Satan. When His enemies arrested and falsely accused Him before the courts, He submitted rather than to act in self-defense. At His bidding angels would have fought for Him. He had reached the crucial point in His life and had to drink of the bitter cup to complete the plan of redemption.

From the experience of Rebekah and Jacob we learn that it does not pay to become impatient concerning the promises of God, who is able to bestow the blessing in due time. Rebekah and Jacob, fearful lest Esau would receive the blessing, devised a scheme that made Jacob the recipient. According to human wisdom they acted wisely and profitably. But they received the reward of wrong-doing. Rebekah suffered grief because of Esau's threat to kill Jacob. To save him she must send him away. How sad to give him up! However, she must, or suffer greater grief.

Jacob finding a home with his uncle Laban contracted with him for his daughter, Rachel, to be his wife. When the time was fulfilled he became victim of a trick which caused him to labor another seven years for her. Besides this Laban tricked him many times. In his old age he suffered great sorrow, because his sons, having sold Joseph into Egypt, made him believe that he was dead. Thus he reaped as he sowed.

King Saul becoming impatient, when Samuel was delayed in making the offering, "forced himself" and made the sacrificial offerings before Samuel arrived. For this imprudent act he suffered the kingdom to be taken from his own posterity.

In contrast with these, David manifested a willingness to wait for God, who promised to bring him into possession of the blessing. Having been anointed to succeed Saul to the throne, he suffered persecution at the hands of Saul. While he was fleeing from Saul, he had the opportunity twice to slay him. Each time he refused, fearing to lift up his hand against God's anointed. When Saul met his death, David made great lamentation over him. Then he inquired of God whether or not he must take his place as ruler over Israel. Thus he waited till God brought him to the throne.

From these examples we learn of the sorrows and failures that come to those who attempt to help the Lord out by changing His plans to make them more successful; and of the eternal happiness and success that come to those who exercise patience in well-doing.

ANOTHER SCRAP OF PAPER.

In going through my drawers where very much more material accumulates than I can publish, I came across the following signed and dated statement which still represents my understanding of the Bible on this line: "A missionary society may be admirably organized, well-officered, and efficiently administered, accomplishing pleasing results in the way of many conversions made and churches planted, and still be displeasing to God—a sinful institution—and this for the very reason that it is an institution other than the church of the Lord, a man-made arrangement designed to do a heavenly-ordained work through another instrumentality than the one which has been divinely erected for this very purpose. In short, no other institution than the church itself can properly do the work for which the church was intended. And Heaven meant for the church to be a missionary institution (1 Tim. 3:15). We dare not add to the word of God (Deut. 12:13); go beyond what is written (2 John 9); nor change the arrangement of God (Deut. 4:2); but must abide in the teaching of Christ (John 15:4-10); and "make all things according to the pattern" (Heb. 8:5) by "speaking as it were oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11) and doing "the things" which we "learned and received and saw" in Paul and other inspired directors. I am opposed to missionary societies and all other institutions to do the work of the church. 8-29-1919.

DON CARLOS JANES.

"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through and steal."
THE CORRECTION OF CHILDREN.

Solomon in his Proverbs has given some valuable instruction. He says “The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself causeth shame to his mother.” (Prov. 29:15). Again—“Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beat him with the rod, he will not die” (Prov. 23:13). In verse 14 he says, “Thou shalt save his soul from Sheol.” This means that as long as there is proper correction there is hope for his soul’s salvation. To fail to properly correct him is equivalent to setting your heart to let him be destroyed. But more to the point before us Solomon says: “He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.” (Prov. 13:24). Add to these wise words the following from Paul: “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.” (Eph. 6:4). The lack of proper child training is no doubt responsible for most of the crime extant. Christian parents, at least, should wake up to the solemn responsibility that rests upon them.—John T. Hinds, in Firm Foundation.

“THE OLD TIME RING.”

CHARLES M. NEAL.

Quite often I read, “His preaching had the old-time ring.” I might add to this that the same is true of many prayers and talks I hear from many brethren year after year. The real live, energetic, Christian life is like riding a bicycle—“You must go on or you go off.” Paul found some who had failed to go on and, as a consequence, were going off. Such he admonishes to “leave the doctrine of the first principles and press on unto full growth.” (Heb. 5:11 to 6:3). The church and individual are beset by two very evil tendencies—putrefaction and petrification, worldliness and formalism. One is going back to the cucumbers and garlic of Egypt, the other making the same old round in the wilderness wandering.

Many in the Church have fought hard against worldliness as dancing, cards, church entertainments, etc., but have been caught by the enemy of growth—petrification. Many of the prayers we hear petrified years ago. Ask some brethren to lead the prayer, and it is like playing the graphophone. What does all this “saying of words” and the repetition of petrified phrases mean but arrested growth?

GOING ON IS MORE THAN MECHANICAL MOVEMENT.

Going on is more than mechanical movement—it is more than mechanical progress. Going on to “full growth” is because of life. Jesus did not say, I give unto my sheep action or progress, but I give them “life,” and life means growth, progress and freshness. Wu Ting Fang, when leaving America said: “Americans profess higher ideals and fall further short of real-
AMERICA'S FAVORITE HYMNS.

Leading a list of 32,000 Hymn Titles sent to "The Etude."

Some time ago The Etude, America's leading musical journal, printed an Editorial based upon a hymn census taken a few years ago. From this census of favorite hymns the ten most liked hymns were selected and were reprinted in The Etude for February, 1922.

The response to this editorial was enormous. Over 32,000 titles were received. After this manifestation of interest The Etude invited noted men and women in all parts of the country to give their favorite hymns so that many different callings could be represented. The final result was printed in The Etude April, 1923.

Below is the list of hymns, with the ten favorites leading. The numbers after the hymns indicate the number of votes received in the 32,000 submitted. In nearly every list four hymns appeared: Abide with Me; Nearer, My God, to Thee; Rock of Ages; and Lead, Kindly Light.

The results were received in the following order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hymn Title</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abide with Me</td>
<td>7301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearer, My God, to Thee</td>
<td>5490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead, Kindly Light</td>
<td>4161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock of Ages</td>
<td>3432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus, Lover of My Soul</td>
<td>2709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty</td>
<td>1444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just as I Am, Without One Plea</td>
<td>875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me</td>
<td>487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Faith Looks up to Thee</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BETWEEN 150 AND 200.

O Love That Will Not Let Me Go.
How Firm a Foundation.
In the Hour of Trial.
What a Friend We Have in Jesus.
I Need Thee Every Hour.
Sweet Hour of Prayer.
When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.

BETWEEN 50 AND 100.

Will There Be Any Stars?
Come, Thou Almighty King.
Softly Now the Light of Day.
O Worship the King.
Now the Day is Over.
Come, Ye Deconsolate.

P. S.—Every hymn in The Etude list appears, with music, in the revised alphabetical hymnal, "Great Songs of The Church," published by The Word and Work, Louisville, Ky. All but one appeared in the original (1921) edition.

THE GLENN DIRECTORY.

Brother E. N. Glenn, of San Diego, Calif., has gathered and printed a list of congregations of Christ in the United States and Canada. Prices: 50c each; 10 copies at 45c; 24 copies at 40c. Order from Brother Glenn, 3866 41st Street, or through this office. Many congregations would take up 10 copies quickly.

I have never favored any attempt to put forth any list of preachers or of churches as the list of faithful preachers or churches; but such a book as Brother Glenn's, understood simply as a list, will be useful and good. E. L. J.
such proportions that the Jewish National Council has appealed to have it continued with the active cooperation of the Mandatory power.

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WHO SHOULD GIVE NOTHING FOR MISSIONS.
1. Those who believe Jesus made a mistake when He said: 
   “Go ye therefore and teach all nations.”
2. Those who do not believe that “the Gospel is the power of 
   God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, Jew or Greek.”
3. Those who wish that no missionary had come to our 
   forefathers and would prefer to be heathen.
4. Those who believe that everyone in the world should 
   shift for himself and ask with Cain, “Am I my brother’s keep­ 
   er?”
5. Those who do not care to have part in Christ’s final 
   victory.
6. Those who believe that God will not call them to account 
   because of the way they spent their money.
7. Those who are willing to have Jesus say to them: “Inas­ 
   much as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not 
   unto Me.”—Selected.

SINDE MISSION LETTER.
Just returned from a week’s trip north of the Mission forty miles. 
Encouraged the people, and broke bread with a few Christians at one place.

A young woman who had lately confessed Christ came to us complain­ 
ing that her parents had married her to an old man with another wife, 
and this question had been, that her father threatened to beat her if she ran away from her captor. She said, “I told them ‘you can beat me then’.”

These cases are sad and very hard to deal with, after they have gone so far. If we hear about them soon enough we can prevent them in most cases, thanks for the support of the Native Commissioner.

While gone, a number of men started on a job of making eight thousand 
brick for a Native teacher’s house. Perhaps we made a mistake in promis­ 
ing these people a teacher before a house is made for ourselves. We can but keep our word with them. We should not let our zeal 
far.

“A LITTLE BIRD TOLD ME.”
Yes, it was a little bird. One day as Bro. Lawyer and I were going along 
the trail from one village to another a little bird came flying about and call­ 
ing to us. We followed it for some time and soon found a tree with some bees in it. The little birds told us truly that there was honey there. It was good 
to eat honey out in the veld. This little bird had a message. If we did not 
at once follow it, it would continue to follow us along the trail until it saw 
that we were not going to follow. Sometimes it will even lead you to two 
or three bee trees. And in the end it wants some honey or bee grubs. Now, we, as Christians, have a message. A message of the sweetest kind, which 
does not satisfy the appetite only. A message of love, not our love, but 
the love that passeth knowledge, and that covers the entire universe and 
mankind. A message of salvation, from our God. Will we tell it? Will we 
tell the people who do not want to listen? Will we continue to tell 
them to dead ears? Will we look for some one who will believe? For our 
faithful service there is a great and sweet reward awaiting us.

I made a trip to one of the villages where we have a congregation of 
Christians. These people are doing very well, working for the Lord and 
giving of their means. A few were tempted to follow the way of 
Satan, but some of these made confessions and came to the work again.

All contributions for Africa may be sent direct, or to F. B. Shepherd, 
420 Graham St., Abilene, Tex.

W. N. Short.

The Lord's Day Lessons

Lesson 6.

THE FALL OF JERICHO.

Golden Text: This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even 
our faith. —1 John 5:4.

Lesson Text: Joshua 6:12-20.

12. And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up 
the ark of Jehovah. 13. And the seven priests bearing the seven 
trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark of Jehovah went on continually, 
and blew the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; and 
the rearward came after the ark of Jehovah, the priests blowing the 
trumpets. 14. And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the 
camp: so they did six days. 15. And it came to pass on the seventh day, 
that they rose early at the dawning of the day, and compassed the 
city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed 
city seven times. 16. And it came to pass at the seventh time, when 
the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; 
for Jehovah hath given you the city. 17. And the city shall be devoted, 
even it and all that is therein, to Jeh­ 
ovah: only Rahab the harlot shall 
live, she and all that are with her in 
she hid the messengers that we sent. 18. But 
as for you, only keep yourselves from the devoted thing, lest when 
ye have devoted it, ye take of the 
devoted thing; so would ye make 
the camp of Israel accursed, and 
trouble it. 19. But all the silver, 
and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are 
holly unto Jehovah: they shall come into the treasury of Jehovah. 20. So the 
people shouted, and the priests blew the trumpets: and it came to pass, 
when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, that the people shouted 
with a great shout on the seventh day, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up 
into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

NOTES ON LESSON 6.

CROSSING THE JORDAN AND FACING JERICHO.

Jericho was the first they must face of those cities that were “fortified 
up to heaven” (Deut. 9:1) which the older generation had dreaded so much.
Joshua sent two spies over secretly, whochanced to stop at the house of Rahab, who, moved by faith, promptly sided with them and protected them. After the spies' successful crossing of the Jordan, Rahab procured the deed to the city with the promise of a sign that would save her from the destruction of Jericho. The sign of the scarlet cord was tied to Rahab's window to serve as a signal that she would be spared.

However, despite Rahab's faith, she was subjected to the same fate as the rest of Jericho (Eph. 2:4). But her works were the proof of a real faith. She was incorporated into Israel, and her name appears in the genealogy of the Savior (Matt. 1:5).

Rahab's works were the proof of a real faith. She was genuine in her confession of faith (Josh. 2:8-14). Wherever there is faith in manifestation, there grace operates. By grace, therefore, was Rahab saved, her antecedents and birth and all overlooked, and she was actually incorporated in Israel, and her name appears in the genealogy of the Savior. Rahab's salvation was a free gift from God, through the Blood (typified in the scarlet cord) as it is ours also.

TEACHING POINTS.

1. The Spies' Visit to Jericho, the Crossing of the Jordan and facing of Jericho. Jericho—Joshua the city of the curse, may well be regarded as in a sense typifying the world—its king corresponding to Satan. Rahab, though living, was thus put under the curse. She was the king of Jericho, and her life is in danger. But when Jericho meets its doom she is saved out of it.

2. God's Instructions to Joshua. We might ask again and again why this was done. Joshua did not know. He only believed and proceeded to do as God had said.

3. The Obedience of Faith. Israel carried out the orders to the letter. Yet it is not said that by their tramping around the walls the walls were overthrown. It was by “words” that they accomplished the destruction of Jericho. Rahab was attacked as she was in her secret place. The walls would have been overthrown by “words” and man could have boasted. But the walls of Jericho fell by faith (Heb. 11:30)—by “the obedience of faith” (Rom. 1:16)—and that takes all boast out of our mouths (Rom. 3:27) for thus it is God alone that does the work.

4. What is “the obedience of faith” today? (Acts 2:38). Are we any less saved by grace because we are thus “obedient to the faith”? (Acts 9:17; 2 Thess. 1:8).

5. The Salvation of Rahab—Note these items: (1) She was in and of Jericho, subject to the doom just as the rest (Eph. 2:4). (2) She heard the report of God and His great work. (3) She believed in the power of the God of Israel, and instead of opposing like the rest, she sought her refuge in Him. (4) She expressed her faith in action, assisting and protecting the spies. It was this that made her faith effective unto salvation. (5) She with all that were hers, that shared her faith was incorporated in Israel. What did the sign of the scarlet cord typify? Comp. Exod. 12:13.
Third Lord's Day Lesson of November

Lesson 8.

Joshua Renewing the Covenant.

Golden Text: Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah.—Josh. 24:15.

Verse 14. And they said unto Joshua, We serve Jehovah, the God of Israel. 19 And Joshua made a covenant with the people, saying, This stone shall be a witness against you, that it shall not be moved from its place; that ye will serve Jehovah; for he is our God. 24 And still some foreign gods to be found in their midst? Do even some Christians harbor idols? (Col. 3:5; Phil. 3:19; 1 John 5:21).

Read Note on Joshua's Farewell.

Lesson 21-23. Did the people persist in their choice? What witness did Joshua call to the transaction? In accordance with this their choice, what must they now do? Were there still some foreign gods to be found in their midst? Did their choice involve taking the paths of righteousness and loyalty to God? What if after choosing God they abandoned Him and followed after other gods? In what sense would He “not forgive your transgressions”? (Comp. Exod. 34:7).

Questions.

1. Who was Caleb?
2. Where did he come into notice before?
3. What stand had he taken at Kadesh-Barnea?
4. What promise had God made him?
5. How did God fulfill the promise?

6. What request did Caleb make now?
7. Was it granted?
8. Did it involve an awful task?
9. On what ground did Caleb hope to conquer?

10. Did Caleb succeed in the task?
NOTES ON LESSON 8.

JOSUA’S FAREWELL.

The whole of Josh. 23 and 24 should be read and studied in connection with this lesson. “After many days”—about 30 years had passed—“when Jehovah had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, their elders, their heads, their judges, their officers, for a farewell talk and final conference. He reviewed before them all that God had done, and called their attention to the fact “that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which Jehovah spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, not one thing hath failed thereof.” (23:14). But in that lay also a warning. For just as faithful as God is to fulfill His promises, so certain is He to execute His threatenings. There are no idle words with God. The faithful servant returned to his home and soon thereafter was gathered to his people.

1. Joshua’s Farewell. See note above. What was the purpose of this final gathering? Where was it? Who were present? What was the main point in Joshua’s final speech? At what place was the covenant renewed? What had the people to choose? Who was present? What was the final gathering? Who was present?

2. God’s Faithfulness. How perfectly He fulfilled all His good promises. Would He be just as sure to fulfill His warnings if they turned away?

3. Sincerity and Truth. There is a widespread delusion that sincerity is sufficient to make a man and his work acceptable before God. That is equivalent to saying that truth is superfluous and worthless, and that every man may do whatever seem good in his own eyes. In the sight of him, it is a special judgment on some who loved not the truth that they should sincerely and earnestly “believe a lie, that they all may lie together.” (2 Thess. 2:11). They had a zeal for God “but not according to knowledge.” Therefore they are lost. The truth saves; a lie misleads and kills.

4. Choose Ye This Day. Every day is decision day; and if the great decision for God is yet to be made, no day is too soon, and later is likely to be too late. Whom will you serve? No man can serve two masters; every man is bound to serve one. Which shall it be? If we turn our back on Jesus, whom shall we go to?

5. The Seriousness of Choosing for God. Would Joshua let them choose lightly and superficially? Did he warn them so solemnly to disavow them from taking Jehovah to be their God? If not that, then why? Should we choose God with all our heart, once and for ever?

6. As for me and my house. In the end what will be most important for me, what others did, or what I did? If all the world went wrong, would that prevent my doing God’s will? Should we wait to see what others will do before we obey God?

7. Put away the foreign gods. If I choose for God, what must I put out of my life? What are some of the idols?

8. Lord Jesus I long to be perfectly whole, I want thee for ever to live in my soul, Break down every idol, cast out every foe. Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

QUESTIONS.

1. Where was this?
2. Who was assembled?
3. Who had called them together?
4. What had Joshua reminded them of? (vs. 1-13).
5. Now therefore, how should they respond to God’s goodness?
6. How should they serve Him?
7. Were Abraham’s kin “beyond the River” idolaters?
8. Between what had they to choose if they rejected Jehovah?
9. What did Joshua propose to do regardless of what the rest did?
10. Did he have good reason?
11. Did he want them to choose

NOTES ON LESSON 9.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

The book of Judges is the record of Israel’s career in the Land after the death of Joshua. It is a story of failure and chastisement alternating with uplifts through the help of God—comparable in a way to “revivals” in the church. These periods of help always came through God-chosen men, men of faith, whom God specially endowed with the Spirit, and enabled to relieve
and to deliver the people who had sunk into bondage to their enemies. These men were called “judges.” Hence the name of the book. The prime cause of Israel’s continual failures was their failure at the beginning to drive out all the inhabitants of the Land as Jehovah had commanded. (Judg. 1:27—2:6). The whole story of the book of Judges is condensed and summed up in 2:11-23, which should be read by all means. The more prominent of the “judges” were Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson. The book ends with an appalling picture of the immorality and lawlessness and civil strife. The last verse of Judges says, “In those days there was no King in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”

THE CALLING OF GIDEON.

In the days when God called Gideon to leadership the Midianites had been sorely oppressing the people of Israel. Gideon was the son of a poor family in Manasseh (6:15)—a young farmer lad. He was beating wheat in the winepress—which strange procedure was due to fear of the oppressors who robbed the people of everything. There “the angel of Jehovah” (who always speaks and acts as Jehovah Himself) appeared to him and commissioned him to the momentous task of delivering Israel from the Midianites. After the first assurance, Jehovah gave him a test-order, in which Gideon showed faith and courage. The whole account should be carefully read. (Judg. 6:11-32).

THE SIGNS TO GIDEON.

It was strangely difficult to convince Gideon that God had indeed called him—a poor and small a person as himself—to such prominence and responsibility. Gideon’s doubt was not of unbelief however: once convinced that it really was God that had sent him, he moved forward fearlessly. That explains why God did not resent his doubt, but condescended to give him signs. There were four: (1) the sign which the Angel of Jehovah gave him, 6:17-24; (2) the sign for which Gideon asked, of the wet fleece on the dry ground, 6:36-38; (3) that not seeming decisive Gideon asks for the reverse, the dry fleece on the wet ground, 6:39, 40; (4) and, finally, a sign which God gave him gratuitously—the sign of the Midianite’s dream, 7:10-15.

TEACHING POINTS.

1. The Book of Judges. Read Note above, and the Scriptures there given. The story is one of decline and failure, with temporary reliefs. The order of events was as follows: (1) Sin. (2) Chastisement. (3) Crying to God. (4) God raises up a Judge. (5) Victory and Restoration. (6) Relapse. At the last they got so low they did not have the courage to call on God any more. What was the first cause of these failures? Who were the most prominent “judges”?

2. Gideon’s Call. Who was Gideon? What was he doing when the call came? Who spoke to him? What objection Gideon made and what assurance the Angel of Jehovah gave him at the first test. See Note.

3. The Signs granted to Gideon. Three of these he asked for, and one was freely offered him and accepted. See Note.

4. Gideon’s Army. How many at first? Why did 22,000 go back? Why were 10,000 yet too many? (7:2). To what number were they reduced? How?

5. The Attack. What wisdom was used in the matter of dividing the force and the time for the attack? (Does the fact that God is with us preclude the utmost care and wisdom and effort on our part?) With what were Gideon’s men equipped? What was the battle cry?

6. By Faith. See Heb. 11:32-34. Why was this “by faith”? What is faith always based on? (Rom. 10:15, A.V.) Does faith exclude or include careful obedience to God’s orders? (Heb. 11:7, 8, 30).

7. The Sequel. 7:22, etc. Midian was utterly and completely routed.

QUESTIONS.

1. Who was Gideon? 5. How many of these turned back?

2. To what task did God call him? 6. To what number was Gideon’s army at last reduced?

3. Who were the enemies of Israel? 7. How was this done?

4. How many men responded? 8. How were they equipped?
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