



LESSON III.—OCTOBER 15.

Esther Pleading for her People.

Esther VIII., 3-8, 15-17. Memory verses 15-17. Read chapters VIII.-X.

Golden Text.

'Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.'—Psa. xxxvii., 5.

Home Readings.

- M. Esther 8: 1-8. Esther pleading for her people.
T. Esther 8: 9-17. Esther pleading for her people.
W. Esther 9: 20-28. Deliverance commemorated.
Th. Psalm 31: 14-24. Joy in deliverance.
F. Zeph. 3: 14-20. Promise of help.
S. Psalm 91. Safety of God's people.
Su. Psalm 37: 1-17. Trust, and fear not.

Lesson Text.

Supt.—3. And Esther spake yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the A'gag-ite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews.

School.—4. Then the king held out the golden sceptre toward Esther. So Esther arose, and stood before the king.

5. And said, If it please the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman the son of Ham-med-a-tha the A'gag-ite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews which are in all the king's provinces:

6. For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?

7. Then the king A-has-u-e-rus said unto Esther the queen and to Mor-de-cai the Jew, Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews.

8. Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring: for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.

15. And Mor-de-cai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shu'shan rejoiced and was glad.

16. The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honor.

17. And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.

The Bible Class.

God is our Deliverer.—Psa. lv., 18, 22; lix., 1, 2; lxxviii., 41, 42; Dan. iii., 17; Acts vii., 22-25, 33-35; xii., 5-11; Matt. vi., 13; I. Cor. x., 13; II. Cor. i., 10; Col. i., 12, 13; I. Thess. i., 10; II. Tim. iv., 17, 18; II. Pet. ii., 9; Rom. xi., 26; Joel ii., 32; Psa. xviii., 1-3; xl., 16, 17; cxliv., 1-7.

Suggestions.

The captive Jews in all the dominions of Ahasuerus were in an agony of terror because of the king's decree fulfilling the desire of the wicked Haman, that they should be set upon and slain on the thirtieth day of the twelfth month, the month Adar.

Mordecai the Jew, in sackcloth and ashes wept aloud in the midst of the city and before the king's palace. Esther, the queen, sent a messenger to find out the cause of Mordecai's grief. He sent back a copy of the king's decree, and a message to her that she should plead with the king for the salvation of her nation, with the solemn charge of a great responsibility, asking,

'who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?'

Queen Esther sent word again to Mor-decai, saying that if he and all the Jews in the city would fast for three days and nights, praying for her, she and her maidens would also fast and pray, after which she would undertake the great and dangerous task. Esther knew the difficulties attending her work of pleading for her people. Ahasuerus was a despotic tyrant, if anyone approached his throne without his permission he would think nothing of ordering the immediate execution of the intruder. But Esther loved her people, and knew that God had indeed raised her up and brought her to the throne for the very purpose of delivering her people in this awful crisis. If Esther had not been true to God's call, God could have raised up another deliverer for his people, but she would have lost the immeasurable blessing of the service, the reward which always follows obedience, and probably her own life beside. If Esther had not been willing to sacrifice her own life, if need be, for the good of her people, she would never have been made the instrument of their deliverance; and her unwillingness would have thwarted the plan which God had made for her own life. God has plans to glorify himself in our lives, but if we are unwilling and disobedient those plans are thwarted and we lose the unspeakable blessing of being used by God. Our God has his plan for every life. If we do not allow him to shape us into an instrument for his glory, our loss is unspeakable, but his work will suffer very little, for he will find some one else who will be obedient, and through whom he can work. God very quickly raised up David to take the place of the disobedient Saul. The name of Saul has come down through history as that of a dishonorable and dishonored man, because of his disobedience and disloyalty to God, because he chose the praise of man rather than the honor of God. But Esther was willing and obedient, and God worked through her.

Queen Esther invited Ahasuerus and his court favorite, Haman, to a banquet, and when the king was in a good humor told him of the wicked plot of Haman to kill her and her people, the Jews. Then the king was very angry and ordered Haman to be hanged on the gallows which he had already prepared for Mordecai. The king also gave to Mordecai all the possessions of Haman.

Esther's own safety was now assured, but the order to slay her countrymen was still in the hands of the people, waiting only for the thirteenth day of the twelfth month to be put in execution. Esther again besought the king for her people, asking that the orders might be reversed or declared void. The king declared that his orders were unchangeable, but that Mordecai should write to all the provinces and rulers in the immense dominion of Ahasuerus, proclaiming to the Jews that they should arm themselves for the defence, and slay all such as laid hands on them on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. Then all the Jews rejoiced for the deliverance of Jehovah and the loyalty of Esther. Mordecai also was made the king's favorite instead of Haman, and became his right hand man.

When the fateful day arrived the Jews assembled to protect themselves from those who would kill them, and slew great numbers of their enemies, but did not touch the prey or booty. The anniversary of this time of deliverance is called the feast of Purim, because of Haman's folly in casting Pur, or lots to determine which would be the best day to destroy Jews.

Primary Lesson.

How much do we love our country? Enough to risk our lives for it? The beautiful queen who pleaded before the king for the lives of her people risked her own life in doing so. The courage of Esther matched that of the bravest soldier. How much do we love our friends? Enough to be glad to put ourselves to any trouble for them? How much do we love our home? Enough to show? If we do not love home enough for any one to see our love by our deeds, we do not love it enough. If we do not love mother enough for her to be quite sure we love her, our love is not deep enough.

But what if we do love? Our country has no need for us to die for it just now. We cannot all be soldiers. But our country has a need, an awful need, for our prayers. Our friends need our prayers, and we must pray for our own homes. What shall we pray for our country? We must pray that God will send righteous rulers, who will rule in the fear of God and not in their own selfish interests. We must thank God for those who do love him, and pray that they may stand true. We must pray for the churches and ministers, and Sabbath-schools and teachers, all over the country, that God will bless them and make them a blessing. We must pray that our own friends will draw nearer and nearer to God through our living Saviour Jesus Christ.

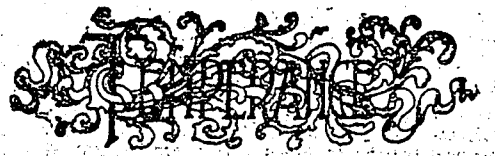
The king before whom we plead is not like the cruel king Ahasuerus. Our king is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and because he gave his own Son to die for us, he tells us to call him Father. He loves us and he loves to hear our prayers. No man can come between us and God. We can only come to God through the Lord Jesus, our Saviour. And our Father will hear and answer us.

C. E Topic.

Oct. 15. Lost opportunities. Jer. 8: 20; Matt. 23: 37-39; Heb. 12: 17.

Junior C. E.

Oct. 15. Lessons from Gethsemane: How does Christ help you to bear troubles? Matt. 26: 36-46.



Tobacco Catechism.

(By Dr. R. H. McDonald, of San Francisco.)

CHAPTER XIX.—OPINIONS OF EMINENT MEN.

1. Q.—What does an experienced advocate write?

A.—'Gigantic as are the evils arising from the use of strong drink, those of tobacco exceed them.'

2. Q.—What is said of William Gladstone, the greatest statesman of England?

A.—That he detested smoking.

3. Q.—Do tobacco and liquor go hand in hand?

A.—Said Horace Greeley: 'Show me a drunkard that doesn't use tobacco and I will show you a white-blackbird.'

4. Q.—What did ex-Senator Doolittle remark in addressing the graduating law class of the Wisconsin State University?

A.—'I verily believe that the mental force, power of labor, and endurance of our profession is decreased at least twenty-five per cent, by the use of tobacco.'

5. Q.—What did Thomas Jefferson say regarding the production of tobacco?

A.—'It is a culture productive of infinite wretchedness.'

6. Q.—Give extracts from remarks by Principal Bancroft, of Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass.

A.—Tobacco is the bane of our schools and colleges, and increasingly so; teachers who have given any attention to the subject agree that boys go down under its use in scholarship, in self-respect, and self-control.

We can select the boys who smoke heavily by a certain hesitation in answering questions, by a peculiar huskiness of voice, dullness of complexion, or tremor of the hand.

The tobacco reform must be in the enlightened conscience.

7. Q.—What further is said about its effects upon the physical system?

A.—A habit which affects the whole nervous system and thus reaches the will and the moral character, is a sin. It takes off the fine edge of the mind, injures the manners, and dulls the moral sense. It is especially important that parents, preachers, and teachers should refrain from using tobacco.

8. Q.—What does Dr. Harris say upon the evil influence of tobacco?

A.—There is not another practice in civilized society that will so directly introduce a young man to vicious associates and to all the haunts of wickedness, as does the