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INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Third Quarter, Lesson IV, July 24, '98.

ELIJAH'S FLIGHT AND ENCOURAGEMENT.—I Kings 19: 1-16.

Read the Chapter.

Commit verses 9-12.

GOLDEN TEXT:—Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him.—Psa. 37: 7.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time.—Beginning the day after the sacrifice on Carmel, B. C. 905 or 6 common chronology; 863 or 4, revised chronology.

THE FLIGHT OF ELIJAH.—Vs. 1-3. And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done. But the story did not affect her. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, who had stayed without the city. Faith does not supersede 'sanctified common sense.' So let the gods do to me, and more. A common oath of that age. If I make not thy life as the life of one of them. The dead prophets of Baal. By her outburst of fury, she gave Elijah opportunity to escape, though she, doubtless, felt sure that he was absolutely in her power.

He arose, and went for his life. He hastened out of the kingdom of Jezebel to Beer-sheba on the farthest verge of the kingdom of Judah, a run of ninety-five miles. And left his servant there. Tradition speaks of this boy as the son of the widow of Zarephath, whose life Elijah saved, and no less a person than the prophet Jonah. Elijah would now be alone with God. Even Jesus himself said to his disciples, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder."

ELIJAH IN THE DUNGEON OF GIANT DESPAIR.—V. 4.—He himself went a days journey into the wilderness. Elijah did not feel himself safe till he was beyond the territory of Judah. And sat down under a juniper tree. Rather the broom-plum bush of the desert, abundant in beds of streams and valleys, where spots for camping are selected. Although but a bush, it is large enough to give considerable shade and protection. He requested for himself that he might die. The pent up emotions of his spirit, which had gone through so tremendous a strain, broke in one terrible sob, when the strong man, like the tired child, requested for himself that he might die. "I am not better than my fathers. Who died without reforming the world. His life seemed like a great failure. His work was done. Nothing greater than his Carmel work could be possible to him. Why should he live in the presence of the ruins of his hopes? How much better it is for us that some of our prayers are unanswered, or rather, answered in a different way than we desired."

THE CAUSES AND CURE OF ELIJAH'S DESPAIR.—Vs. 5-16. The first cause was physical. The effect of the body on the soul. It was the result of the exhaustion of physical and nervous energy, after the intense nervous strain of Carmel. Depression under such circumstances are a common experience. The greater the strain, the more terrible the recoil; the higher the tide, the lower the ebb; the higher the wave, the deeper the depression. The Cure was twofold. It was (1) Sleep. He lay and slept under a juniper tree. (2) Food. Then an angel touched him. God's angels are still "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." And, behold, a cake (that had been) baked on the coals (or embers). Simply the ordinary food of the desert Arabs. And a cruse (or bottle) of water. For us, too, in our hours of discouragement, God has provided living waters and the manna from heaven in his Word, and in the presence of the Holy Spirit. And laid him down again. Not because he did not appreciate the gift, but from his complete exhaustion. Came a second time. Recognizing the over-exertion of the prophet. Value of the remedy. It is well to mark the divine method. The same method was used by Jesus Christ, who was continually helping the bodies of men, in order to benefit their souls. Went in the strength of that meat forty days. Without obtaining anything further than what the wilderness might afford. To Horeb. The same as Mount Sinai. The mount of God. So called because here God revealed the law to Moses.

The second cause was loneliness and want of human sympathy. What dost thou, here? There was doubtless some reproach in these words. It was to show him that he was far away from his field of work. I have been very jealous. Unwilling that any other should have the honor and worship that belonged to Jehovah. For the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, etc. The whole outward worship of the kingdom had been turned towards idols.

And I, even I only, am left. Obadiah had preserved a hundred prophets in a cave, but as they did not come forth to stand with Elijah, he did not count them as anything. He felt himself to be alone. No one helped him; no one counseled with him. So Paul was once deserted in Rome by all but Luke. So the disciples, in that last night, forsook Jesus and fled; and on the cross Jesus cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

The cure was found (1) in the hallowed memories of Horeb. Here God had revealed himself to Moses, who also had been discouraged. Success had slowly come out of worst times than those of Elijah. (2) In v. 18, where God assures Elijah that there were seven thousand true followers of Jehovah in Israel. Elijah judged by his impressions by the facts.

Go forth, and stand upon the mount. That is, just outside of the cave. And, behold, the Lord passed by. In the symbols of his power. A great and strong wind. A hurricane rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks. Such winds were common in the region of Sinai. The Lord was not in the wind. This was not his marked and peculiar manifestation. And after the wind an earthquake. One of the most terrible manifestations of earthly power. But the Lord was not in the earthquake. It was but the very slightest manifestation of his almighty power. Fire. Lightning, continual, terrible. And after the fire a still small voice. Literally, "a sound of soft stillness." That he wrapped his face in his mantle. In reverent awe at the power of God.

The first lesson this scene taught Elijah was that real success was not to be measured by things that strike the senses, by miracles, or shoutings of the people, or storms. These pass away but the real success does not pass away with them. God showed Elijah his method of progress by invisible, but mighty forces, not easily measured.

The chief manifestations of God's power and glory are (a) in Jesus Christ, who made no show among men, but has made the greatest changes the world's history has known; (b) in his love; and (c) in the gift of the Holy Spirit, with his mighty working and reformation in the souls of men and in the world.

THE FOURTH CAUSE WAS THE WANT OF ACTIVE WORK FOR THE CAUSE.—What dost thou here? Why are you not where your work is? Many a person is despondent because he is not in active work for a good cause. Return on thy way, back to Israel, to the wilderness of Damascus, which is situated on the borders of the desert. Anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. He was to be the means of punishing Ahab and Israel, and thus compel them to repentance and fitness for the better times. Jehu... to be king over Israel. He was to destroy the house of Ahab root and branch, and its idolatry, and to restore the worship of Jehovah. Elisha to be prophet in thy room. To have some one to take up his work, which thus would be carried on without ceasing. "God's workmen die, but the work goes on."

"Tried in the Fire."

There lived at Newcastle a young girl whose name was Edith Mary Ledingham. She won a prize at school—the story of Grace Darling. It gave her a kind of wish to lead the life of a heroine, and she did lead it, by being the kindest possible helper to the house hold and to all the neighbors who needed her help.

The father died, and the girl and her brothers removed to London. It was cheaper to go by sea than to go by rail when the family moved, and they went by steamer. This voyage determined Edith to become, if ever she got the chance, a stewardess on board a steamer. Her brothers both became stewards on various ships, and this made her more desirous the sea life.

In June of 1895, she obtained her much-coveted desire and became stewardess on board the steamship Iona, that plies from Leith to London.

She won all hearts, we are told, of both crew and passengers by her kindness; and I, who have seen a photograph of her bright, capable face, can well understand how cheery a stewardess she would be. On Monday, September 16, 1895, she went on board, and a mother placed a little child under her special charge.

At sundown they slipped from the Leith Dock and passed out into the quiet, calm, grey seaway. A pleasant evening was spent; the passengers retired to rest, and after having seen all her work finished, the stewardess herself went to her berth.

All was quiet except for the pant, pant, pant of the engines, the creak of the rudder chains and the sound of the lookout man, who tapped his bell forward from time to time to indicate what ships lights were seen.

So quietly and serenely they moved upon their way—that little child fast asleep probably the last thought in the stewardess' mind. Suddenly a cry of "Fire!" rang through the ship. They were just off Clacton-on-Sea. The cry might almost have been heard on the coast so terrible was the shout. Up sprang the stewardess, woke the passengers, one and another, helped them to the deck, pushed them through the cabin, cheered them through the smoke—no thought of her own safety, thinking only of her charges.

Then she was seen to turn pale, and with a great cry of "Oh, the child has been left behind!" she sprang back right into and through the flames determined, if possible, to bring the little one safe from the jaws of death.

She never came back, never passed that cabin door again. Men heard the flames roaring like a wild beast in a den of torment. When the fire was subdued and they could explore the cabin, they found just two heaps on the floor, and could tell, by a few bones of a woman's hand locked tightly round the small bones of a little child's hand, that this was all that was left of the brave stewardess, Edith Mary Ledingham, and the little child, Lily Stewart, whom she had tried to save. You can understand now the meaning of the verses:

Then back to the horrible fiery den The heroine sprang. How the forked tongue Of the fierce flame-serpent leaped and stung, Struck at her bosom and blinded her eye; But One went with her, whose word to men Was "Life for the least, though the strongest die."

She had taken the little one safe in hand: Angel of help, she has turned for the door; This eloquent heap of ash on the floor Is sealed of her will and is sign of her doom; But her feet, so swift for the purpose planned, Are set, God knows, in a larger room.

Children, we shall not all be called upon to face fire as Edith Ledingham did, but we can all remember that, when the time comes to do it, we shall, in the midst of the furnace, find One walking with us like unto the Son of man; and in His strength we shall not feel the power of the flame to hinder us from doing our Heavenly Father's will. We shall find that we can willingly follow one of whom it was said, "He saved others, himself he could not save."—Sunday Magazine.

A Hopeless Case.

A teacher in a Sunday mission school at the west end of Boston had a boy in her class who seemed to be proof against every good influence. It was a wonder that she secured his attendance for any length of time; but by her tact and kindness she held her other pupils, and he came apparently for company's sake, and for the fun and mischief he could stir up among the other scholars.

He gave no signs that her teachings had touched his moral nature—or, in fact, that he had any moral nature. He grew older, until all she had done for him seemed wasted plans; but she continued to treat him kindly, and never forgot him in her prayers.

One day she heard of his arrest for complicity in a recent burglary. She did what she could to secure him legal counsel in his trial, and through the two years imprisonment that followed occasionally visited him. He never gave any indication of penitence. His sullen, defiant temper greatly discouraged her; but her faith and love were invincible.

He disappeared after his release. All who knew him supposed he was dead or lost under a feigned name somewhere in the criminal herd of the cities.

Nearly thirty years passed. The lady went to California. In the meantime she had married. Her children were grown, and she, with her husband, were visiting friends in the Pacific States. In one city where she stayed a question of political reform was agitating the people, pending a change in the municipal government. Her host and hostess were to entertain one of the candidates for the mayoralty. "He is our man," they said, "and we hope to elect him, for he is an earnest Christian, and stands for high principle in public and private life."

The gentleman came, and was about to be introduced to the visitor, when, to her surprise, he spoke her name. She could not recognize him in the handsome, bearded man before her, but he was her old boy of the Boston West End Sunday School.

"I lived a reckless life for several years after I left Boston," he told her, "but I was not able to forget your patience and kindness, nor some of the things you said to me."

Under God I owe what I have today of true manhood to you."

Examples of apparently utter depravity are met by every lover of his kind who gives himself to the uplifting of humanity, but it is an unsolved problem whether the case was ever a really "hopeless case." We are told that "genius loves difficulties," and it is equally certain that supreme faith in Christ and in his teachings loves the hopeless causes—let the phrase mean what it may.—Youth's Companion.

Entertaining an Unwelcome Guest

Did any one ever come to see you whom you did not like at all? Well, what did you do about it? There are two ways of receiving these unpleasant people. You can sit down with a scowl on your face and refuse to say a single kind thing. This will make your guest feel unpleasant, and very likely she will not stay long.

There is another way. You can forget yourself and your own pleasure, and do everything possible to make your guest have a nice time. Then, when she is gone, you will feel far better over it, and she will say to some one, "What a ladylike little girl that Mary is!"

Remember that a lady or gentleman is never ungracious. If you really wish to be happy, you will not try to please yourself, for selfish people never enjoy themselves. They are always looking for something more. The people who are really happy, are they who please others. Perhaps this doesn't sound true, but it is a charm. Try it.

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A Railwayman's Story.

Mr. W. Franks, in charge of the Grand Trunk Engine Shops, Port Dover, Ont., says:—"Four boxes of Doan's Kidney Pills cured me of a very bad attack of Kidney Complaint and Lame Back."

Mrs. Celeste Coon, Syracuse, N. Y., writes: "For years I could not eat many kinds of food without producing a burning, excruciating pain in my stomach. I took Parmelee's Pills according to directions under the head of 'Dyspepsia or Indigestion.' One box entirely cured me. I can now eat anything I choose, without distressing me in the least." These Pills do not cause pain or griping, and should be used when a cathartic is required.

A little girl was presented with a Bible on her birthday. The Bible which is a child's "very own" seems different from any other. What is the good of giving Mary a Bible, some parent asks, when there are half a dozen Bibles in the house which she may read? You do not understand child nature if you ask such a question. If Mary has her own Bible she is much more likely to read in it of her own choice than she is to take up one of the Bibles belonging to the adult members of the family.

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