

GRADE III — FIRST SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — I Samuel 8:6-22

SAUL CHOSEN FIRST KING

Golden Text — And the Lord said unto Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.—*I Samuel 8:7.*

Many, many years went by after Moses had received the Ten Commandments and helped his people build the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. The Hebrews grew and multiplied, and they built cities where they settled down to live and work. They had many things and many riches but, as often happens when people become interested only in possessions and wealth, they had turned away from God's laws and were more and more following their lower desires.

For a long time they had been governed by king-priests, very wise Beings who knew God's laws and were able to help the people follow them. There was much goodness in the land then, and the people worshipped God and lived righteous lives. Little by little, however, they turned away from God. Finally, because they were no longer living the way God wanted them to, the wise king-priests did not rule them any more, and there was much wickedness and trouble among them. Only a few people remained pure and righteous, and they became very wise.

Among these was the prophet Samuel, who could understand God's word as given by His Archangel, and made it known to those people who would listen. The wickedness and trouble in the land finally grew so bad that the people asked God to give them a king once more. God knew, however, that the people were not ready to give up their selfishness and live as they had under the king-priests. God's

Archangel, therefore, appeared to Samuel and told him to warn the people of the kind of king who would be chosen if they did not mend their ways.

Samuel told them about it in words something like this: "The king who will govern you will take your sons to work for him, in his army and growing his crops and building and making things for him. He will put your daughters to work as cooks and other workers in his households; he will take your fields and vineyards away from you and give them to his servants; he will take your sheep and other possessions for himself; he will make you all work for him. And then, when you are unhappy with this king who governs you, and cry to God about it, God will not listen to you."

In this way, the Archangel, through Samuel, was trying to warn the people that unless they mended their ways, they would have a selfish king who was interested only in material things, and they would have no one to guide them according to God's law. As we know, if people do not live according to God's law, they will get into trouble and become very unhappy. This is just what would happen under such a king as the Archangel described.

The people, however, refused to pay any attention to what Samuel told them. They did not want to change their ways, but still continued to ask for a king. And thus, in the end, they were given just the kind of king that Samuel had described. The king's name was Saul. Eventually, they were just as unhappy as the Archangel had warned they would be.

The people had the free will to change their ways, but would not, and had to suffer the consequences. In the same way, we have the free will to live as God wants us to, or not. If we do, all will go well for us. If we don't, we, too, shall have many problems and be very unhappy.

GRADE III — SECOND SUNDAY

KEYWORD: Transmutation.

You know that there are many wonderful things that God has done for us. One of the most important is that He has given us the power to change bad things into good ones. This is really true, and you can all try it to see how well it works. We can turn falsehoods into truths, hate into love, and discord into harmony. We can all do this right within ourselves, in our homes, and when we are with friends.

We all know how quarrels among friends often end up: one person goes home, unhappy, saying something like, "I'm not going to play with you again," and the two people who used to be friends are suddenly not friends any more. Instead of that, suppose one of the friends says something like, "I'm sorry. Let's not quarrel any more. It's a silly thing to do. Let's figure out exactly what is the matter, and decide what to do that we can both be satisfied." It doesn't really matter whose "fault" the quarrel was; what matters is that one friend did something to stop the quarrel and make peace again.

When we feel bad thoughts coming on within ourselves we can change them to good ones; when we feel like being mischievous or downright naughty, we can do something good and helpful instead. The process of changing the bad within ourselves to the good is called "transmutation", and by transmutation we will eventually become good and loving and pure through and through.

Many hundreds of years ago, in what was called the Middle Ages, not very many people knew the things that we are teaching in The Rosicrucian Fellowship. The few who did know couldn't talk about them, because in those days it was forbidden to believe anything that was different from what people who were in charge of the church believed and taught, and people who tried to give a new or a different

teaching were punished. So instead of talking about changing themselves, they went into their laboratories and let everyone think that they were trying to change iron and other metals into gold. The people in power thought it was wonderful for them to try to do this, because naturally they thought that the more gold there was, the better. The alchemists, which is what the people in the laboratories were called, wrote books about their experiments, and used chemical and scientific names to describe what goes on inside ourselves when we try to transmute our bad qualities into good ones. In this way they were able to write about transmutation without being punished, while the people in power thought they were writing about how to change other metals into gold.

But now we don't have to keep transmutation a secret any more, and the more we try to change ourselves, and become just as good as God wants us to be, the more we will be able to help Him in His great work, and the faster we will learn our lessons in this school of life.

GRADE III — SECOND SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — I Samuel 16:4-11

THE ANOINTING OF DAVID

Golden Text — Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will you die, O house of Israel?—*Ezekiel* 18:31.

Just as had been prophesied, King Saul was unable to govern his people according to the way of the Spirit. Samuel tried to advise him, but Saul paid no attention to the good advice. Finally, the time came when the next king had to be chosen.

God's Archangel told Samuel to go to Bethlehem, where he would find the person who was to be the new king. In Bethlehem an important man named Jesse greeted Samuel. Jesse had many sons, who were introduced to Samuel, and Samuel was sure that one of them was to be the future king. But he heard the voice of the Archangel telling him that no one of these sons was the right person. Samuel then asked Jesse if he had any more sons, and Jesse replied that he did, the youngest, David, being still a boy, was out tending sheep.

Samuel had David brought before him, and when David came the voice of the Archangel told Samuel to anoint him, for he was the one whom God had chosen to be king. When someone is anointed, he is touched with sacred oil, and this is a symbolic way of showing that he has dedicated or consecrated himself in service to God. David, who was an entirely different kind of person from the old King Saul, dedicated himself to serve God and lead his people in God's ways when he became ruler. We can each and every one dedicate ourselves to God and make up our minds to do our jobs, whatever they may be, in a way that follows His commandments.

There is something else we should remember about this story. Even Samuel, as wise as he was, did not recognize David as the future king. Everyone, including Samuel, was surprised that such a young boy had been chosen. This was because they could not see the goodness that was already present within David: all they saw was his outward appearance, which was that of a youngster, and a simple shepherd besides. What this really means is that we cannot tell everything about a person by simply seeing what he looks like and what he does. It is what he is and how he feels *inside* that counts the most of all.

GRADE III — THIRD SUNDAY

KEYWORDS: Birth and Rebirth.

We all know that we have more than just one life on Earth, and every time we come back, we experience and learn something new. Every time we are ready to be reborn, we must do many things in the heaven worlds before we can appear on Earth as babies. You know that we have finer bodies than the dense body — and before we are born we gather around us the material from which these bodies are to be made. The Angels help us choose the people who are going to be our fathers and mothers — these may be people whom we have known in previous lives, and with whom we have to learn new lessons or have new experiences. When we are quite ready to be born, work starts on the building of our physical bodies, with an Angel watching over each one. In a little while the divine spark of God which really is each one of us enters into our mother's body, and the work of building our bodies goes on. Then, after nine months, we are born as tiny babies, ready to live another life on Earth.

Being born is a very wonderful thing, especially when we realize how much God's love, and our parents' love for us, is helping us. An Angel takes care of every tiny little spark of God from the time he gets ready to be born on Earth till the time he appears here in the body of a little baby. Maybe some of you have baby brothers or sisters at home. You can see how much the baby is going to have to learn in this life — first he must learn to do things like focus his eyes, sit up, walk, feed himself, and later he will have to go to school just as you are doing, and then will come high school, and college, and then probably many, many years of being an adult and learning adult lessons. What you can't see, but what is just as important, is everything that the little spark of light within the baby had to do before he came to Earth.

After the baby has grown up and learned his lessons for this lifetime, the spark of light within him leaves the physical body and goes back to the heaven worlds. Then he goes over all the things he has done during his lifetime, and if there were some things that he did wrong, he is made to see that they were wrong and why. He is also made to feel very good about the good things he has done, and in this way, in the next life, he will be more ready to do the good things and not so likely to do the wrong ones. After that he stays in the heaven worlds, learning and resting, until it is time for him to get ready to be born on Earth again.

Whatever we learn and do well in this life, and whatever we do that is good and loving for other people, will help us after we are born in the next life. In the same way, whatever we do that is bad or evil, or that hurts other people, will hurt us when we are born again. If our bodies, our thoughts, and our deeds are good and pure and clean now, we will be able to build even more wonderful bodies next time, and it will be even easier for us to do good deeds then. But if we are not good and pure now, we will not be able to build such good bodies next time, and it will be harder for us to do the right things and we will suffer. So you see how important it is for us to do all the right things that we can in this life.

GRADE III — THIRD SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — I Samuel 24:9-22

SAUL AND DAVID

Golden Text — And Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.—*I Samuel* 15:28.

As you can imagine, King Saul was not very happy when he learned that David had been anointed as future king.

Saul pretended to be kind to David, and even called David his son, but secretly was planning in some way to get rid of him.

David grew older, knowing of how Saul felt about him. This saddened him, but he had no anger in his heart against Saul. One day, however, God's Archangel told David that he would deliver Saul to him, that David might do what he thought best with Saul. That is how it happened that Saul entered a huge cave where David was hidden, waiting. Saul did not know David was there, and David could have taken him by surprise and injured him or made him prisoner. Instead, however, David stealthily crept up to Saul in the dark cave and cut off a piece of his cloak. Saul knew nothing about this until David showed him what he had done. Then Saul realized how merciful David really was. He saw that David could easily have hurt him, and yet had spared him. Saul was very moved and said, "You are more righteous than I, for you have rewarded me with good, while I have rewarded you with evil." And then Saul, seeing how fine and just David really was, was glad that David would be the new king.

This was really a big test for David, and in a way it was a test for Saul, too. When the Archangel told David that Saul would be delivered up to him, it would have been easy for David to harm Saul, just as Saul had wished to harm David, and certainly many men would have done that very thing. But David knew we must love all people, even if they seek to hurt us. This is why, instead of injuring Saul, David showed him mercy and kindness and, in this way, proved to God that he was really worthy to become the new king.

Saul had what may have been his last chance to understand that he was wrong in ruling selfishly and thinking so much of power and possessions, and not enough of his people. When he told David, "You are more righteous than I," it showed that he finally understood that to show love and mercy is right, and to be selfish is wrong. Before he learned

this lesson, Saul could not have accepted David as the new king. Now, however, he at last knew that it was right for David, who had dedicated himself to God and was a wise, unselfish man, to rule the people.

GRADE III — FOURTH SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — I Samuel 18:1-3

DAVID AND JONATHAN and review

Golden Text — A man that has friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.—*Proverbs* 18:24.

One of the most beautiful things we can read about in the Old Testament is the great friendship which sprang up between David and Jonathan, King Saul's son. In spite of the fact that his father wanted to harm David, Jonathan and David grew very close to each other. Jonathan even helped David escape from a plot that had been hatched against him by Saul.

Friendship is one of the greatest blessings we can have. Think how lonesome we would be without friends — without someone we really know and love with whom we can talk and play. We know, however, that in order to *have* friends, we must *be* friends. If we are good to other people, and try to understand them, and cheer them up when they are sad or be glad with them when they have something to be happy about, we will find that we are friends and have friends. But if we think only about ourselves, or sit in our corners and don't try to meet people and get acquainted with them, we might easily find ourselves without friends, which is one of the most unhappy things that could happen to us. Let us remember, then, always to do our best to be friendly to others.

Review previous three weeks' work.

LESSON SUGGESTIONS FOR SAGITTARIUS

GRADE III — FIRST SUNDAY

KEYWORD: Scope.

The Star Angel delivering God's message this month is Jupiter. He tells us, "Be kind!"

We have said many times that during our lives here on Earth we are going to school, just as we go to different classes, from first grade through twelfth, in our schools here. In each grade we are expected to learn certain things, and we never stop learning. When we start first grade, for instance, most of us don't know how to read; when we leave first grade, we *can* read. So we have learned a lot, but we will have to learn a lot more before we are able to read the books that grown people read.

So it is in God's school of life, too. There is always something more to learn, always a higher step to reach toward. All the sparks of life that came from God — that is, all of us — must keep on growing and learning and climbing until we have become as great, as powerful, as wise, and as compassionate, as God Himself. So you see what a long way there is yet to go.

It is important always to keep our goal in mind, and try to stay on the main road of life that leads onward and upward. There are so many little side roads and by-paths to sidetrack us that if we don't know where we are going, and why, we are very likely to start rambling around in places that won't lead us anywhere, and waste a lot of time. When we first learned arithmetic and could do easy little addition problems, it would have been much easier to keep on doing them instead of going ahead and learning subtraction, and then multiplication and division. But we wouldn't have made much progress.

This is just what some people do in life, though. They

learn one thing, or like to do one thing, mainly because it is easy, and then keep doing it and never go beyond that point. That is not what God wants us to do, and that is not why we are here.

If we use our minds, they grow and become stronger and help us go farther and faster. If we don't use them, they won't grow and we won't make progress. If we don't try to do things that are a little bit hard because we are afraid we won't be able to do them, then we never *will* be able to do them. If we don't do the things that we know are right, simply because we don't want to and think we would have more pleasure doing the wrong ones instead, it will become harder and harder to do the right things when we *do* want to do them.

If we want to progress in life's school and learn all that God wants us to learn, we must follow all of God's laws — not only those that tell us to keep on working and studying and learning, but also those that tell us to be kind and loving and helpful to the people we meet. If we remember always to do all these things, we will keep going upward and onward, gaining wisdom and the ability to help greatly in God's work.

GRADE III — FIRST SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — I Kings 3:5-14

SOLOMON IS MADE KING

Golden Text — The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament shows His handiwork.—*Psalms* 19:1.

David finally became king, and reigned for many years. He had a son named Solomon, who grew up loving the Lord and living according to His law. More years went by, and in time Solomon took his father David's place as king.

One night God's Archangel appeared to Solomon in a dream and said to him: "Ask what I shall give thee."

Solomon, who knew what a great responsibility it was to be a king and to govern many people justly and kindly, answered: "Give thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad."

The Archangel knew that God was very pleased with this request. Solomon had not asked for wealth or power, or for any other of the many things that most men might ask for if they suddenly could have anything they wanted. Instead of thinking about himself, he thought about the people he had to rule, and asked for an understanding heart, which would help him judge the problems that would be brought before him, and to be fair to everyone in his kingdom.

So the Archangel told Solomon that he would be given, not only the understanding and wisdom that he had requested, but also riches and great honor, which he had not asked for. As a result of this, Solomon became one of the greatest, most just, and wisest kings of all time. He was so wise and so good that he was a great teacher and healer, as well as a great king. He knew how to cure the sick and comfort those who were sorrowful, and he understood and could work with, not only people, but also animals and Nature Spirits. His people loved him because he made fair decisions and gave wise commands.

So we see that because Solomon was unselfish, and asked for understanding and wisdom to help his people instead of something just for himself, he was able to do many great things for his people. He grew within himself, for those who live wisely and justly do make much soul growth. We may be sure that God was very pleased with Solomon.

GRADE III — SECOND SUNDAY

KEYWORD: Reverence.

In God's magnificent plan of creation there are many big and tremendous wonders, and there are many wonders

so tiny that most people have never seen them. Think of our vast solar system — all those planets, so far from each other, all spinning around the Sun, all weighing tremendous amounts, all having many of God's children living and learning on them. Think of the Sun itself, radiant and powerful, giving life to everything in the solar system. Think of the wonders here on Earth — magnificent snow-covered mountains, deep oceans as teeming with life as is the dry land, thunder storms and blizzards, balmy spring weather, the fruit and grain growing in summer, the swell of autumn leaves.

Then think of the little things — tiny flowers with each petal perfect, the gurgling noise made by a little brook, little butterflies and bees, and even tinier lady bugs and ants. And finally, think of the tiny things that can be seen only under a microscope. Those of you who have looked through microscopes have seen some of the very many forms of life, of all different shapes and sizes, which are so small we cannot see them just with our eyes. These minute things, just as the planets of our solar system, and we ourselves, are all parts of God's great Plan. Nothing that exists is too small for God to give it His attention and care.

Before the microscope was invented, people had no idea that tiny bacteria and microbes existed, but just because people could not see them did not mean that they were not there. The same thing is true of other things in God's great world. There are some people who do not believe in Angels because they can't see them, and who don't believe in the little Nature Spirits who help make plants grow for the same reason. We know that they do exist, and there are people who have seen them and have described them to us. Some day we all will be able to see them, and then even the people who don't believe in them now will see and have to believe.

There are many other wonderful things in God's world that we know very little, or nothing, about, but as we advance in our school of life we will learn more and more.

Just as we said last week: if we remember always to follow all of God's laws, always to do our very best, always to keep in mind where we are going and why, we will, little by little, be able to see more and more of the wonders that God has created. We will learn to appreciate them more, too, for we will not only see them, but we will understand better how important they are in our world — how they help to make our world more beautiful and more pleasant for us to live in.

GRADE III — SECOND SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — I Kings 8:54-66

SOLOMON BUILDS THE TEMPLE

Golden Text — Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honor and majesty.—*Psalms* 104:1.

The children of Israel had finally stopped their long, long journey and had settled down in the city of Jerusalem. The time had come for them to build a permanent Temple where they could worship God.

Solomon's father David had wanted to build the Temple, but he was not allowed to do so. Although he was a good man in many ways, he also had to make war when he was king, and because he did make war, he was not considered pure enough to build the House of God. Therefore, it was left to Solomon to build the Temple. Many people helped him, and he received treasures and gifts for the Temple from many lands.

It took seven years to build the Temple, and then Solomon called all the elders of Israel together, and dedicated the Temple to God. The Ark of the Covenant, which held the Tablets of the Ten Commandments, was brought in, and the staves by which it had been carried all these years

were removed. This showed that there was now a House of God where the Ark would be kept permanently, and where God would be present at all times.

There is another meaning behind this, too. We know that we will not live forever in the material world, and that some day, after many long years, we will have learned all our lessons and return to live in the world of God from which we came. The Ark, when it was carried by its staves and taken from place to place, was a symbol for the fact that man, too, must wander from place to place until he returns permanently to God. When the Ark was finally placed in the Temple and the staves were removed, it symbolized the fact that man, too, will one day return to his permanent home.

Solomon's Temple was a symbol for the light of the Spirit, the light of God which is always shining to guide us, if we will only follow it. We can do this by living according to His law. For some time, the people did follow God's laws, and the Temple remained standing. Little by little, however, as has happened so often in the past, men turned away from God's law and lived the way they wanted to. Then there was, again, great sorrow and trouble, and, eventually, hundreds of years later, the Temple was destroyed. It then had to be rebuilt, in hopes that man would again come to the light of the Spirit and follow God's law.

GRADE III — THIRD SUNDAY

KEYWORDS: The Hips — The Thighs.

Today we will talk about the parts of the body that the Star Angels from Sagittarius helped us build. They helped us build both the hips and the thighs. The thighs are the long bones reaching from the hips to the knees.

Now, let's see if you can get up without moving your thighs. (Children will find this impossible. Then ask them

to stand up in a normal way, and then try walking without moving their thighs. This is also impossible.)

Now you see how much the thighs help us move around. Imagine the trouble we would have getting anywhere or doing much of anything if they were bound up and we couldn't use them. Every time we wanted to go outside and play, to get in the car, to go to school, or even to go into the kitchen for something to eat, we would be frustrated. No matter how hard we tried, we simply wouldn't be able to do these things.

The same sort of thing happens to the minds and hearts of people who do the wrong kind of thinking or have the wrong kind of feeling. If they think unkind thoughts instead of loving ones, if they are selfish instead of generous, if they are angry instead of forgiving, if they hate instead of love, or if they are worried and afraid instead of being cheerful and remembering that everything in God's world works for the good, their minds and hearts become all bound up with these bad feelings and thoughts and they are unable to move ahead and do the wonderful work they are supposed to do.

When we do the right kind of thinking and have the right kind of feelings, the effect on our hearts and minds is the same as the effect good, strong thighs have on our bodies. We move forward quickly and well; we learn the lessons we are supposed to learn; we become cleaner and purer inside; and we become ever more able to be of service to other people, and, in so doing, to do God's work.

Right thinking and right feeling are all bound up with obedience to God's laws that we have been talking about this month. One of the most important things to feel is the *desire* to help others. When we really want to help others — to serve — we will be given many chances to do so, and to show our love for and kind feelings toward other people. When we want to help badly enough, when we have shown that we will take those chances to serve which are given to us and

really do everything we can to help, and when we have shown that we are really and sincerely trying to live according to God's laws, then, after we have grown up, we will be allowed to work as Invisible Helpers while our physical body is asleep and we are out in our Soul Body.

GRADE III — THIRD SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — II Chronicles 9:26-31

SOLOMON'S REIGN

Golden Text — And Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the Lord his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly.—*II Chronicles* 1:1.

King Solomon ruled for forty years, and was the wisest man ever to reign on Earth. He knew all about philosophy, botany, farming, mathematics, and all the sciences, and he could write music and beautiful poetry. He knew many things about the world of the Spirit which were, and are, hidden from most men because they are not yet worthy to know those things.

There are many legends and stories about King Solomon, all of which have important hidden meanings. One of the stories is about the Queen of Sheba, a wise and beautiful queen of Arabia, who had heard many things about King Solomon's wisdom and the glory of his kingdom. She did not believe the stories until she came to see for herself. She was received with great pageantry by Solomon, and liked what she saw, and Solomon and Sheba became great friends.

The Queen of Sheba is a symbol for what is called the "composite soul of Humanity," or, really, all mankind. At the end of our present era of evolution, we will all have awakened the Christ within us, and we will be living in unity and harmony under His leadership. Right now, however, we are evolving along many different paths. Solomon in his

great wisdom is a symbol of one of the ways we can travel. Solomon and Sheba planned to be married, but then Sheba found another man whom she liked better and so, in spite of their plans, Sheba and Solomon did not get married. This is a symbol of the fact that humanity is not yet ready to unite on a single path to God.

Solomon also wrote a beautiful song called "The Song of Solomon." When we hear the words of this song, it sounds as though they are about two people who love each other. The song is much more important than that, however, because it, too, has a hidden meaning which is somewhat hard to understand. Many, many years from now, human beings will no longer be divided into men and women the way we are now. Instead, each person will have within himself all the good things that we think of as belonging mostly to man, and all the good things that seem to belong mostly to women. For instance, we think of women as having imagination and sympathy, and as being peace-loving. We think of men as being determined do get out and do things, and striving to be perfect in their jobs. For a long time, differences like this between men and women were much greater than they are now, and that is because we are already beginning to learn the good things from each other. There are many men now who don't want to fight wars any more, but in King Solomon's day almost all men were fighters, whether or not they were soldiers. And there are many women now who go out and do things in the world, taking jobs or working for the government. In King Solomon's day, it was unheard of for a woman to do anything except take care of her home and her family. The Song of Solomon tells us that someday all the good things about men and women will be united in each one of us.

Solomon had great wisdom, which is really knowledge mixed with love. Many people know things, and we say they have knowledge, but they use what they know for their own selfish purposes. When, because of their love and

compassion for others, they use what they know to help people, and not for themselves, then we say they have wisdom. Because of his wisdom, and because of the goodness within him, when Solomon was reborn on Earth in a later life, he came back as Jesus. Jesus, we know, was the purest and most advanced human being ever to live on Earth, and his body was so pure that it was used by the great Christ Spirit when He came to Earth to teach us. We will learn more about that later.

GRADE III — FOURTH SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — II Chronicles 10; 36:11-21;
Isaiah 11:1-6; Jeremiah 23:1-7; 33:14-16

REVOLT OF ISRAELITE TRIBES ISRAEL'S BACKSLIDING AND FATE PROPHETS FORETELL SAVIOR'S COMING

(*Note to Teachers* Endeavor to connect the Old Testament with the New Testament to be used for the next three months. Tell of the long line of Prophets who lifted their voices in warning and protest against the wrongdoing of the people, and who foretold the coming of the Christ. In this way the story of Jesus' birth will be seen as a continuation of the lessons of the last nine months and not as a break into something new.)

Golden Text — And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord.—*Isaiah* 11:2.

After King Solomon died, it was not long before the people began to revert to their old ways of selfishness. King Solomon had ruled justly, as we know, but he saw to it that his people lived according to God's laws, and there were some who did not want to. When King Solomon died, many of

the people revolted against King Rehoboam, his son, who was a good man and loved the Lord, but was not as strong or as wise a ruler as King Solomon had been.

The people then went back to their wicked, selfish ways. Here we see how strong our lower natures are, if we are not very careful to prevent their getting hold of us. We also see how important it is that we use our free will in the right way. As soon as the people lost the guidance of wise King Solomon and had no one who could keep them in line, they decided, of their own free will, to follow the selfish desires of their lower natures and move farther and farther away from God's laws. After many years had gone by, things became so bad that, as we said before, their Temple had to be destroyed and their city, Jerusalem, was also burned.

It was becoming clear that humanity would need someone sent by God Himself to guide them out of the terrible mess into which they had gotten themselves by being so evil and selfish. There were again, just as in Samuel's time, a few wise men and prophets who had not forgotten God's commands, and kept themselves pure and just. As Samuel had done, they tried to warn the people about their wrongdoing, but, again, most of the people paid no attention. Because the prophets were very wise, they foresaw that in several hundred more years, God would send the Messiah to Earth to teach His people a new religion, the religion of love and brotherhood. The Messiah, of course, was the great Christ Spirit, about Whom we will learn much more in the months ahead.

The most famous of the Messiah's prophets was Isaiah, who told, not only of the coming of the Christ, but also of the wonderful Aquarian Age of peace and brotherhood which still lies ahead of us. In that great Age, which we are now working towards, selfishness, wars, and cruelty will be gone from the world, and we will live together in love, peace, and harmony. This will come about when we finally have learned

to love our neighbors — to love all people — as Christ Jesus urged us to do.

In our Bible lessons for some months, we have studied the Old Testament, which has to do with man's history before the coming of Christ. The New Testament, for which the Old Testament is a preparation, has to do with the new religion brought by the Christ. Next week we will begin our study of the New Testament.