

GRADE IV — SECOND SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — Psalm 65:9-13

MIDSUMMER — PART I

Golden Text—While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.—Genesis 6:22.

At this time of year, when Nature's physical activities are at their peak, Midsummer is celebrated in some parts of the world, although we don't hear much about it in the United States. However, it is only fitting that we recognize the great work done by the Nature Spirits and show our gratitude for all they do to make life more beautiful with flowers, plants, and trees. They also nourish cattle, cultivate grain, etc., providing food for all who live on this Earth. They work for all four kingdoms—mineral, plant, animal, and human—and help mankind in so doing.

In the Middle Ages, many people could see the gnomes and elves and fairies roaming about mountains and forest. The folk stories from those bygone days are really true. Anyone having extended (etheric) sight may see those gnomes building green chlorophyll into plant leaves and tinting flowers beautifully. They also cut crystals in minerals, making the priceless gems that gleam in golden crowns. Without the gnomes there would be no iron, silver, gold, etc. They work everywhere and are busier than bees, although unseen by most people. Those who do see them are often called dreamers and fools. Many small children see these creatures, although grown-ups don't believe it.

Literature tells us much about the Nature Spirits in mythology and folklore, and Socrates, Plato, and Paracelsus, as well as other wise men, declared their reality.

The Nature Spirits about which we hear most are the gnomes, the undines, the sylphs, and the salamanders. The word *gnome* means "earth dweller," and that is what they are. One type of them frequently mentioned in stories is the brownie, or elf, a mischievous, comical looking creature about twelve or eighteen inches high. They are usually dressed in green or brown, are aged in appearance, and often have a long white beard. They may be seen (with etheric vision) scampering out of holes in tree stumps, and, at times, vanish by dissolving into the trees. They are great eaters (making their own food) and hard workers, liking to store things in secret places. They can be burned in fire. They grow old much as human beings, living only a few hundred years.

The undines belong to the family of water spirits operating in liquid ether, close to the water elements. They help to control the course and function of water in Nature. It has been agreed that they closely resemble human beings in appearance and size, depending upon where they live. They represent beauty, and are symbolized as female. Many groups of them are found in waterfalls, swiftly moving rivers, and clear mountain lakes.

Tiny undines live under water lily pads and little houses of moss sprayed by waterfalls. They work with vital essences and liquids in plants, animals, and human beings, being present in all that contains water. When seen, they resemble goddesses of Greek statuary, rising from water draped in mist and unable to exist long away from it. There are many families of them; they are rather emotional, are friendly to humans, like to serve mankind, and have special love for flowers and plants, serving them nearly as devotedly as the gnomes. Undines live for thousands of years.

Next week we shall talk about *Sylphs* and *Salamanders*.

GRADE IV — THIRD SUNDAY

KEYWORD—*Stomach*

We all know something of the workings of this stomach of ours, but do we understand what can be done to help improve its digestive processes?

Actually, the stomach may be termed a "food reservoir." When calm and at ease it is a pale pink, made up of many encircling folds, resembling glistening velvet. However, when we become angry, the color changes to red; when we turn pale with fright, it also turns pale; excitement greatly increases the flow of its juices. If we get depressed, it practically ceases working; at such times it's best not to eat any thing. When irritated by the use of pepper, mustard, or horse radish the stomach turns a fiery red.

If we take aspirin, there are likely to be small hemorrhages (bleeding) in the lining of the stomach. Some drugs such as barbiturates, LSD, bennies, glue, pot, etc., react in various ways upon different people. Whenever we eat unwisely or too much, there is a housecleaning; no doubt all have experienced vomiting at one time or another.

Under normal conditions food is mixed thoroughly with digestive juices in the stomach, the resulting thick gruel being passed on to the small intestine. It takes about four hours to digest a normal meal of protein, potatoes, vegetables, and dessert. Fats take much longer, and that is why we hear so much about avoiding certain fats. Anything cold will halt digestive activity until sufficient time is allowed for the stomach to warm up. If the evening meal is a normal one, the stomach sleeps when we do.

When treated with some consideration, our stomach will provide trouble-free service throughout our lifetime, but we aren't always as thoughtful as we should be about what we send down to pass through the digestive process. If we use mostly vegetables and fruits, whole grain cereals.

cottage cheese, wholewheat bread, fresh fruit and vegetable juices, etc., they are welcome. Proper mastication or chewing is also required to make certain that food is welcomed by the "food reservoir."

There is something else we often forget: to have pleasant conversation at meal time. We should never eat when disturbed; serious subjects should be left for another time, so that we may cheerfully attend to the food before us, abundantly received from Nature's storehouses. We ought to be thankful for being fortunate enough to have sufficient food to keep healthy and strong. As we entertain such thoughts, our digestion will be good and we shall enjoy our food far more than otherwise would be the case. Our stomach will be grateful, too!

GRADE IV — THIRD SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — Psalm 65:9-13

MIDSUMMER — PART II

Golden Text—To everything there is a season . . . a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted.—*Ecclesiastes* 3:1-2.

Continuing our discussion of last Sunday about the Nature Spirits, today we shall learn of the sylphs and salamanders.

Sylphs are said by wise men to live in the air, their bodies composed of the light ether. Sometimes they take human form for short periods of time, but change rapidly. Although their size varies, they are mostly not larger than humans, and oftentimes much smaller; they live for thousands of years. In disposition they are merry, changeable, and eccentric. It is said that they gather around minds of dreamers, poets, and artists, inspiring them with their close knowledge of the beauties and workings of Nature. They

work with the gases of the human body and, indirectly, with the nervous system, where their changeableness is shown. They have no fixed dwelling place, but wander from place to place, invisible, but always present in intelligent activity of the universe. They generally have wings, appearing sometimes as tiny cherubs, at others like delicate fairies.

During a storm, the sylphs and undines are at war with each other. They lift the water of rivers, lakes, and sea into the air where it is vaporized and formed into clouds; these condense, sending helpful rains to the Earth. The salamanders enter the battle with their torches, causing lightning, thus burning evil thoughts in the ethers around the Earth. That is why the air always feels so fresh after a storm. If it were not for these little people, man could not exist, because the Earth would become hot, dry, and barren.

Salamanders are the little people of fire, living in a spiritual ether of very delicate texture for many thousands of years. They are the invisible fire element of Nature. Without them, material fire could not exist; no match could be struck, nor would flint and steel give off sparks without their assistance; they appear immediately when brought forth by friction. Varied in grouping and arrangement, there are many families of them, differing in size and dignity; sometimes they are visible as small light, fiery balls, tongues of fire, running over fields or into houses. In bygone days it was believed that the most common form of the salamander was lizard-like, about a foot long, glowingly visible, twisting and crawling in the midst of fire. Members of another group were described as huge, floating giants in flowing robes, protected by sheets of fiery armor. Still others appeared as indistinct globes, floating over water at night, or occasionally as forks of flame on masts and rigging of ships. They are the most

powerful of the Nature Spirits. In animals and men they work through the emotional (feeling) nature by means of body heat, the liver, and blood stream. Without their assistance there would be no warmth.

All four classes of Nature Spirits work with our life wave, giving most valuable and necessary service. That is why we owe them our heartfelt gratitude.

GRADE IV — FOURTH SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — Exodus 20:8-11

FOURTH COMMANDMENT

Golden Text—Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.—*Exodus 20:8.*

There is a special reason for having this commandment in Cancer, the sign of the home; we learn a great deal about ourselves at home. There are no half-way measures in the home! It is, and always will be, a testing ground for our good and bad points, which stand out as clearly as black and white. Behind those closed doors, the all-seeing eye of God penetrates forever!

Some people seem to have broken away from home and all it stands for, so that it has become merely a place to eat, sleep, change clothing, etc., in between trips to other places of interest—poor substitutes for the home.

If we really want to make our world better, we especially need prayer at home, for it enables us to have peace and harmony within, while going about our daily activities and meeting our everyday challenges.

We can set aside a certain portion of our room specifically for this purpose. It may be enclosed or not as desired. What is important is that we go there regularly at a certain time every day, keeping our quiet time with God sacred, with no outside distractions. There need be no long prayers,

unless we feel so inclined. At times we may speak only God's name, awaiting His response in the silence which will bring light into the darkness of our thoughts. That is our true Sabbath, the time we spend with God in prayer!

We shall find, as we continue faithfully, that there will be an increase in peace each time we go to our place of prayer. The decision to set aside a part of each day for prayer is important to our present and future spiritual well-being. If we pray regularly, sincerely, and from the bottoms of our hearts, we will receive the guidance we need in overcoming the problems with which we will be faced from day to day.

The FOURTH SUNDAY is also SERVICE SUNDAY for discussions on the CANCER keywords of *Imagination*, *Impressionability*, and *Sympathy* in relation to the service we were able to give during the past month.

GRADE IV — FIFTH SUNDAY: REVIEW

Lesson Suggestions for Leo

SPIRITUAL KEYWORD—LOVE

GRADE IV — FIRST SUNDAY

KEYWORD—*Dominion*

Leo is the kingly sign, the sign of rulership, because it is the home sign of the Sun, the ruler of our solar system.

The physical Sun, the great fiery globe which can be examined and measured by the scientists, however, is only the physical body through which God sends His mighty power to feed and sustain every part of the solar system. Without the continuous outpouring of this stream of Life and Light from the invisible Sun that is behind the visible

Sun, our Earth and the other planets would become dead worlds falling through space and breaking up, just as our physical bodies disintegrate when the Life Spark, the Higher Self upholding it, is withdrawn.

The material scientists see how perfectly every part of the solar system appears to be controlled by the visible Sun, but most of them know nothing about the marvelous Invisible Government working through the visible Sun, and nothing of the Divine Plan behind it all.

The spiritual message which the Sun brings us is: "Be Strong!" What do you think would be the "living lesson" under this kingly sign of Leo, with its picture of perfect rulership, and the call of its messenger, "Be Strong?" Well, the lesson is *self-mastery*. Every one of us lives in a little universe of his own, a miniature model of God's universe, which we are learning to govern and develop that we may bring it, in time, to the perfection of the great cosmic pattern set before us. So the more we know about the great universe and how its forces work, and the more we know about ourselves and how *our* forces work, the better governments we will be able to set up in our own inner and outer lives.

The Leo keywords point the way. The first and greatest is *Love*, telling us that the immense power which guides and controls the universe is love-power. We know the love-power in us flows from the Higher Self, the God of our little universe, so that anything in ourselves which is out of tune with that keynote of love is interfering with the proper working of our inner government.

Dominion, the second keyword, and the one to be used during the coming week, means absolute control by the Higher Self of all the forces of our being, and the vehicles through which these forces work. Learning how to rule ourselves truly is a more thrilling and heroic work than anything the outer world has to offer. Those who are most

successful in doing that are also best fitted to be leaders in world affairs.

GRADE IV -- FIRST SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — Psalms 8:1-9; Proverbs 4:7-9

MAN — RULER OF EARTHLY THINGS

Golden Text—Thou hast made man to have dominion over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things under his feet. All sheep and oxen, the beasts of the field; the birds of the air and fish of the sea.—*Psalms* 8:6-8.

Have you ever thought about how many things man controls in this world of ours? Take the minerals—rocks, stones, gold, coal, metals, soil, etc. — which are moved, shaped, and developed with man's assistance. Rocks and stones are useful in buildings, walls, walks, etc., only when man moves them where they may be so used. Gold is dug from the Earth and formed into beautiful ornaments, used in dentistry, etc. Coal is dug, too, and used for heat and power. The same is true of precious stones which are also mined and later cut and polished into great beauty. Soil, when watered and cultivated, sometimes by man, does wonders for plant life. Metals, after mining, are manufactured into various items useful in many ways.

Some people enjoy climbing mountains; others cut them away to make room for projects like dams, reservoirs, lakes, housing developments, parks, etc. In the deserts some people appreciate the beauty and stillness. Nowadays, however, deserts also are used as testing grounds for planes and bombs, as air fields, etc. Man has helped here in many ways, although not in others.

Then there is the plant kingdom, made up of a vast variety of countless sizes and shapes. Many are used for

food, others for their beauty, while trees are useful in building homes, and making paper, clothing, furniture, etc. You can probably think of many more uses for plants. Man has helped with all kinds of plant life by cultivating and improving them.

It is in the animal kingdom that we haven't done very well. Many animals are still being badly treated—cruelly killed or trapped for their valuable skins. Others are being punished severely and neglected while being kept as pets or beasts of burden. Meat eating, of course, is common in many parts of the world. In spite of that, the animals are trying, in their way, to give of their best and help us while doing their particular work in the world. Some domestic animals, like the dog, cat, and horse, as well as some birds, are making great strides by living with man. Animals could use much more kindness from man.

We learn that man has dominion over all these life-waves on Earth because of his ability to think. Naturally, God expects more from us because we do have that ability, and have been on the path of evolution longer than any of the other kingdoms we have mentioned. But how do we use our power—what are we doing with it?

Before we can truly be rulers of others, we must learn to control our minds. We have a long way to go, however, before our minds will be fully under control or developed to their greatest potential. Since our minds are our most recently acquired vehicles they are, so to speak, in their infancy. It is still very difficult for all but the most advanced human beings to control their minds — although many may think they can do so. Furthermore, we know that even the imperfect minds that we do have are not fully formed until we reach 21 years of age.

Nevertheless, let us try an experiment to see just how hard it is to control the mind. Close your eyes and think about one thing, and only one thing, for two minutes. (Al-

low two minutes of silence for this concentration.) How many of you can say that you did not think about anything at all except that one single thing for the entire two minutes? Most of you will no doubt have noticed that your thoughts kept jumping from one thing to another, try as you might have to make them stay on the subject you had chosen. This exercise—thinking about one thing and only one thing—is called concentration. The better we are able to concentrate, the more we will be able to control our minds. Concentration, like every other worth-while ability, is improved only with practice.

The mind (intelligence) and the heart (love) must be able to work together in complete harmony before we will be able fully to express our highest and best qualities. The more these two forces within us are brought together, the more elevating and helpful will be our thoughts, wishes, and deeds, and the more justly we will be able to exercise our “dominion” over the life-waves evolving behind us.

We know that, just as we must help those life-waves below us on the ladder of life, so also, are we being helped by the great Beings who are on the steps above us. The Angels, the Archangels, and the Planetary Spirits to whose influences we react so strongly are all constantly trying to help us, to the extent that we allow them to do so.

GRADE IV — SECOND SUNDAY

KEYWORD—*Loyalty*

Loyalty to the Higher Self is, of course, a very necessary part of self-mastery. It means being true always to the best we know, in little things as well as great ones. Those who do this will soon find that people trust them to carry out any responsibilities placed upon them.

With the idea of self-mastery in mind, let us make a survey of the powers we are developing and the tools we

have to work with. We begin with the dense (physical) body, because the Hierarchy of Leo gave us the germ of this body at the very beginning of our long journey from the higher planes down to this Physical World. Those Great Beings, after sending out from themselves the thought germ of the dense (physical) body, worked upon it for a long, long time to put life and the sense organs into it. When this had been done, they worked on the Divine Spirit to awaken and start it on its first stage of development. So we see that those Great Beings helped us to develop both our highest and lowest vehicles — the Divine Spirit and the dense (physical) body.

In the millions of years since that time, a wonderful degree of perfection has been developed, so that the dense body now stands ready to become a truly efficient tool for the highest part of our being. To do our utmost in carrying out that purpose, we can start this week by checking ourselves in our loyalty to the Higher Self—loyalty to the Right wherever we find it—and loyalty to the responsibilities placed upon us. That is a very high and lofty ideal, requiring great strength of mind and heart to live up to always. Let us seek God's guidance and help each and every day in our efforts to do so.

GRADE IV — SECOND SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — Acts 9:1-22

THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS

Golden Text—I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.—Acts 26:19.

“Saul, why do you speak and act against Me?” Saul asked, “Who are you, Lord?” “I am Jesus Christ, against whom you're working; it is hard to do so.” Saul again asked, “Lord, what do you want me to do?” The Lord

said, "Arise, go into the city, and there you shall be told what to do." The men with Saul were speechless with wonder. They heard the voice, but saw no one!

This happened as Saul and his company journeyed toward Damascus. Suddenly there shone upon them a great light from heaven. Saul fell to the ground. Later, when he arose, his men led him into the city because he was blinded. He remained there without sight and food for three days. As he thought over what had taken place, he became a changed man, ready now to spread the good news of Christ Jesus' message of love and peace.

About the same time, in Damascus, another very strange happening occurred, this time to the leader of the Christian Center. Christ appeared to him in a vision, saying: "Ananias, arise, go into the street called Straight, enquire in the house of Judas, for one who is now praying, called Saul of Tarsus." Ananias replied, "I've heard of this man and how much evil he has done to the saints at Jerusalem. Here he has authority to bind all who call on your Name." The Lord answered, "Go your way: for he is chosen of Me, to bring My Name before people in many lands, and kings, and the children of Israel. I will show him what great things he must suffer for My Name's sake."

All this may seem strange to us. However, the Lord knew that after Saul had been shown his great error, he would be just as intent on spreading Christ Jesus teachings as he had been against them before. Saul thought he was doing right to persecute the followers of Christ Jesus. As soon as he learned that he was doing wrong, however, he was willing to change. It took much courage and strength of character for Saul to do a complete about-face in this way. He was then given the name Paul, which means that he had taken a step forward in his evolution. Afterwards, he went on to become one of the greatest teachers of which the Bible gives a record. How many of us would be cour-

ageous enough to admit we had been wrong, and then go on working for what we now knew to be right? (Discussion)

GRADE IV — THIRD SUNDAY

KEYWORD—*Light*

Since Leo is the home sign of the Sun, and the Sun is the central power of the solar system, it is not surprising to learn that the organ in our dense (physical) body corresponding to the sign Leo is the heart, the "engine" of the body. As the power poured through the Sun carries life to every part of the solar system, so the blood stream, pumped through the heart, carries life-giving nourishment to every cell in the body.

A cell, although so small as to be invisible to the eye except through a microscope, has the same needs as the physical body has as a whole. It must have food and air, and must send out, as waste, such materials as it cannot use. The blood stream, which has been purified in the lungs and filled with oxygen, picks up the food prepared by the stomach and intestines and carries it through the entire body by means of the network of blood vessels.

The blood, freshly supplied with oxygen from the lungs, flows into the upper left chamber of the heart, the left atrium (auricle), and then to the left ventricle, the lower chamber. From there it is sent out into the large artery called the aorta, carried to the head and upper body through several branches of the aorta, and to the middle and lower body through other branches; these branches divide and subdivide until they become the tiny, hair-like capillaries serving every single cell.

Each cell, as it takes up its share of food, throws its tiny portion of waste into the blood stream until gradually the food substances have been exhausted and the blood stream filled with poisonous gases and waste materials. The blood

stream then begins its trip back to the heart, flowing from the capillaries of the arteries into the capillaries of the veins, which connect with them; then it flows into larger vessels until all the impure blood has been collected into the two large veins called the venae cavae. These veins, one coming from the upper part of the body and one from the lower, empty into the right upper chamber of the heart, the right atrium. From these the blood flows into the lower right chamber, the right ventricle, to be pumped into the lungs again for purification, and so on to a new tour of the body.

GRADE IV — THIRD SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — *Judges 16:15-31*

SAMSON AND DELILAH

Golden Text—The way of the Lord is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.—*Proverbs 10:29.*

“Behold now . . . you shall bear a son . . . Now beware, I pray you, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing: . . . and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.” So spoke the Angel of the Lord to Manoah’s wife, who immediately went to her husband saying, “A man of God came to me, with face like an angel of God, but I didn’t ask him where he came from, nor did he tell me his name.” She then repeated the message of the Angel.

Manoah prayed, “O my Lord, let the man of God which you sent come again and teach us what we shall do to the child that shall be born.” God again sent the Angel to Manoah’s wife, who called her husband. He said, “Are you the man who spoke to my wife?” He said, “I am.” Manoah again asked, “Now let all you have said come to

pass. How shall we order the child, and how shall we do with him?" The Angel repeated his message.

Manoah and his wife begged to make a sacrifice to the Lord. When their offering, upon the altar, burned with flame rising to heaven, the Angel ascended in the flame, being seen no more. Manoah and his wife fell to the ground, now believing him an Angel of the Lord.

All came to pass as the Angel had said. Their son was born; he was named Samson, and the Lord blessed him. He grew up to become judge of the children of Israel, continuing so for twenty years. What later happened to Samson has a special meaning, as we shall see.

The Philistines, who were at that time overlords of the children of Israel, feared Samson, for they knew that if he continued to remain powerful, their kingdom would come to an end. Therefore, they determined to learn the secret of Samson's great strength so they could destroy him, and for this purpose they asked Samson's wife, Delilah, to help them. Delilah begged and begged him to tell, but he steadfastly refused to do so. One day, however, he finally told her that his strength lay in his long hair.

Thereupon, while Samson slept, Delilah had his hair cut. At the same time, she called the Philistine leaders, who tied Samson with bands of brass. Upon awakening, Samson tried to break the bands, which he could easily have done with his old strength. Now his strength was gone, however, and he remained captive.

He was imprisoned and blinded by the Philistines, who were delighted to have Samson in their power. They proclaimed a feast of rejoicing, and the people asked that Samson be brought before them so that they could rejoice in his misery. A crowd of some 3,000 people attended the feast. Samson was led to the temple by a boy. He asked the boy: "Let me feel the pillars upholding the temple,

so I can lean on them." When this was done, Samson prayed: "O Lord God, remember me, I pray you, and strengthen me, I pray you, only this once, that I may punish these people for removing my eyes." Samson then held on to the two middle pillars, one with each hand. He continued to pray: "Let me die with the Philistines." He pressed against the pillars with all his might and they came crashing down, killing himself and the great crowd of people.

In this story, Samson represents the Sun, and his hair represents the Sun's rays. The Philistines represent the winter months, or the powers of darkness. From the winter solstice in December to the summer solstice in June, the Sun's rays grow, and it gains in strength with every day. This frightens the powers of darkness—the winter months—for if the Sun continues to maintain its strength their kingdom (winter) will come to an end. They enlist the help of Delilah (who represents the zodiacal sign Virgo). As we know, the Sun begins to lose its strength when it is going through the sign Virgo (Delilah cuts Samson's hair). The Sun then goes into the six southern signs where it remains in winter. (The Philistines put Samson in prison.) At the winter solstice, however, the fettered solar giant shatters the temple of the powers of darkness, and although he dies in the effort, he leaves the way clear for another Sun-child to be born.

Thus we see that the story of Samson is an allegory representing the changing seasons. After winter, spring with its promise of new growth and new beginning is always assured. Then comes summer, the time of growth and maturity, and fall, the time of harvest. If a new, Sun were not, so to speak, "born" each year, bringing with it a period of growth and fructification on Earth, we could not survive.

GRADE IV — FOURTH SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — Matt 15:3-8

FIFTH COMMANDMENT

Golden Text—Honor thy Father and thy Mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.—*Exodus* 20:12.

The commandment to honor our parents is one of the best known and most widely quoted of the ten. Certainly it is right that we honor our fathers and mothers, who have given so much of themselves to us for our well-being and development.

The word "honor" has a number of connotations. For one, it implies obedience. We do not always agree with our parents, and this is natural enough. Whether we like it or not, however, our parents have had many more years of experience in the "business of life" from which to draw, and their advice—or their commands—are based on this experience and the knowledge they have gained from it.

Consider your own positions with regard to very young children. You know that it is not safe for them to play with matches or play in the street; your knowledge is based on your own experience during the several more years you have lived than they have. If such little children are in your care, you see to it that they don't do either one of these things. If they listen to your suggestions, well and good, but if you have to order them to do as you say, you do so, because their safety depends on that order.

The children, on the other hand, are likely to resent your order. They are too young to understand clearly the potential results of either venture, even if you do explain to them. The immediate pleasure of what they are doing far outweighs, in their considerations, the potential dan-

gers. They may cry, reject your order by saying "no," or try to do what they want as soon as your back is turned. If you are taking care of them, your first concern is for their safety and you must remain vigilant, whether or not this makes you "unpopular" in their eyes.

Naturally there is a difference in type and degree between the care that must be taken of young children and the care and concern which your parents manifest toward you, but the parallel between these two situations is clear enough. You are old enough now to be entrusted with many things that would not have been permissible when you were younger. Nevertheless, you have still not attained full maturity, and the potential dangers and problems that are likely to threaten you if you act unwisely are generally much more subtle than the more obvious threats to small childrens' safety. You may think that just to "experiment," with drugs once would not hurt you, or that consuming quantities of soft drinks and salted, processed "snacks" will not damage your health. Or, not yet having seen or experienced the ravages of severe disease or debility, you may choose to ignore the warnings. If, however, you obey your parents' injunctions to refrain from using these substances even though they may seem unnecessary or exaggerated to you now, you will be glad in later years. Similarly, the child who might have been severely crippled as a result of playing in the street will have reason to be glad, in later years, that he did not play in the street and was thus able to avoid that danger.

The word "honor" also implies respect. Again, it is natural enough not always to agree with our parents, but we owe them the respect that they have earned as a result of both their experience in life and their care and concern for us. We respect upstanding and outstanding figures in the worlds of statesmanship, science, literature, art, etc.,

for their contributions to their fields, even though we may not agree with their every point of view. Surely we owe the same consideration, in fuller measure, to our parents.

To honor our parents also means to be considerate of them. It means to hold them up in our minds as being admirable people. It means to speak of them respectfully, even if we are not momentarily in agreement with them. It means to be thoughtful of them in material ways, too, performing our household chores, keeping our rooms neat and tidy, and offering voluntarily to lend a hand when we see that there are things around the house or other tasks that unexpectedly need doing.

It means giving them moral support and showing them evidence of our affection. Parents are as human as anyone else, and have "good days" and "bad days" just as anyone else. Sometimes the most helpful things we can do for them is to give them the "lift" that they receive when one of their children goes out of the way to do or say a little "something extra" in the way of encouragement.

The Fourth Sunday is also Service Sunday for discussion of *Leo* keywords of *Love, Dominion, Loyalty* and *Light* in relation to the Service we were able to give during the past month.

Lesson Suggestions for Virgo

SPIRITUAL KEYWORD—SERVICE

GRADE IV — FIRST SUNDAY

KEYWORD—*Discrimination*

The great Hierarchies of all the zodiacal signs serve in God's Plan with every bit of power they have. All of them have served us, God's Earth children, and still are helping us in our climb onward and upward on the Lad-

der of Life. Why do you suppose Virgo is set apart as the sign of service?

It is because the Lords of Wisdom, who work through the sign Virgo, help us to learn what service means in our own lives, also the part it plays in the working out of God's Plan. Through their messenger, Mercury, they help us to find our particular work in the world, help us to understand the value of our physical body as the instrument through which that work must be accomplished, and urge us to take care of it as any good workman would take care of a valuable tool. We know that the success and comfort of our lives depend upon the success and skill of every worker in his particular field in performing the very simplest or the most difficult task. So it is with the universe, only in a much more wonderful way.

The Virgin Spirits in each life-wave progress in knowledge and power by serving one another; then every life-wave serves and is served by the life-waves above and below it. They cannot get along without one another, because each one plays an important part in the life of the other.

The plant builds its body from the mineral substance of the earth. Man and animal use the plants as food and build this mineral substance into *their* bodies. The vibrations of the mineral life-wave are being raised by this important service to the three life-waves above it, and the Virgin Spirits of the minerals are being helped toward their first awakening.

Man is working with the mineral, plant, and animal lifewaves. Some of this work is constructive and some destructive, but it all carries its results into the future to be balanced. What do you think are some of the ways in which man has worked and is working with these three life-waves?

In earlier Periods the three life-waves above us worked

with us in ways that helped them to gain knowledge and experience while helping us to awaken. So we can see how closely all God's children, who are developing in the same evolutionary Plan, are bound together by service.

All life-waves above man serve wholeheartedly and joyously because they see the wonder and beauty of the Light that lives in every form and cannot help but love it. We stand at the point between the unconscious service of the lower life-waves and the willing, loving service of those above us. Before we can enter this higher class we must learn to love that Divine Spark of God hidden in every living thing, and love it enough to serve it eagerly and joyfully under any and all circumstances. We call this *devotion*, which is the heart keyword of Virgo.

There is a right and a wrong way to serve, and that is why Mercury—as messenger from Virgo—calls upon us continuously to keep a wide-awake mind and to discriminate between the true and the false service. So *discrimination*, which is the mental keyword of Virgo, is our best guide to the true service that we want to give our fellow-travelers on the road of evolution.

Please look up the word *discrimination* in your dictionaries—using it as the keyword for the coming week.

GRADE IV — FIRST SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — Luke 19:1-10

THE TAX COLLECTOR

Golden Text—I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no man comes to the Father, but by Me.—*John* 14:6.

“Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house,” said Christ Jesus to the very short man who had climbed a tree better to see over the crowd

of people. Imagine the surprise of all that Zacchaeus was called by name. Most amazing, too, that Christ Jesus intended visiting the home of that most despised tax collector and appraiser! Happily, Zacchaeus climbed down from the tree while the people wondered over this strange happening.

What the people didn't know, of course, was that Zacchaeus—even though he held that dishonorable position—did his very best to be absolutely fair and honest in his work. That is shown by the symbolism in this biblical passage. The tree and its branches are likened to the spinal column in our bodies which contains what is spoken of as the spirit fire. As our lives grow in purity and love, as Christ Jesus taught and lived, that fire grows and rises, through the spinal column, toward the head. When it reaches the head, great and glorious changes take place, enabling God to make greater use of us as “loving, self-forgetting” workers for Him.

When we compare the tree with its trunk and branches, we can easily see that it does appear similar to our own spinal column. Very likely that is what prompted Joyce Kilmer to write the poem, *Trees*, where we find these lines:

“. . . A tree that looks at God all day
And lifts her leafy arms to pray . . .”

As we seek to understand better and learn more about how to do what Christ Jesus taught, we become better people, “more worthy to be used . . . as channels in the service of humanity . . .” Then that Divine Spark within each one of us grows stronger and brighter, while our bodies become true temples, fit to be dwelling places of God.

Notice that Zacchaeus wasn't asked to give up his job; he kept on with it, while at the same time seeking to be-

come a better man. It required a firm and strong determination to do both to the very best of his ability. That he had succeeded is shown by the words of Christ Jesus: "Zachaeus, today I must stay at your house."

We may be very sure that Zacchaeus prayed while seeking better to serve both God and man. We also must do that, because without God's help, very little progress can be made. Let us begin each day by praying for guidance and giving thanks to God for helping us to become better helpers to Him and His children — to all living things upon this Earth.

GRADE IV — SECOND SUNDAY

KEYWORD—*Devotion*

Devotion is a complex trait. It involves steadfastness, compassion, unselfish idealism, and intensity. It can be turned to good or ill, for it is bound up with the emotions. Prayerful devotion can lift a person to great heights—to the very throne of God. Devotion to a lofty ideal can, in time, bring about the successful achievement and expression of that ideal.

Devotion must be sought and cultivated. Many people are not yet capable of devotion—or, they have simply not tried to nurture this splendid characteristic. Someday, however, all mankind will understand the significance of devotion. They will understand how all our traits merge into One, which is the expression of All in All. They will know that the perfection of each worthy trait requires the perfection of all others. Complete unselfishness, for example, assumes perfect love, and perfect love requires constancy. It also requires courage, cooperation, sympathy, and understanding. Out of this comes *devotion* to the high ideal of unselfishness, or self-less-ness.

When we come to that point in our evolutionary journey when we are ready to *devote* our entire lives to the service of God in man, we will feel keenly the need to employ all of the uplifting traits, and to express each one as much as possible in our daily lives. Then our worries and cares will cease to be worries and cares; the sources of our former "troubles" will become as interesting projects upon which to work.

If altruistic love is the aristocrat of our traits, devotion is her handmaiden. Gentle, strong devotion, in which the gentle, feminine love is combined with the virile, masculine strength.

GRADE IV — SECOND SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — Mark 8:1-9; 14-21

FEEDING FOUR THOUSAND PEOPLE

Golden Text—How is it that you do not understand?—*Mark 8:21.*

We have often heard about how Christ Jesus fed the five thousand hungry people after they had listened to His teaching for three days. Today we will speak of another time when He also fed four thousand people, who were faint from lack of food after three days of hearing Him speak. In addition to satisfying their hunger, Christ Jesus had another very special reason for repeating that miracle of increasing, or multiplying, the seven loaves of bread on hand and providing sufficient food to feed everyone. This is what it was:

Christ Jesus wanted the Disciples to understand that the ability to perform such a miracle required that the person doing so must be *absolutely unselfish at all times in thought, word, and deed.* That means the person *must not* use spiritual power for *his own benefit*—he must *not*

feed himself in that way no matter how hungry he may be. We recall that Christ Jesus Himself passed such a test when Satan tempted Him after He had spent forty days and forty nights of fasting in the wilderness. Satan said, "If you be the Son of God, command that these stones be made into bread." Christ Jesus answered, "Man shall not live by bread alone." The disciples hadn't understood the first miracle feeding, nor did they understand the second one, either. That is why Christ Jesus repeated it—to impress more strongly upon them the workings of the law governing His action. As said, the law is complete unselfishness requiring the consideration of others' needs before one's own. That is why He has given us the new commandment: "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Such love must be accompanied by fasting and prayer for guidance in doing whatever is best for those whom we endeavor to help. We all have a very long way to go before reaching the place where we can do that. At times we may love our neighbor as ourselves, but often we forget, thinking only of our own wishes and needs.

The mind (creative power of the Spirit) must become a mighty force for good, of such power that it will be shown in every part of our lives and surroundings, in our associations with others, or in whatever we set out to do, all for the upliftment of those around us. When we have reached the place where we can do this constantly, we shall be nearing the time when we may accomplish many of the things Christ Jesus did: healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, making the dumb speak, casting out bad spirits, making the lame walk, cleansing lepers, feeding those in hunger, etc., and many other great things of which we haven't even the slightest knowledge at the present time.

That is a lofty goal to work toward as Helpers in advancing the work of Christ. It takes steady, unceasing effort, perhaps for many years, in the face of possible fail-

ures, ridicule from others, and temptations. Faithful persistence, however, will bring us through every test, even though at times we may fail temporarily. The Great Beings are ever ready to help all who are sincere and steadfast in their efforts to persist. Are you willing to become such a Helper for Christ?

GRADE IV — THIRD SUNDAY

PHYSICAL EXPRESSION—*Intestines*

A very interesting part of the body, the intestines. The food from our stomach is moved along the first twelve inches of the small intestine, known as the duodenum, by a series of contractions. Bile is received from the liver, juice from the pancreas, and the other digestive organs contribute their share in the process. The secretions (matter or fluid) reach the duodenum through tubes from these glands. As the food moves along, portions of it sift in between finger-like projections on the intestinal wall. Thus, the amount of digestive action to which food is exposed is greatly increased.

After some twenty feet of travel the food, now entirely liquefied and greatly changed chemically, enters the first portion of the colon, a part of the large intestine. In passing through the colon, water is lost from the food mass so that it becomes half solid. A chemical break-down takes place in the colon. Bits of undigested food, a mass of colored matter from vegetables, fruits, etc., fatty bits, and a variety of other remnants which the food mass picked up during its journey through the intestines are decomposed. Important and vital parts of the food have already been taken up by the blood and by a stream of transparent yellowish fluid (called lymph). These parts are used to build body tissues.

The process has done its work. What started as a vegetable has yielded substance that maintains beauty or ugliness, intelligent or stupid action, happy or sad emotional activity. The foods man eats are the source of his energy, the basis of life. The state of mind in which man receives his food, and his way of chewing or masticating it are important to proper action of the stomach and intestines. Thus, it is necessary to be pleasant and thankful at mealtimes; this is not the time for arguments or unpleasant discussions.

The workings of our minds may be likened to the action of the intestines in that we must "weigh" or "digest" and "sift" everything brought to our attention—thoughts, ideas or suggestions — before accepting any of them as worthy of keeping in our minds. Thus we learn, far more than in any other way, to save considerable time and effort which may be used in striving for high ideals. The achievement of these high ideals enables us to grow into the best people possible, able to do our *real* work more perfectly. You will remember that each one of us has some particular purpose to carry out in this life. The sooner we get busy working at it the happier we shall be, in the knowledge that we are doing that "which is our own."

GRADE IV — THIRD SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — Romans 12:1-14

UNSELFISH SERVICE

Golden Text—All things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them.—*Matt. 7:12.*

There is much mention of service in this solar month of Virgo—the sign of service. It is important to understand how we may serve in the very best possible ways.

In reading about the life of Christ Jesus, we find His

three years of ministry were spent in healing the sick, feeding the hungry, giving sight to the blind, making the deaf hear and the dumb speak, blessing children, and showing kindness in countless other ways. We can't do all He did, but there are many ways in which we may serve. The following are some of them:

GOODWILL—being pleasant and cheerful, kind and thoughtful of others, playing fair, reminding others of something they might have overlooked, sharing our lunch, speaking kindly of others. Whenever we hear someone speaking unkindly of another, we can speak of our own pleasant communication with that person.

GRATITUDE—so often overlooked—by expressing our thanks to others for kind or helpful actions toward us. Everyone appreciates recognition, even though the kindness may not have been done for that reason. Above all, we need to thank God daily for His many blessings of sunshine, rain, light, food, our parents and teachers, and, most of all, His loving care.

ACTIONS are important—others notice what we do, how we speak, and where we go. Some may think we're special, believing that if we do certain things, it's all right for them to do the same. When our actions aren't of the best, we harm others who may be following our example. We need to be especially careful of what we think, holding onto only those thoughts which lead to right action.

IMPROVING what we're dissatisfied with if possible. Perhaps we're unhappy about how some things are done; instead of complaining, we can set about finding easier or better methods, that others may also use. In so doing, we're developing our minds, making new grooves in the brain, and at the same time getting away from selfishness.

WILLING WORKERS—the spirit or attitude in which we work determines how well we will perform it. A will-

ing spirit in going about the day's activities makes it pleasant for those around us and enables us to accomplish our tasks more easily and accurately.

PRAY without ceasing—in so doing we gain strength and courage with which to overcome daily temptations. We seek God's guidance for right thoughts, words, and actions. We pray for others that they, too, may be helped in living better lives.

OBEYING the Golden Rule—"Doing to others as we would have them do to us" is a greater thing than we may realize. If every one lived by that rule, the world would be a far happier place because we would be obeying God's commandments. We can begin at home by being more kind and loving, looking for the good in family members, and we'll be surprised how conditions around us will improve in a short time.

UNSELFISH SERVICE is a great challenge, enabling us to climb higher on the Ladder of Life while working as God's helpers. It may not always be easy but we mustn't let that discourage us, for that is the way we grow. While serving, we learn more of God's great Plan and show Him that we really mean it when we say we wish to do His will.

No doubt you're thinking of other ways of performing unselfish service — how about sharing your ideas with us?

GRADE IV FOURTH SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — Matthew 19:16-18

SIXTH COMMANDMENT

Golden Text—Thou shall not kill.—*Exodus* 20:13.

The sixth commandment, applies to us today as much as when it was given to mankind thousands of years ago.

Today, wars continue, with heavy loss of life, as do accidents and senseless killings, but, there is a deeper meaning to this commandment. It implies a reverence for all life that is partially expressed by the vegetarians, who do not kill. It will be completely fulfilled, however, only when there is continuance of life for all within the context of "loving, self-forgetting service to others."

When we consider the words, ". . . the shortest, the safest, and the most joyful road to God," we are led to look upon service as a road built to give life purpose and meaning. It is only through service that we are bound together; lack of service separates us. Therefore, service is a very vital part of God's Divine Plan because it builds unity as a preparation for the time when the Brotherhood of Man will become a reality. Any *thing* or any *one* that destroys this unity is guilty of killing, for service keeps life rolling on without a break. Through service we shall make life's road a continuous, unbroken highway leading on up the Ladder of Life to God.

Each one of us must do our best to promote unity among those we meet, from day to day, and in that way give "loving, self-forgetting service to others." What can we do now to be helpful right where we are? Give this some thought during the coming week so that we can talk about it again next Sunday.

The Fourth Sunday is also Service Sunday for discussions of the *Virgo* keywords of *Service*, *Discrimination*, and *Devotion* in relation to service we were able to give during the past month.