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Third Quarter.

Lesson VII.—Aug. 16. 1 Kings 18: 30-46.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The Lord, he is the God; the Lord he is the God.—1 Kings 18: 39.

I. ELIJAH'S PREPARATION FOR THE TRIAL.—30. *And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down.* We can hardly be mistaken in holding that this was one of the "altars" (chap. 19: 10), "thrown down" by command of Ahab or Jezebel. Elijah's repairing it was an act of profound significance. It showed him as the restorer of the law and the true religion.

31. *And Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes.* This was a declaration in act that the twelve tribes together constituted one people, that they had one God in common, and that Jehovah's covenant was not concluded with two or with ten, but with the unit of the twelve tribes. *Israel shall be thy name.* In spite of political division and even religious separation, the tribes were still united in the covenant of God.

32. *He built an altar in the name of the Lord.* By the authority and for the glory of Jehovah. *And he made a trench, as great as would contain two measures of seed.* Literally, "as the space of two seahs of seed." The seah contained about three of our gallons. A trench as deep as the grain measure containing two seahs. It would therefore contain considerable water.

33. *And he put the wood in order.* No doubt the prophet did everything in an orderly and regular way. *Fill four barrels.* Or "water-jars," such as the maidens used to carry on their heads.

34. *Do it the second time . . . third time.* Elijah adopted this course for the purpose of preluding all suspicion of even the possibility of fraud in connection with the miraculous burning of the sacrifice.

II. ELIJAH'S PRAYER.—36. *At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice.* Probably "the ninth hour," or three o'clock. *Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel.* Note (1) he appeals to the covenant God of their pious ancestors with all his promises to them. (2) This was the same of God who had done wonders for their nation in the past. *And that I have done all these things at thy word.* That is to say, "that I have been divinely directed in all that I have done public y as a prophet, in proclaiming the drought, in gathering this assembly, and in proposing this trial.

37. *That this people may know that thou art the Lord God.* Elijah did not seek his own honor, but God's. He forgot himself in his desire that the true God should be known and worshipped. *And that thou hast turned their heart.* He had begun to turn them already, and the process was still going on. *Back again.* From idols to the true God.

III. THE ANSWER.—38. *Then the fire of the Lord fell.* Thus they could plainly see for themselves that there was no trickery, no hidden fire, but that the answer could be only from God himself. *And consumed . . . the wood, and the stones.* The heat must have been intense to "consume," or melt up and pulverize these stones. This fire demonstrated the existence and omniscience and omnipotence of Jehovah, and set in a strong light the folly of worshipping the purely imaginary Baal.

VALUE OF MIRACLES. Miracles like this are God's signature to his truth; the proof that it is God that speaks. It is only in miracles that men, however satisfied in their own souls, can prove to others that God himself is speaking through them.

39. *When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces.* In reverent worship and awe at the spectacle. *The Lord, he is the God.* The people understand thoroughly the nature and bearing of the whole scene, as a trial to determine whether Baal or Jehovah is the true God. And they now pronounce the matter to be clearly and certainly decided.

40. *Take the prophets of Baal.* Take these teachers of idolatry,—some of them renegades from the faith of Israel, some of them foreign emissaries introduced into the land,—and destroy them as God has commanded on three separate occasions (Ex. 22: 20; Deut. 13: 1-18; 17: 2-7). *And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon.* A stream which flows along the northern slope of Carmel ("and nowhere so near as immediately beneath the spot where Elijah's altar stood,") and empties into the Mediterranean. *And slew them there.* Not certainly all with his own hand, though some he may have actually so slain, as Samuel slew Agag (1 Sam. 15: 33). Elijah is said to have sl in them because the people slew them by his orders, as Josephus understands the passage ("Ant. Jud." viii. 13, § 6.)

REASONS FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF BAAL'S PROPHETS. This destruction was not an act of cruelty, but of mercy. For (1) it stood precisely as a defensive war stands. (2) It was done on the same principles as we execute criminals; with sorrow for their death, but with the certainty that it is not only just, but is mercy, life, safety to multitudes of the innocent. (3) It was necessary for the very existence of the nation. Hardly any punishment would be thought too severe for men engaged in the poisoning of wells, or adulterating the staple food of a land, but the spiritual help of a people is of far more importance than any physical hygiene; especially in this true where a nation has a religion or a code of morals given to them expressly by God.

IV. THE COMING OF THE RAIN.—41. *And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up.* From these words, it follows that Ahab had gone to Kishon, and was present at the execution of his Baal priests. *Eat and drink.* It is extremely probable that the excitement of the ordeal was so intense that the king had barely tasted food all day long. Elijah now bids him eat if he can, after what he has witnessed. There is now, he says, no further cause for anxiety, or alarm, for the rain is coming.

42. *So Ahab went up to eat.* The rain alone was of importance to him, not the Lord and his mercy. How many like-minded ones in our day. *And Elijah went up.* The king goes to feast, the prophet to pray. *To the top of Carmel.* The high point of Carmel rising from the place where the sacrifice took place. From the top of this elevation there is a wide prospect of the Mediterranean sea. *He cast himself down.* The natural attitude of humble, penitent, earnest prayer.

43. *And said to his servant. Go up.* A little higher than where the prophet was bowed in prayer. *There is nothing.* The praying Elijah does not despair, for he has the promise of God. The promise does not keep him from praying, but keeps him at it. *Seven times.* Either exactly seven, or many times, as the phrase often means.

44. *A little cloud . . . like a man's hand.* The clearness of the sky renders the smallest speck distinctly visible; and this is in Palestine the uniform precursor of rain. It rises higher and higher, and becomes larger and larger with astonishing celerity, till the whole heaven is black, and the cloud bursts in a deluge of rain.

That the rain stop thee not. These words have caused some perplexity to commentators. Their meaning becomes perfectly clear as read on the spot. The river Kishon, easily fordable at this point, would soon become a rushing, furious torrent, as in the days of Sisera. Besides which, the plain of Esdraelon consists of a rich, alluvial soil, which after a heavy rainfall becomes absolutely impassable for carriages, and is difficult even for horsemen and pedestrians. If Ahab is to return to Jezreel, he must do it at once.

45. *And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.* Ahab's summer residence, situated about 17 miles from Carmel, in the tribe of Issachar.

46. *And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah.* Hand is here used as the symbol of power. The meaning is, that the Spirit of God came upon him, and imparted to him unusual strength. *He girded up his lions.* Gathered his mantle around him with his girdle, and made it tight for running. *And ran before Ahab.* His object was apparently twofold. First, to honor the sovereign whom he had that day humbled in the presence of his subjects. Secondly, he may have hoped, by his presence near the king and court, to strengthen any good resolves which the former might have made.

PRACTICAL.

1. Vers. 30, 31. Let us be frequently reminded that the church of God is one.

2. In reforming the country or the church, use all the good there already is in them; repair old altars rather than build new ones.

3. Vers. 33-35. Let us so guard our work for the Lord that men shall clearly see that all the power is from him, and not from the "machinery" we use.

4. Ver. 36. There is a peculiar power and helpfulness in worship at the stated seasons.

5. All that God has done for our fathers is a power and encouragement for the work of to-day. So the Christian is strengthened in faith by remembering what God has done for him in the past.

6. Ver. 38. Miracles are God's endorsement of his messengers and their message.

7. God still answers by fire, through his Holy Spirit. His miracles of to-day are miracles of conversation,—sinners changed to saints, nations elevated,—the fruits of the Gospel.

8. Ver. 40. Righteous punishment of crimes against society is mercy to the nation.

9. As soon as men are convinced of the truth they should be set to practising it.

10. Ver. 42. We are to pray even for those things which are promised.

11. Ver. 43. We must watch for the answer as well as pray.

12. We must persevere in prayer. The answer is sometimes delayed for good reasons, but it will come.

13. Ver. 46. Even those who reprove rulers boldly for their sins should show that they are true and obedient subjects.

Isabelle M. Alden—"Pansy."

BY FAY HUSTINGTON.

Perhaps no biographies have a keener fascination for the young than those of the authors of the books they have read. And those of our readers who have wept with Julia Reid, journeyed with Mrs. Solomon Smith, or followed the Chautauqua girls through their varied experiences, or laughed with Tip Lewis, will enjoy this sketch of the foremost Sunday-school writer of the day, taken from the magizine of which she is the editor.

A score or more years ago, soon after fall opening of the school, I went up to the seminary one afternoon to call upon a friend. I found her full of the praises of a new girl, and when presently, school-girl fashion, we all started down town together, I was introduced to the young lady, whom they all called "Belle," though in the introduction ceremony she was named "Miss Macdonald."

As to personal appearance, the impression which I carried away was of a rather slight figure with a graceful carriage, a shapely head with an abundance of brown hair, and brilliant dark eyes.

During that year I met her occasionally, and when I went back to school a year later, though we were in no sense what school-girls mean by friends, it fell to our lot to be room-mates. Just when we dropped the formal Miss and became Belle and Dody to each other I do not remember, but ever since those days we have been friends and I know a great deal about her. She was born near Rochester, N. Y., but while she was yet a very little girl her father removed his family to Johnstown, in the same state, and later to Gloversville, a town which has since become noted for the manufacture of gloves.

From her father our friend has inherited great strength of character and an inflexible firmness in matters of duty and right. When she talks to the young Pansies in story, setting forth an uncompromising hatred of vice in all its forms, and a love of truth and purity, I think of the dear father whose frail body wore out many years ago, setting the imprisoned soul free.

"Pansy" became the wife of the Rev. G. R. Alden in May, 1866. Mr. Alden is an earnest hard-working pastor, and Mrs. Alden is all any parish could desire in their pastor's wife. Perhaps some of you think that all she does is to edit *The Pansy*. In this you are mistaken. Again, some you who know of her other literary labors and who delight in her grown up books, and enjoy the benefit of Sunday-school lesson helps think that surely these things must take up her time. I wish such might step into that parsonage home and become a looker on for a week. She is a practical Sunday-school teacher, and those of you who say to yourselves, O, well, these plans and schemes of hers looks very well on paper, yet they are not so easy of execution," would have the proof of their adaptation to real Sunday-schools, could you spend an hour in her primary class. She has in charge a young ladies' prayer-meeting, normal class, and a mission-band, and I cannot begin to tell you of all the schemes she has for the benefit of the people of her husband's parish.

There is a dear mother in that home. More than eighty years she has lived, and yet, looking at her, watching her movements and listening to her voice, one can believe that our "Pansy" has inherited from her mother some of her persistent energy as well as her sweet womanly qualities. There is a boy there, too! A boy to be proud of, that is all I need say of him. If all you *Pansy* boys are boys to be proud of, we shall be satisfied.

You want to know when "Pansy" began to write and which was her first book. Her taste and talent for writing developed early, though she did not publish any books when she was very young. She wrote sketches for the newspapers when quite a child, one—I think the first one—was a story of the old clock, which so pleased her father that he called her his "Pansy" or "Pleasant Thoughts," a name which she has since retained. Her first book was *Helen Lester*—not *Tip Lewis*, as some one said in a sketch of "Pansy" written not long ago. *Tip Lewis* was written a year or two later—just after her marriage. How does she look? Some of you have her picture. Well, it is called a good one—but it is only a picture after all! It is not easy to describe her. She looks like her mother, and her mother is a very beautiful woman.

The other day, while I was staying a few weeks in the parsonage home, I said, "I think I ought to have a Pansy Society Badge," and she replied, "You have not signed your pledge; you must pledge yourself to try and overcome some fault." And I responded:

"I am always thinking of some things which I imagine it would be nice to do, but I never do them. I'll begin now to do these things!"

She laughed and gave me a badge.

This sketch of "Pansy" is one of the things which I thought it would be nice to do.—*N. Y. Advocate.*

What is this Disease that is Coming Upon Us?

Like a thief at night it steals in upon us unawares. Many persons have pains about the chest and sides, and sometimes in the back. They feel dull and sleepy; the mouth has a bad taste, especially in the morning. A sort of sticky slime collects about the teeth. The appetite is poor. There is a feeling like a heavy load on the stomach; sometimes a faint all-gone sensation at the pit of the stomach which food does not satisfy. The eyes are sunken, the hands and feet become cold and feel clammy. After a while a cough sets in at first dry, but after a few months it is attended with a greenish coloured expectoration. The afflicted one feels tired all the while, and sleep does not seem to afford any rest. After a time he becomes nervous, irritable, and gloomy, and has evil forebodings. There is a giddiness, a sort of whirling sensation in the head when rising up suddenly. The bowels become costive; the skin is dry and hot at times; the blood becomes thick and stagnant; the whites of the eyes become tinged with yellow, the urine is scanty and high-coloured, depositing a sediment after standing. There is frequently a spitting up of the food, sometimes with a sour taste, and sometimes with a sweetish taste; this is frequently attended with palpitation of the heart; the vision be-impaired with spots before the eyes; there is a feeling of great prostration and weakness. All of these symptoms are in turn present. It is thought that nearly one-third of our population has this disease in some of its varied forms. It has been found that medical men have mistaken the nature of this disease. Some have treated it for a liver complaint, others for kidney disease, etc., etc., but none of the various kinds of treatment have been attended with success, because the remedy should be such as to act harmoniously upon each one of these organs, and upon the stomach as well; for in Dyspepsia (for this is really what the disease is) all of these organs partake of this disease and require a remedy that will act upon all at the same time. Seigel's uratives Syrup acts like a charm in this class of complaints, giving almost immediate relief. The following letters from chemists of standing in the community where they live show in what estimation the article is held.

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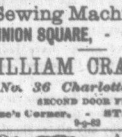

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