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The Sabbath-School

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Third Quarter-Lesson IX.—Sept. 15.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*—Rom. 12: 21.

DAVID'S SEVEN YEARS OF EXILE AND OUTLAWRY. Flight to Nob. Immediately after David's parting with Jonathan at Gibeah, David fled to Nob, which probably lay between Gibeah and Jerusalem, and was within sight of that city. Nob was the religious capital of the nation. In his terror he told a falsehood to Ahimelech the high priest. The fruit of this lie was the massacre of Saul of the high priest, and his family (save Abiathar,) and the ministering priests, eighty-five in all. Flight to Gath. David hastened away from Nob, and fled to Gath, the old residence of Goliath. Here he was recognized, and was afraid. After a very short stay he escaped by feigning madness. He seems to have lapsed from his accustomed trust in God.

In the Cave of Adullam, Leaving Gath, David returned to the tribe of Judah, and took refuge in the cave of Adullam. Being near his boyhood's home, David was probably well acquainted with his cavern. Here there gathered around him a large band of discontented people. They numbered 400 at first, and, later on 600. Among them were his own parents and brothers, the prophet Gad, the high priest Abiathar, the son of the high priest Ahimelech and his nephew Abishai, and eleven mighty men of valor of the tribe of Gad. Not long after he was joined by twenty-three men of war, from Benjamin. For safety David placed his parents under protection of the king of Moab.

THE VALUE OF DAVID'S EXILE EXPERIENCE.—Hard as these seven years of exile were to bear, they were fruitful years to him. The exile experiences preserved him from the dangers to which his sudden elevation to power and popularity would expose him. He learned his weakness, and his need of divine help. He learned entire trust in God under all circumstances. This led to the marvellous development of religious institutions, and of the service of song under his administration. He had the best of opportunities for becoming acquainted with the people. He understood their spiritual as well as temporal wants. He had practice in the art of governing. He gained experience in war. He obtained a knowledge of the country, and of its enemies. Many of his sweetest songs were wrought out by this long and hard experience, for the comfort and hope not only of his own people, but for God's children in all ages. In spite of his few lapses from faith and perfect truth, he grew in character and manhood, he became strong in faith and virtue, large-hearted, wise, noble consecrated to God.

AN INCIDENT OF THE EXILE.—Vers. 4-17. For two or three years David had been pursued by Saul, who wished to take his life. He had hidden in various places, and now had come to a secluded and almost inaccessible spot near the west shore of the Dead Sea, called Engedi. Engedi was situated upon the tops of cliffs 2000 feet above the Dead Sea. Its approach was through dangerous and precipitous passes,—but the spot itself was a most beautiful oasis, a garden in the wilderness; with a fountain flowing in a limpid stream, delicious to the taste, while trees and fruits abounded. Saul had been called away from the pursuit of David by an invasion of the Philistines; but after his victory over them, he took 3000 of his chosen warriors and returned to the pursuit. He came to a cave in whose recesses David and his men were hidden, and lay down to sleep near the entrance. He was visible to those within the cave, but they could not be seen by one standing at the entrance. The sleeping king, with his soldiers on guard without, and suspecting no danger within, was now in the power of David. Behold the day of which the Lord said. This was the version by David's men of divine predictions. The words may be rendered "Behold, the day is come on which the Lord hath said to thee I am giving thine enemy into thine hand." Thou mayest do to him as it may seem good unto thee: which in their opinion it would be to kill him, of course. The motives which would powerfully influence David to kill Saul, were self-preservation desire to escape the persecution which was destroying all comfort in life. He could thus immediately occupy the throne. The knowledge that Saul was rapidly becoming unfit to be king. The opportunity placed in his hands to accomplish that for which he had

been anointed. The pressure from his followers, who would not understand David's motives, and would consider him very foolish not to use his opportunity. The wrong was in the deed itself. He had no business to do evil that good might come. It would have been not only a sin against God, and a crime against the king, but treason against his country. Opportunities to do wrong are no excuse for wrong doing. Doing right is always the best policy, but it is not right doing if done for policy. Then David arose. He must do something, but what he should do would determine his character. And cut off the skirt of Saul's robe: perhaps some of the golden fringe which edged the royal cloak. He did this to prove to Saul that he had been in his power, and yet he had spared him. David's heart smote him. His conscience reproached him, because he regarded this as an injury done to the king himself. It was an affront to Saul's dignity, and David wished that he had not done it. Note: it is a good thing to have a heart that smites us for sins that seem little. It is a sign conscience is awake and tender, and will be the means of preventing greater sins. Seeing he is the anointed of the Lord: He should do nothing to him unbecoming a loyal subject. So David stayed his servants: restrained them from doing what he was unwilling to do himself. This showed his sincerity, for the insincere man will be glad to have others do wrongs that he refrains from doing himself. Thus David gained a great victory over himself. "He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave and cried (called aloud) after Saul. This was a bold thing to do, for Saul's army was near. Saying, My lord the king. A most loyal address. Bowed himself. As a token of reverence and loyalty to the king. An Oriental, when he meets a superior, kneels down and touches the ground with his forehead. Wherefore hearest thou men's words. David was quite aware that there were flatterers at Saul's court who were continually inflaming his mind by their false accusations against David. We should use the utmost care in our representations of others lest we should calumniate them, and to do irreparable injury. Behold this day thine eyes have seen. The facts were plainly before Saul, so that he could know just how David stood towards him. This was David's answer to the slanders against him, and the answer was conclusive. But mine eye spared thee. The eye is used for the person because it is the organ which shows compassion or fury, vengeance or pardon, gentleness or severity. My father, see. David expresses his kindly feelings by the title he gives to Saul. The Lord judge between me and thee. He committed his case wholly to God. This was another proof of David's innocence of the charges against him. A guilty man does not wish the Lord to judge his cause. As saith the proverbs of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth wicked. So Christ said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." But mine hand shall not be upon thee. What David did was good, therefore Saul could be sure that David's heart was loyal and true. After whom doest thou pursue? after a dead dog (which can harm no one,) after a flea. By these similes David meant to describe himself as a perfectly harmless and insignificant man of whom Saul had no occasion to be afraid. Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul... wept. He was completely overcome by David's kindness and forbearing loyalty. For time at least, the persecution ceased, but only for a time. But Saul was too bad a man to retain his better feelings long. After this David fled again from Saul, and lived sixteen months among the Philistines. Overcoming evil with good. To fight evil with evil is simply to make two evils instead of one. And both evils are increased by the processes. Good is the only power that can conquer evil. Even if it fails, the good is strengthened and increased by the effort, and therefore the proportion of good to evil is increased. Like kindles like, as fire kindles fire. The tendency of good is to awaken the good in other souls. This is the divine way. God's love in Jesus Christ is the transforming power in the world. Even his indignation and punishments are instruments wielded by love.

PRACTICAL HINTS.

God prepares his people by various experiences for their work here, and their life in heaven.

Our whole lives may be likened to David's experience, preparing us to be kings and priests unto God forever.

Society in Chicago.

Our highest society circles, says the Chicago News, have become so deeply enamored of the French language that it is fashionable now to superscribe all notes of invitation "R. s. v. p. p. d. q."

A Plausible Explanation.

The many autograph letters of George Washington in existence induce the belief that at least 1,000 of the 2,700 of his body servants who have died during the last thirty years were employed by the Father of his Country to write his letters.

TIME-TABLE VACATIONS.

A Cheap and Very Satisfactory Way of Seeing the World.

Some Points from a Man Who Believes That the Pleasures of Anticipation Are Greater Than Those of Participation —Joys of the Mental Tourist.

I wonder if any body but myself ever took a time-table vacation, asks Luke Sharp in the Detroit Free Press. It is such a cheap and delightful way of getting round about this little world of ours, that those who have never indulged in one have missed a great deal of inexpensive pleasure.

I have knocked about quite a bit in my time and have seen several places besides Detroit, yet those actual journeys are nothing to my time-table trips.

For instance, the first part of this winter I thought I would like to go down to the City of Mexico. I at once went to a passenger ticket office in Detroit and began to make inquiries and load up with time-tables. One of the great advantages of living in America is that you get your time-tables for nothing. Now, in England they make you pay a penny for even the smallest time table of a railway. It is true that some of the larger railways give you quite a book for the money. You get all particulars of how much it will cost to ship a horse from one part of the country to another; what the tariff on dogs is; what the rules and regulations of the company happen to be; what the law is if you sass a station-master, and what various things you will be fined forty shillings for, but all this knowledge is useless to the ordinary man. He prefers to have his penny.

The railroads of America, on the other hand, flood the country with time-tables as free as the waters of the Detroit river—that is, unless you get the water through the pipes of the Water Board.

The men in the Detroit ticket offices are beginning to know me pretty well by this time, and they do not rush away from a cash customer in order to attend to my wants. They know that I am a person who asks a great many questions, but who seldom buys a ticket. I think they believe that I am something of a fraud, but my intentions are honorable. For the time being I really believe that I am going to all those places that I inquire about. Take the brief course of the City of Mexico fever, for instance. I got the time-tables of the Wabash railroad to St. Louis; then the Iron Mountain road to the borders of Mexico and the Mexican Central railroad through to the City of Mexico. Then I got another time-table by way of Cincinnati; then the Queen & Crescent route to New Orleans, then the Southern Pacific and so on to Mexico. After that I found that I could go to Galveston and take a steamer there to Vera Cruz and go over the New Mexican National road to the capital. Or I could go on to San Antonio by rail and down that way to the National road.

I then set to work to compare the different advantages of the different routes. I had great difficulty in making up my mind which I would take or whether I would go one way and come back the other. There were the delights of visiting the ancient and historical city of New Orleans Galveston had many attractions, and at San Antonio I could see the ruins of the Alamo. How I did revel in all those places I got books about them and posted up. Then I read all I could lay my hands on regarding Mexico and what was to be seen there. I found out how much it would cost to go up the big mountain and learned that the guides expected five dollars a day and thought they would be disappointed in their expectations when they struck the undersigned. I got many points on what the cost of living would be and figured up how much time I could spend on the trip.

After that I did what most people of a sensible nature would have done at the first. I figured up the cost.

Then I gave up the trip. I don't expect that the aforementioned sensible persons will enter into my enthusiasm on the time-table trip business, but their thoroughly sensible people miss a lot of fun in this world. Anyhow, they don't amass as many time-tables as I do.

Although, as I said before, they charge for their time-tables in Europe, there are many advantages there in the way of taking a time-table trip that are not to be had in America. For a shilling or two a man can get a book containing every time-table in Europe. Then by a further expenditure of cash he gets, one by one, the valuable guide books of every country there, neat and compact and with a red cover. All this makes a time-table vacation easier and more instructive in Europe than in America. There is another great advantage there for the mythical tourist. The railway time books and guide books in Europe are made for the people; in America they are made for the railroad companies. For instance, you can't get the rates of fare in an American time-table or railroad guide. I never could understand why it is that the railroads of America are so anxious to conceal their fares from the people. Bradshaw's very complete book gives every railroad fare in Britain, and costs only 6d. Appleton's railroad guide gives no fare at all, and I imagine does not give a map unless the railroad pays for it. I wanted to find out about the steamers of a large steamship line on my trip to Mexico. There was no mention of the line in Appleton's, so I suppose that line refuses to advertise and so the traveler gets left. Baedeker's, g. g. book gives the names of almost every hotel in Europe and tells honestly whether it is good or bad. It gives the prices by the meal or by the day. The guide book will accept no advertisement of any kind at any price. It is a book made for the people and it can be depended on.

There is nothing of that kind in America. However to the mental tourist all this makes no difference. It is as cheap to stop "in your mind," at a first-class hotel as at a poor one.

The philosopher says that the pleasures of anticipation are greater than those of participation. If that is the case I commend my plan of traveling. A time-table tourist has all the fun and has no bills to pay.

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