



## LESSON X.—SEPTEMBER 7.

## The Prophet Like Moses.

Deuteronomy, xviii., 9-19. Commit to memory verses 17-19.

## Golden Text.

'This is of a truth the prophet that should come into the world.'—John vi., 14.

## Home Readings.

Monday, Sept. 1.—Deut. xviii., 9-22.  
Tuesday, Sept. 2.—Deut. xii., 28-32.  
Wednesday, Sept. 3.—Isa. viii., 11-20.  
Thursday, Sept. 4.—Acts iii., 19-26.  
Friday, Sept. 5.—Acts vii., 35-43.  
Saturday, Sept. 6.—Jer. xiv., 10-16.  
Sunday, Sept. 7.—Heb. xii., 18-29.

## Lesson Text.

(9) When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. (10) There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch. (11) Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. (12) For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. (13) Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God. (14) For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do. (15) The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; (16) According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. (17) And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. (18) I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. (19) And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

## Suggestions from Peloubet's Notes.

Deuteronomy is mainly occupied with a series of addresses by Moses to the people, delivered during the last forty days before the death of the speaker. It fills the slight gap between Numbers and Joshua.

The passage of Deuteronomy from xvii., 14 to xviii., 22 is one of much importance, because it outlines the three great agencies through which God was to lead his people,—the kings (Deut. xvii., 14-20), the priests (Deut. xviii., 1-8), and the prophets (Deut. xviii., 9-22). The chief exhortation in the last section is to national purity, separation from the sins and horrible defilement of idolatry. That this may be possible, the prophets are promised, and especially the one great Prophet, the Messiah. Purity, therefore, is the next lesson taught the Israelites in their wilderness training school; a lesson imperatively needed as they drew near to Canaan, that country steeped in foul idolatries.

The Israelites were about to take a step for which God through Moses had been preparing them for forty years. What more natural and suitable than these closing exhortations, the baccalaureate sermon of their great commencement week? Which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and there-

fore they could confidently march up against the land. Thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. Sometimes conquered countries conquer their conquerors, as Rome did, and Moses knew how easily his people, after winning Canaan, might fall into a second captivity under the crafty attractions of heathen idolatry.

The natives of New Guinea believe that angry spirits alone cause sickness and death. These spirits speak through the sorcerers. At every feast they set aside food for the spirits. So many evils spring from sorcery that the English government has now affixed severe penalties to the practice of it. Illustrations from mission fields might be multiplied indefinitely; but how about Christian lands? The ancient Molech burned the body, but the soul itself is burned by our modern Molechs,—the saloon, empty fashion, mammon, and worldly ambition,—into which many parents throw their children.

The wise Mosaic law against consulting familiar spirits is violated to an amazing extent to-day, and our cities are filled with fortune-tellers, clairvoyants, astrologers, palmists, mediums,—feeders of superstition and crime.

Finally, there are hundreds of popular superstitions, such as those connected with the moon, the number thirteen, spilling salt, giving knives, charming warts, lucky days, mascots, pocket pieces, Friday, dreams, and the like. To hold that the course of providence is connected in any way with such absurd trifles is to dishonor the God of providence.

The Weakness of Idolatry.—Vs. 12-14. For all that do these things, whether heathen or Hebrew, are an abomination unto the Lord. The penalty was death. 'In the earlier days of the sacred history there was no enemy so subtle, so insidious, so difficult to meet as magic and soothsaying. Only by actual prohibition, on pain of death, could the case be adequately met; and under these circumstances there is no need for us to apologize for the Old Testament law, 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live' (Ex. xxii., 17).—Prof. Andrew Harper.

Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God. Yield him pure service, undefiled with idolatry. See Matt. v., 48.

Why All Idolatry is Weak.—1. Because God hates it; it is an 'abomination' to him, and whatever he hates must in the end perish. No one can be pure from sin unless he comes to hate it as God does.

2. Because idolatry weakens the body, whether it is the sensuous worship of an idol or the worship of mammon, fashion, strong drink, and the gaming table.

3. Because idolatry weakens the intellect. All superstitions destroy the judgment. As the emotions gain control, resolution, prudence, and reason fall behind.

4. Because idolatry destroys the soul, from which man's true strength comes. No nation can be strong without a high ideal; neither can a man.

5. God does not always deprive idolaters at once from their Canaans. Mammon-worshippers, debauchers, drunkards, notorious sinners may seem to flourish for a time, but always in the end their kingdom is taken away and given to the pure and obedient.

Guidance in a Pure Religion.—Vs. 15-18. Idolatry and sorcery testify to a need of the human soul that must be met, the need of some outlook into the future, the need of spiritual guidance, and of a revelation of God's will. In forbidding idolatry and sorcery this need must be supplied, or the nation would be like the house from which the devil had been driven out, swept and garnished for the reception of seven worse devils. Therefore the prophets and the Messiah were promised.

The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee. In this verse there is outlined what Oosterzee calls 'the grandest hope of all antiquity,' the promise of the Messiah. This promise was at first in large, general terms, like the broad foundations of the Great Pyramid of Egypt, but narrowed upward through the centuries, becoming sharper and more definite as it drew near to its glorious apex, Jesus Christ. A Prophet. In the King James version this is capitalized, making it refer to Christ alone; but the revision writes it 'prophet'

here as well as in vs. 20-22. The latter passage evidently speaks of the prophets as a class, showing how false prophets may be distinguished from the true. But the entire prophetic order looked forward to Christ and found in him its culmination; so that, in either view of these verses, they furnish a picture of the Messiah, and a glorious prophecy of his wisdom and power. 'For who is so worthy of being called the Prophet, in the fullest extent of the word, as he who has fully made known to us the Father's will and counsel for our salvation?'—Oosterzee.

## Christ a Prophet.

'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee.' V. 15. The fulfilment of the prophecies of the advent of Christ are a beautiful study. Here are a few of them: 'There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.' Isa. xi., 1. And 'of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.' Acts xiii., 23. The promise to David was, 'Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever.' II. Sam. vii., 16. And Matthew is 'the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David.' Matt. i., 1. And Paul wrote to the Romans concerning 'Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power.' Rom. i., 3, 4. 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.' Isa. vii., 14. And 'the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise.' Matt. i., 18-25. 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah . . . until Shiloh come.' Gen. xlix., 10. And 'it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah.' Heb. vii., 14. 'But thou Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel.' Micah vi., 2. And 'Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea.' Matt. ii., 1. 'The Gentiles shall come to thy light . . . they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord.' Isa. lx., 3, 6. And 'there came wise men from the east . . . to worship him . . . and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.' Mat. ii., 1, 2, 11. The ministry of Christ is threefold, that of prophet, priest, and king. He was a prophet on earth; he is a priest in heaven; he will reign as king when he comes again. His life as prophet is our example. 1. Pet. ii., 20-24.

## C. E. Topic.

Sunday, Sept. 7.—Topic—Ready for his coming. Luke xii., 31-40.

## Junior C. E. Topic.

Monday, Sept. 1.—Christ our salvation. 1 Tim. i., 15.

Tuesday, Sept. 2.—Christ our joy. John xiv., 1.

Wednesday, Sept. 3.—Christ our strength. Phil. iv., 13.

Thursday, Sept. 4.—Christ our judge. John v., 22.

Friday, Sept. 5.—Christ our master. Matt. xxiii., 8.

Saturday, Sept. 6.—Christ our guide. John xiv., 6.

Sunday, Sept. 7.—Topic—Why you should be a Christian. John iii., 16-19.

We shall never commend Christianity, though sometimes we think that we do, by softening its sharp lines, by blurring its clear statements. Why, what the world is impatient with, is just the very vagueness we imagine pleases it. Men want the presentation of something definite. Life is definite; and they want something definite to help them to live—definite comfort, definite strength. Death is definite; and they want something definite to help them to die—definite knowledge, definite hope. To us they are looking, on us they depend, and from more than we think comes the cry, 'Speak out!' Plainness as opposed to vagueness is a present-day duty.—Rev. W. A. Gray.