

Bible Lessons for 1877.

STUDIES ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

SUNDAY, February 25th, 1877.—Elijah at Horeb.—1 Kings xix. 8-18.

COMMIT TO MEMORY. Vs. 8-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me." Job xxiii. 6.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, 1 Kings xix. 8-18. Tuesday, vs. 8; Matthew iii. 1-11. Wednesday, vs. 11; Ex. xxxiv. 1-8. Thursday, vs. 12; Luke ix. 43-56. Friday, vs. 15; 2 Kings viii. 8-15. Saturday, vs. 16; Psalm lxxv. Sunday, vs. 18; Romans xi. 1-7.

ANALYSIS.—I. *Elijah at Horeb.* Vs. 8. II. *His despair.* Vs. 9, 10. III. *Hears a still small voice.* Vs. 11, 12. IV. *The Lord speaks to him.* Vs. 13, 14. V. *Gives new commands.* Vs. 15-17. VI. *"Seven thousand" left.* Vs. 18.

QUESTIONS.—On the change in Elijah.—In what character did we see Elijah in our last lesson? What change has come over him? How do you account for it? Who was the personal cause of it? Vs. 2. But for Elijah's loss of faith, might not Jezebel have been reformed? Might not Israel?

Vs. 8. In departing from Jezreel, to what place did Elijah go? Where was this place? How far from Jezreel? Where did he go next? How far was this from Beersheba? Who had been miraculously fed for forty days before him? Where? Whom after him? Where? How far is Horeb from Jezreel? Why go to Horeb at all?

Vs. 9. In what ways that you can think of did God speak to men in Bible times? What was the object of the question in this verse?

Vs. 10. What is the difference between jealousy for God and jealousy as between man and man? What man had saved one hundred prophets? How did this complaint, however seem true to Elijah? Of whom should we chiefly take heed? 1 Cor. x. 12.

Vs. 11. In what three things does the narrative proceed to say "Jehovah was not"? In what one thing does it plainly infer that he was? Why not in either one of the three? Why was he in the "still small voice"? How is all this designed to help Elijah? Of what dispensation is this typical? Which is the more convincing of sin, a tempest of judgment or a soft gale of the Spirit of God? See John xvi. 8. What was the effect of judgment upon Pharaoh? Upon Jezebel?

Vs. 15. What was Hazael to do? What Jehu? What Elisha?

Vs. 18. Were there ever any dark times when God was without a witness? What is a good song for all when cast down? Ps. xliii. 5. If any too confidently boast, what may we say to them? Matt. xxvi. 41.

EXPOSITION.—*The Transition.*—It is given in vs. 1-7. The threat of Jezebel (vs. 2) was evidently intended to drive Elijah in fright from the realm; for had she really chosen to murder him she would not have given him such timely notice and the chance to flee. Elijah's expectation of the nation's reform, and the restoration of Jehovah's service, was naturally complete in view of the events at Carmel, but he knew that Jezebel was the real ruler, and he saw that she was unawed, and that she would awe her husband and carry her measures. Hence the sudden reaction from highest hope to lowest despondency. Vs. 4. In his flight his first stop was at Beersheba, in the south of the kingdom of Judah. Even there he dared not stay, since a marriage alliance was perhaps already formed between the two kingdoms, xxii. 44; 2 Kings viii. 18. Hence leaving his own servant, he took flight into the desert to the south of Palestine, "a wide expanse of sand-hills, covered with the *Betem*, (not juniper, but broom-shrubs), whose tall and spreading branches, with their white leaves afford a very cheering and refreshing shade." We met him in vs. 8, after a night's sleep, refreshed by food the previous evening through the angel's loving ministry, and again called by the same angel to break his fast on furnished bounty. Verses 7, 8.Verse 8.—*He arose.* From his sleep at the angel's touch (vs. 7). *Went in the strength of that meat,* etc. The narrative seems to indicate that this meal alone was his support for the period, excluding the idea of any other nourishment; but possibly it only excludes the idea of any subsequent full or adequate meal. The rest of the time he fasted. The period forty reminds of the years of wandering in the same desert, as did also Christ's period of temptation. A

similar lesson and discipline were involved—preparation for the future through closer communion with God, and clearer disclosures of his mind and will—clothing himself with Jehovah's strength. A desert is a natural place in which to learn that our good is God. Especially fitted for Elijah's condition was Horeb, both from the bare, lonely, rugged, frowning, awful nature of the place, and from its solemn historical associations.

Verse 9.—*A cave.* Exactly, "the cave," as being well known either before this event, in which case conjecture would make it the "clift of the rock" of Exodus xxxiii. 22, or because of this event, and hence subsequently, as at the time when the narrative was written. Tradition points out a "cave of Elijah" on Jebel Mousa (Mount of Moses). *The word of the Lord came,* etc. And he said, which suggests, that the word came through an angelic visitor. *What does thou here, Elijah?* A question asked, not, of course, for information, but to remind the prophet that he had fled hither in part at least at the instigation of his own fearful and failing heart, and to rebuke him kindly but effectually for this conduct. When he spake or acted under inspiration, his words and deeds carried full divine authority, and were veritable revelations, not otherwise—a most important and practical distinction.Verse 10.—*I have been very jealous,* etc. This was a fair and truthful statement of his mind and conduct from the time he first appeared to Ahab. For introducing the cause of his jealousy. *Thrown down,* etc. Like that on Carmel. xviii. 30. This act expressed the purpose to extirpate Jehovah's worship. *Slay thy prophets,* etc. Showing that Elijah's act in xviii. 40, had the added justification for slaying God's prophets. *I, even I only, am left.* Here, however, it would seem that in his despair he had lost faith even in the religious integrity of all. *Seek my life.* Thus he betrays the cause of this flight, and also refers to Jezebel's threat, which clearly he took to be earnest. At Cherith and Zarephath, his concealment was in obedience to express command given. Here lay the difference between his course then and now. Notice here a seeming contradiction, terror lest he should lose his life, and in vs. 4, prayer that he might die. Yet there is no contradiction in fact, for very different is murder by enemies, especially when as in Elijah's case they represent a hostile cause, from peaceful death in God's time and way, and at his call.Verse 11, 12.—*Go forth,* etc. Evidently from the cave. *And behold, the Lord [Jehovah] passed by,* etc. This clearly took place at once upon the command to go forth, and before Elijah had gone, as vs. 13 represents him as coming out reverently after these awful manifestations. *A great and strong wind,* etc. This revelation in the three forms of wind, earthquake, and fire, is correctly regarded as adjusted to the present, and in fact prevailing temper of Elijah, which was rather that of severity. He would reform by force. Force he had tried, and the promised reform had not come. So God thrice exhibits force and destructive agencies before him, yet each time making him to see and say, "God is not in this." It was not, however, meant that God does not employ or require force, or even that Elijah had not done right and according to God's will in using it against Baal, for he had only obeyed orders, and retribution had not been of his infliction. The intent here, therefore, cannot be for Jehovah to disown such activity; as this would be to deny and to stultify himself. He would instead teach that such action is rather occasioned and made necessary by sin, and is only preparatory for the actual communication of himself in love and communion. The riper the Christian, and the richer his experience, the more he enjoys of these silent communications with his God.Verse 13.—*When Elijah heard.* God was seen by him in a new light, and his heart was affected. *What does thou here?* repeated. This is to enforce the lesson of that verse. That he might return to the new and higher work of his remaining years. His answer in vs. 14, is the same which he first gave. Vs. 10.

Verse 15-17.—On the anointing of Hazael and Jehu, see 2 Kings viii. 1-12; ix. 1-5. Though not done in person by

Elijah, it clearly enough came within the scope of the command and implied prediction; as Elijah was Elisha's master or "Father" prophetically, and could be regarded as working through his pupil, especially if he had given instructions on the very points in question. On the designation of Elisha to be his successor as head prophet in Israel, see vs. 19-21. Perhaps the word "anoint," is used with reference to Elisha as equivalent to designate to office and inaugurate in the office. The work of Hazael and Jehu was to be that of stormy wind and rending earthquake. Elisha's sword was "spiritual," not "carnal." It was the "word of God."

Verse 18.—*Seven thousand.* God has hidden ones, who hear and know the "still small voice." Here was and is encouragement. Yet it should not encourage one to hide his light.

—Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, March 4th, 1877.—The Story of Naboth.—1 Kings xxi. 4-14.

## Booths' Department.

## Barnaby Bond and the Beggar Boy.

A BIG HIVE OF B'S.

Barnaby Bond, from Banbury, was busily baking a batch of brown bread and the best abernethy biscuits in his comfortable abode, which he had built a little beyond the beach, when a bare-footed boy, with nothing but a burnt and blackened blanket bound about his body by a broad belt, bashfully begged a bit of broken bread, because he had had no breakfast. Barnaby Bond being beneficent, bestowed the broken bread, beckoned the boy to sit on a bench in the bakehouse, and bade his wife Betty bring the bone of boiled beef and a basin of broth.

Now Betty was in a back building, boiling bacon, beans, beets, and cabbage, basting a baron of beef, and beating batter for a pudding, because her brothers, Bertram the barber, Bernard the butcher, and Ben the brewer, besides Bartlemy Barnes and Bob Benson were to be at the beach bake-house that day, being Barnaby Bond's birthday.

Betty's beautiful baby Barbara was by the table, breaking a bun into a basket for her blackbird, and a bunch of blue-bells was beside her. Betty, beaming with benevolence, brought the beef-bone, and a basin of broth, also the baby, fearing to leave her behind. When Barbara beheld the beggar, she bent down to brush away some black that was on the boy's brow; and she bit off a piece of her bun, saying, "Bonnie, bonnie boy, baby's bun for bonnie boy." He blushed, bowed humbly, and blessing them for their bounty, began to breakfast on the beef and bread.

Betty Bond went back to cook dinner, but she bore in mind to watch Barbara, who having put the bits of bun into the blackbird's beak, and played with the blue-bells, bowed about three balls which were kept in a baize bag.

Betty bustled as before, but her heart was throbbing in her bosom as if it would burst, for that beggar boy had brought to her remembrance her beautiful boy Bobby, bright with beauty, whose loss she more bitterly bewailed than if he had been burned to death, or buried beneath the briny billows, for he had been borne away by a band of barbarous beggars. Poor Betty and her husband believed that they went abroad; because the boatswain saw the beggars embark on board a brig at Bristol. The baker, who bore the bereavement little better than Betty did, felt a burden in his breast, and his benevolent heart beat fast, while beholding the bare-footed beggar, for he remembered his own beloved boy, his first-born. Poor Barnaby! his brain became so bewildered, that the batch of brown bread, and the Abernethy biscuits he was baking were badly burned.

When both beef and bread were gone, and the basin of broth emptied, Barnaby Bond sat on the bench beside the boy, and asked by what name he went, and what business had brought him to the beach, barefoot, with nothing but a burnt and blackened blanket about his body; bidding him be brief and boldly tell the truth. "The beggars," said he, "who brought me from abroad called me Billy Babington. Last week they bade me embezzle some butter, a bale of bombazin, a bundle of brooms,

and a box of beaver bonnets, and bring them in a wheel-barrow (borrowed from a builder) to their cabin, built of bricks and boards by the babbling brook by Bushy Bank. I bluntly told the beggars that I would not obey them; that they had obliged me to beg when abroad, but had not been able either by bribery or brutal treatment to make me a robber." "You may be sure," I said, "now I am a big boy and on British ground, I will not be in bondage to a band of base beggars." How they abused me! They called me a babbling brat, blockhead, and blundering booby; and Barabbas Burton who hobbles about to make believe he is blind, said he would break my bones and bury me alive, if I rebelled in that brazen way and he beat me on my back till it must be black and blue, if not blistered.

Whilst I was in bed that night, sobbing and bemoaning myself, they were brawling and debating about me. I heard the words "bolts and bars" in a horrible tone. When the disturbance abated, and I might have slumbered, they began to bawl out abominably blasphemous ballads; to drink bottles of beer, and Bell's brandy, of which they had abundance beneath branches of birch, stubble, and rubbish in their cabin. By and by they dropped some burning tobacco into the barrel of brandy which burst into a blaze, and began to burn the timbers of the building. A fresh breeze was blowing. I don't know what became of Barabbas Burton and the other beggars; but I bounded briskly out of my berth, and I am bound now for Banbury, where I believe I was born. I believe too, that I was called Bobby, for I remember somebody who baked bread and biscuits at Banbury called me Bobby, and bought bulls-eyes and filberts, and a barber used to blow bubbles; and, I remember my mother rubbing my chilblains, and calling me "bonnie boy," as the baby did, when she bit off a piece of bun for me. My mother used to embrace me, and give me bilberries and blackberries, and when the briars and brambles made my hands bleed, she bade me bear the pain like a brave boy. I could not have been much bigger than that baby, I believe, when somebody bought me a book, in beautiful binding, and called it 'blessed bible,' best of books; and besought me to be a good boy, remember the Sabbath, and beware of robbing and breaking my word. The bad beggars obliged me to beg, I did not become a robber. I used, before the beggars brought me back to Britain, to ramble about by myself on the Sabbath; when I had liberty, and the beauty of the buds and blossoms on the boughs, the blades of green grass, and the birds and beasts, all combined to make me remember what had been taught me when little bigger than a babe. I could not bear to be bad; but I could not learn to be a good boy, because there was nobody to teach me. I prayed betimes every morning, and numbers of times besides, behind the bushes, and in barns and stables, that God would bless me and bring me back to Banbury.

Barnaby Bond trembled while he tore away the burnt and blackened blanket. "Oh Betty," he cried, behold the brown mole that he was born with! There are bruises all about his dear body, but here is the brown mole upon his back bone. Betty! Betty! the beggar boy is our beloved Bobby.

## Select Serial.

From the *Day of Rest.*  
'Poor Michel.'

"With such a disposition I can quite understand your becoming attached to him," I said. "And, indeed, the poor boy seems to read many a useful lesson to us who, as you say, should know better. How old was he when he died?"

"Seventeen, Madame."  
"And as he grew to manhood did his brain seem to become weaker or stronger?""He never grew to be more than a child, Madame, though to be sure the last two or three years of his life he did seem to take a sort of turn for the better, but it had less to do with his years, I think, than with the little one—the *bébé* who lies in the grave beside him there. My daughter married, Madame must know, while poor Michel was with us, and the *bébé* was her child, and it was wonderful the influence that the little one had on poor Michel. Fond he wasof us all, but his whole soul seemed wrapped in the *bébé*. In the first place, he thought God had sent her straight to him out of the skies,—and a sweet little angel she was, to be sure, put in the old woman with a sigh,—and as soon as he learned how to hold her, he was never happy when she was out of his sight. He would sit patiently for hours beside the cradle, or with her on his knees, when she was an infant, and as soon as she began to toddle he was always by her."

"You were not afraid of his getting her into any mischief?"

"Oh, dear no, Madame, in some things he was as sensible as could be, and as for his doing her any harm, he would not have hurt a fly, bless you,—to him, they were all "God's," and so, in a sort of way, sacred, it seemed. As for the *bébé* I think Michel and she understood one another better than the rest of us did. Long before the child could speak, those two used to sit together chatting and chatting in a sort of crooning baby-language that both seemed to know, as happy as possible and the *bébé* would leave any of us to go to "Mi" as she called him."I think she was a great help to Michel, poor little soul. It was so strange to him to have some one about him weaker and more childish than himself, some one that looked up to him so to speak. It almost made a man of him,—and when she died, poor little darling, he seemed to fade away too. All his prayer was to go to *bébé*."

"Sometimes," said the old woman solemnly, "it seems to me that she was only sent on earth to call him up to heaven."

Her tears fell.

"This recital pains you, I see. 'Do not distress yourself. Tell me some more another day. See, the sun is already sinking low.'

"No, no, Madame says my old friend, putting her brown hand on my arm, 'I am not sorry because I cry, I am only stupid, as I told you. Let me go on, I have not much more to say.—Where was I?'"

"You were speaking of the little child's death."

"Ah! yes. After that, we were all very sad, to be sure; but for Michel—it was his death-blow. He did not grieve so very much, but he just faded and faded and faded away, as his mother had done. He would still talk to the *bébé*, or fancy that he was talking to her. "Listen," he would say, 'she is calling me,—Yes, Yes, I am coming *bébé*. The dear God knows she cannot run in heaven without my hand to hold her—the *bébé* wants me. God will let me go.' And so gradually he got weaker and weaker."

"You have not told me," I say, "if he ever overcame that aversion to his father of which you spoke."

"Well, Madame," said my old woman, "that was always a painful thing. To be sure Monsieur did not trouble himself to come very often to the farm. He was, to do him justice, most part of the time away in foreign lands,—where, I know not; but when he was at the Château he would always ask for the boy, and would sometimes come to see him. But it was always the same. One would have thought that his long absences would have made poor Michel forget all about him. Not at all. The moment he caught sight of him he would invariably be seized with a fit of shuddering and horror—not passion, Madame, but pure fright—that it would take hours to allay. It was so even a few weeks before poor Michel's death. He was taking a turn among the flower beds, leaning on Georgette's arm, so peaceful and gentle and sweet, when suddenly who should pull the great bell at the gate but Monsieur? I went to him. From a window he could see the boy walking in the garden."

"How goes it with the lad, Marie? Have you taught him to love his father yet?" he asked grimly.

"I do not know Monsieur—would that we had!" I answered, for in truth I always felt as though, seeing how good and teachable our poor Michel was, we should have taught him better in this matter. "Would Monsieur wish to speak with his son?" I asked, with a trembling hope that Monsieur would say "no." I dreaded always the effect that Monsieur's visits had upon the boy. However, "yes," Monsieur would go, he said.

"He came out of the house to descend