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INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Fourth Quarter-Lesson VII —Nov. 17.

DAVID'S LAST WORDS.—2 Sam. 23 : 1-7.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*He hath made me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.*—2 Sam. 23 : 5.

DAVID'S LAST WORDS TO THE PRINCES OF ISRAEL.—1 Chron. 28, 29. The princes and leaders of Israel were assembled just before David's death, and David told them what he had done for the temple. They gladly followed his example, and brought willingly great treasures for the same purpose.

DAVID'S LAST WORDS TO SOLOMON.—1 Kings 2 : 1-9. David on his dying bed, called Solomon, and gave him a most solemn charge to show himself a man and to walk in God's ways. His dying request about two men seems at first thought to be very strange. He laid upon Solomon the execution of Joab, the general of the armies ; but this was not revenge, but the duty of the chief ruler, which David felt that he had neglected. Joab had deliberately and treacherously murdered two of the chief men of Israel. He ought to have been executed long before. Moreover, he had joined in Adonijah's attempt upon the throne, and would be a dangerous element in Solomon's kingdom. Shimei, who had cursed David so bitterly, was also to be punished as Solomon deemed best. He commanded him to live in Jerusalem under the king's eye, and not to leave the city under penalty of death. He was another unpunished rascal, full of danger to Solomon's kingdom. Justice and foresight are right even upon the deathbed.

DAVID'S LAST WORDS TO THE WORLD.—Vers. 1-7. This is a short hymn, and "seems to have been uttered in connection with his final words to Solomon." At least it was his last public utterance. *The man who was raised up on high.* His exaltation from a lowly shepherd lad to one of the greatest and most influential men the world has ever known he attributes to a higher power than himself. *The anointed of the God of Jacob.* Appointed to his place and work by the true God. He was part of a great plan of redemption, the promise of which was made to Jacob. *The sweet psalmist of Israel:* by the composition and arrangement of Israel's lithurgical songs he was entitled to be called "pleasant." He has brought pleasure, and comfort, and hope, "sweetness and light" to multitudes of people all down the ages. *The Spirit of the Lord* (Jehovah) *spake by me.* A direct claim of inspiration, to which Christ himself bears witness (Matt. 21 : 43). *The Rock of Israel.* God is called a rock because (1) he is immovable and unchangeable, like the everlasting hills. (2) He is the defence of his people. (3) He brings shelter and rest, as "the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land." *He that ruleth,* etc. Such a one the psalmist sees in the far future. He is the ideal king of David's line. The ideal was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, "David's greater Son," the successor to his kingdom, which, unfolding from the germ in David's time, became the universal kingdom of God. All true believers are his subjects and heirs according to his promise. Jesus Christ is the absolutely holy and good ruler ; the perfect king. *And he shall be as the light of the morning.* Blessings will follow him as verdure clothes the earth from the united influence of sunshine and rain. *Even a morning without clouds;* with nothing to interfere with the full power of his rays. This description of the ideal was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, "the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in his wings." The world lay in the darkness of sin and hopeless wretchedness and trouble ; in the darkness of ignorance. Jesus Christ came as the light of the world. He is the source of power. He is the source of life. He is the source of comfort and cheer. He is the source of the beauty of holiness. He shines everywhere, enlightening all the earth. *As the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.* In order to appreciate the force of the figure, it must be borne in mind that verdure is not perpetual in Palestine as with us. There what in June "a brown, hard-baked, gaping plain with only here and there the withered stems of thistles and centaureas to tell that life had ever existed there" is clothed in spring, after the rains, with "a deep, solid growth of clovers and grasses." This is a picture of the new life which Jesus has brought into the world by the converting and life giving influences of the Holy Spirit. *Although my house be not so with God.* He expresses his confidence that God will in due time cause the salvation promised to him and his house, and all his own good pleasure, to grow and prosper. *But the sons of Belial.* Belial means worthlessness. So that "sons of Belial" are wicked, lawless persons, who obey neither God nor their own consciences. *Shall be all of them as thorns thrust away:* because they are useless and injurious to others. *Because they cannot be taken with hands.* They are dangerous, bringing injury to all who approach them. *Must be fenced* (armed) *with iron,* etc. The thorns must be torn up with an iron hook on a long handle. *In the same place* : where they are gathered together.

DEATH AND BURIAL OF DAVID.—David died at the age of seventy, "full of days, riches, and honor." He was buried at Jerusalem, in the tombs of the kings cut in the rocks under Mount Zion. No trace of his tomb now remains, although it still existed in the time of Christ.

REVIEW OF DAVID'S LIFE.—His character. David was a noble, brave, loving man, with strong passions, a warm heart, and a ready, generous hand; a devoted friend, attractive, bright, joyous, poetic, deeply religious and devotional, strong in faith, unselfish, and sincerely good. He fell into some of the vices of the age; he committed a great crime; he was too easy in his family government; but his repentance and public confession prove him to be at heart a true and godly man.

A Statesman. It is hard to realize how great a change David made in his kingdom. He organized the government ; he extended its boundaries ; he developed the resources of the nation ; he promoted the arts : he opened up commerce ; he distributed the Levites, the religious teachers, over the land ; he organized courts of justice ; he united the people.

A General. He was a wise and victorious military leader ; he conquered the enemies who during the previous reign had continually overrun and distressed the nation ; he organized the army in a most skilful manner.

A Religious Organizer. David made Jerusalem the religious capital of the nation. He organized 24,000 Levites in twenty-four courses for service in the house of God ; 4000 were trained musicians. David introduced many musical instruments into the service of the sanctuary.

An Author. "David was undoubtedly the most distinguished writer of the sacred songs of the Hebrews." Many of his hymns were set to music and sung by his choirs in the religious services. He brought in a new era of song.

ORIGIN OF BOCK-BEER.

A Harrowing Tale of a Feudal Lord, Dark Beer and a Goat.

The reputed origin of bock beer has been preserved in various legends which are current throughout Germany. At the town of Nuremberg, in the spring of a certain year during the feudal ages, an Easter church fair was being held, which was participated in not only by the townsfolk but by people from all the countryside as well. There came riding into town a feudal Lord of great renown, who brought with him from Munich a quantity of light beer, which he praised very much. At the fair the people were drinking a dark beer, which the Lord looked upon with disdain.

After much discussion upon the relative merits of the light and dark beers a wager was laid, to be decided the following year when fair time should come around again. Each side was to brew a quantity of its favorite beer, and by a practical test it was to be ascertained how many mugs of each could be drank before making the drinker drunk. The beer that would make a man drunk first was to be awarded the palm.

At the next Easter fair the contestants sat down together in the presence of a vast concourse to decide the wager, the Lord drinking the dark-brown beer of the town and one of the lustiest of the Nurembergers drinking the Lord's light beer. A citizen kept tally of the number of mugs emptied by each. The Lord soon became hilarious and was finally exalted to a state of roaring intoxication long before his rival began to feel the effects of the light beer. Accordingly the dark beer was declared the winner of the contest and the townspeople sung the praises of their favorite beverage.

While the people were still assembled a young goat, which is known in Germany as a buck or bock, broke into the space where the drinkers were sitting and rushing between the legs of the befuddled Lord threw him flat on his back, where, such was his condition, he was compelled to lie till he was picked up. From this circumstance comes the name of the dark-brown beer which still comes at Easter time.

Another legend is to the effect that the Jesuit monks were accustomed to hold a feast in the spring, at which they slaughtered a young goat or bock. To drink with this they brewed a dark, sweet beer which was considered a delicacy and which, when it became known outside of the monasteries, was hailed with delight by the people, and under the name of bock beer became an established institution.

Slavery in Ecuador.

A French missionary gives a serious account of the state of slavery in Ecuador Though it is not a legal institution, yet the law permits an Indian to sell himself as a slave when he is unable to pay his debts, and once a slave he is rarely able to free himself. He may be bequeathed by will. The majority of the interior Indians have been reduced to this condition.

FAMILY PLEASURES.

How to Make Home Life Enjoyable to the Old and Young.

Recreations and Amusements for Leisure Hours—How Parents Can Create a Close Bond of Sympathy Between Themselves and Their Children.

Perhaps the greatest general need of the American people is a better provision for recreations, or amusements, in the home circle. We live too much in public, truthfully remarks the editress of the Ladies' Home Journal. Our men, absorbed in money-getting or politics, regard their domestic life as a secondary matter. Our women, if not domestic drudges, and these are comparatively rare, are devoted to the verge of dissipation to benevolent and religious work, or to the claims of society. Even children are led to regard every phase of life more important, and fuller of enjoyment, than any thing connected with the privacy of home.

American character is thus to a great extent developed in an atmosphere of excitement, and nourished with the artificiality pertaining to an existence carried on before the eyes of the world. It is to this many faults in American manners, and perhaps also in American morals, are no doubt due.

We need the peculiar refining influence to be obtained only from a simple, yet elevated and attractive, home life.

Enjoyment pure and simple or relaxation from serious occupations is an inherent demand of human nature. And it is needed by men and women, as well as by children. All work and no play makes John a dull man as inevitably as it makes Jack a dull boy. Most people realize this fact, only to look away and beyond them for pleasures which are either impossible for them to obtain, or having been obtained, prove unsatisfactory. At the same time the best of all delights may lie unnoticed at their feet.

Again circumstances compel some families to live lives isolated from what is called "society." In their "idle hours" they must do without the joys of companionship, or find them in their own home circles. Blessed is the family that is able to discover the pure happiness which even apparently narrow lives afford.

Home pleasures as a rule should be those in which every member of the family can partake. They should be emphatically simple pleasures, such as require loving care and thought for others, rather than the expenditure of wearisome labor or much money. They should be pleasures which keep the mind active, bringing healthy satisfaction without danger of dissipation or of enervating satiety. Finally they should be sufficiently varied to suit human nature's love of change.

A pleasure easily obtained, and almost universally agreeable, is to be found in reading aloud from an entertaining book of travels, an interesting story, or a book in which humor is largely intermingled. Nor is it strictly necessary that a book should be well read in order to give pleasure. Yet on the other hand a good reader can make a comparatively uninteresting book attractive. And there are probably few families containing no member sufficiently talented to become a good reader through practice. If parents would only encourage their children from earliest childhood to read aloud from books and papers they understand and find interesting, good readers would no longer be rare, and an unfailing source of pleasure would be provided for many homes. This pleasure is dwelt upon because it is so commonly overlooked and unappreciated. To read well will some day no doubt be considered as valuable an accomplishment as to sing, or to play upon some musical instrument well. And as much pains will be taken to develop a talent for reading—not elocution—as are now given to the cultivation of musical talent.

Music is somewhat universally recognized as an amusement, or more properly an enjoyment, suitable for the home circle. Yet as a rule, the piano or organ is opened, and the voice is used in singing many more times for the entertainment of guests than for the exclusive pleasure of a family. Story books often make it one of their heroine's special virtues, that she plays or sings some simple music occasionally to please an old father.

Every home ought to be furnished with a backgammon board, a set of checkers or chess-men, a box of dominoes, a game of authors or something similar. And these games should not be laid away on a shelf until company comes, but should be used principally as an innocent means of relaxation for the different members of the household. It should perhaps be said, for the sake of those conscientiously opposed to all games of chance, that they never do harm until united with a sordid spirit, which values only money or material rewards.

The cultivation of flowers, "gardening for pleasure," is usually an unending source of delight to the girls, and not unfrequently to the boys, of the household.

Out-of-door sports in which all of the family can engage should be encouraged. Croquet, tennis, archery, etc., where they are feasible, and the family circle large enough, can generally be entered into with as much zest by fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters, as by a large mixed company, and without the addition of the many social features too often supposed to be indispensable.

Family picnics, walks in the woods, fishing excursions, rides and drives, are pleasures especially enjoyed by the younger members of the family.

Besides bringing parents and children nearer together, home pleasures increase the affection of brothers and sisters toward each other. They have thus not only a commonality of interests in childhood and youth, but in after life a tie of pleasant memories connects them closely in each others thoughts. To be comrades and friends, as well as brothers and sisters, form a three-fold cord not easily broken.

Finally the tendency of these simple, easily obtained pleasures as a part of daily life, heartily enjoyed, is to encourage a noble simplicity of character. They give a dignity to little things, and add a fullness to life. They develop man's ability to obtain good wherever it may be found. They prevent, to a great extent, a craving for unhealthy excitements and less innocent pastimes. And by keeping the mind fresh, and the senses alert and active, they prepare the way for the higher enjoyments possible for people of education and culture.

Simple pleasures, perhaps, come the nearest of any thing to being the thornless roses in the pathway of our earthly pilgrimage, and their fragrance sweetens the atmosphere in which we move, keeping our natures wholesome, our dispositions cheerful, and our perceptions of the beauty and value of life keen.

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