

TEXTS AND THOUGHTS FOR EVERY DAY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. JULY 29.—EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY. 1. Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. 1 Kings xiii. 1.

God has planted us in his vineyard, and he tends us by his ministers, and supplies nourishment and refreshment by his word and ordinances, and prunes us by affliction. But all is that we may be fruitful, and that our fruit may be good. But if that is not the case, then, when the time of visitation comes, we shall be hewn down and cast into the fire. O that the grace of God may not be to me in vain.

2. His hand which he put forth against him, dried up. 1 Kings xiii. 4. When God sent a prophet to reprove and warn Jeroboam, he was so far from receiving the warning, that he stretched forth his hand against him and gave orders to seize him.

2. There shall not be dew nor rain in these years, but according to my word. 1 Kings xvii. 1. Elijah desired earnestly to bring his countrymen back to God's service; but in order to do so, he knew that it was necessary that they should be convinced that He was with him, who has all power in heaven and earth; and to awaken their attention it was necessary that his power should be felt throughout the nation, and for a continuance, that it might sink into their minds.

3. After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places. 1 Kings xiii. 33. His arm was restored at the intercession of the prophet, and his heart had never been moved to repentance; and therefore, when the immediate alarm was withdrawn, he returned to his old courses, and repeated and continued the sins which he had begun.

3. I have commanded the ravens to find thee there. 1 Kings xvii. 4. When it became known that it was through Elijah's word that the rain was withheld, there was great indignation against him, and Ahaz sought every where for him to slay him; so that it was necessary for him to be supported in secrecy. God therefore directed him to go to the brook Cherith, and provided his subsistence by a daily miracle.

4. As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Rom. viii. 14. God makes us his children of his mere grace and mercy; but we have no right to regard ourselves as such, or to expect to be treated as such, except so far as we act as children towards a parent.

2. Art thou come to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my soul. 1 Kings xvii. 18. So spake the widow of Zarephath, to Elijah, when her son fell sick and died. It is true that Elijah had sustained her and her son for many days by miracle. Yet now she thinks her son's death comes likewise from the prophet, in punishment for her sins; thinking herself too unholly for the presence of one so near to God.

5. The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the sons of God. Rom. viii. 16. Our own heart goeth forth towards God in confidence and gratitude and love and obedience, and is a witness that we have the true temper of mind of God's children; and the Holy Spirit of God, both by his word, and by holy ordinances, and by the inward leading of our minds; and sweetly inclines us to confidence and reliance, and to casting ourselves wholly on him; and by moving us to act as children, gives his sanction to our thinking ourselves such. May I always have this two-fold witness.

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6. Men count it much if they are heirs to houses or land; but how few value an inheritance beyond the grave. Yet we are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, and consequently heirs of an eternal kingdom. And shall we continue beyond that which is imperishable, that which we must quit before that which endures forever—that which can neither satisfy nor improve the soul, to that which shall both satisfy and sanctify. Quicken thou me, O Lord, and raise me from the dust.

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7. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Matt. vii. 19. That is the only test by which we can know any thing. We may believe that a thing is either good or bad on the testimony of those we can trust, and above all of God; but if we are to know, that requires evidence; and the only evidence that a teacher or a doctrine is either good or evil is by the good or evil conduct of the teacher, or the good or evil effect of the doctrine. But for this time and care are required. Give me, O Lord, to prove all things and hold fast that which is good.

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