

## V. AN EXAMPLE OF Obedience TO GOD.

*Did according to the word.* v. 5.

"By faith Abraham . . . obeyed." Heb. 11. 8.

"Do whatsoever I command you." John 15. 14.

## VI. AN EXAMPLE OF TRUST IN GOD'S CARE.

*Dwelt by the brook Cherith.* v. 5.

"Trust in the Lord and do good." Psa. 37. 3.

"The Lord preserveth the faithful." Psa. 31. 23.

## THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

## The Honors of God's Follower.

We see in Elijah a man who stood forth openly, avowedly, uncompromisingly, as a follower of God. He received for this great privileges, which we can have on the same terms.

1. There is the honor of insight into the divine purposes. He knew what others knew not, because, living in communion with God, the divine secret was with him. v. 1.

2. There is the honor of divine guidance. Every step was under God's direction, whether to Samaria, Cherith, or Zarephath, v. 2, 8, 14.

3. There is the honor of divine care. God's child is safe, for his Father's arm is around him. While others famish, he has food, even though birds may bring it. v. 6.

4. There is the honor of becoming a blessing to others. Not only is his own life preserved, but he becomes the means of preserving other lives. v. 13-16.

## English Teacher's Notes.

I do not know whether cricket is as common a game in America as it is in England, but if not there is doubtless some other game which takes its place and which will serve as well in illustration. A cricket-field, to any one entirely ignorant of the game, presents a scene of curious confusion. Bats are raised and lowered, balls are pitched about, some are running as if for their lives, some standing on the alert as if watching for a foe, movements are begun and suddenly withdrawn again. A stranger might say: "Whatever are these boys about?" But if he inquires he will find they are acting according to rule—a strict, unbending rule—the law of the game. This accounts for their motions, slow, swift, sudden, or wary. This accounts for the place that each occupies, and the place to which each returns after some sudden departure. All is done according to rule. And not only play, but work also, requires to be done according to rule. Without some standard of reference even the common life of mankind would go on in a strange, haphazard way. Each place and nation has its rule or custom according to which the business, the pleasure, the life, goes on.

But there is a rule or measure laid down for us in the Golden Text which is meant for every place, nation, age, or rank, and which is equally suitable to all: "according to the word of the Lord." And as, in the passage for reading, these words occur twice over, so we get in the passage a twofold application of them.

First we see the word of the Lord as a rule. Here is a man who is ordering his conduct by it—Elijah the Tishbite. For years the word of the Lord has

been cast off by the rulers and by the nation as a whole. And, as the Lord's servant, Elijah has stepped boldly forth and announced the Lord's judgment upon the land. This very judgment threatens and endangers himself. How is he to be supported during the famine? And how is he to escape the wrath of the king? One would think the safest place for him was out of the country altogether. In Judah, surely, he might have found both the shelter and sustenance.

But instead of that, where does he go? First down to the lowly brookside on the farther bank of Jordan, to pass his days in solitary concealment. Later on to "Zarephath which belongeth to Zidon," actually into the country of Jezebel, the heathen queen of Israel, the slayer of the Lord's prophets. And not to some home of plenty, but to the dwelling of a poor widow, reduced as it seemed to her very last meal.

This appears strange conduct. What is the reason of it? It is no haphazard course. It is ordered by a strict principle. Elijah went and did "according to the word of the Lord," a rule altogether unpopular and out of fashion at the time.

If the matter were judged according to human calculations we should say that Elijah was in danger in both these places. A whole year, probably, he was on Israelitish ground, and another year he was in a heathen land, the country of his bitterest enemy. Quite within the reach of his foes, we should have concluded. And within the reach, also, of starvation, either in the lonely wilds near the Jordan or as a suppliant for food in a strange city.

But we have to look at the word of the Lord as a standard of reckoning. There had been commands given to others as well as to Elijah: "I have commanded the ravens to feed thee." "I have commanded a widow woman to sustain thee." Very incapable were both the ravens and the widow to perform the task of themselves, but in this matter they were the Lord's stewards, and were to draw from his resources. And they were not only incapable of themselves, but they were unconscious. When the hungry birds secured more than enough food to supply their own need in order that Elijah might be fed, they did not know whose word they were fulfilling. Nor did the widow know when she received the stranger who came to her door to what high honor she had been appointed. But God's word to Elijah could not be broken. "Go and hide thyself," said Jehovah to him, and he remained undiscovered by his enemies. "I have commanded," etc., again said the Lord, and day by day the bread and meat was brought to the brookside, and day by day the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil held out, sufficing for the wants of the prophet, of his hostess, and of her child, "according to the word of the Lord."

That standard of reckoning still holds good. The Lord's stewards, conscious or unconscious, still have orders to sustain every trusting servant who may be in need. "I have nothing wherewith to