



LESSON II. — JULY 10.

Elijah the Prophet.

I. Kings xvii., 1-16. Read the whole chapter. Memory verses, 2-6.

Golden Text.

'And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord.'—I. Kings xvii., 16.

Home Readings.

- M. I. Kings xv., 1-24.—Reigns of Abijam and Asa in Judah.
- T. I. Kings xv., 25-16: 10.—Nadab, Baasha, and Elah, Kings of Israel.
- W. I. Kings xvi., 15-34.—The wicked reigns of Omri and Ahab.
- T. I. Kings xvii., 1-24.—Elijah the prophet.
- F. Luke iv., 14-26.—Christ's teaching about Elijah at Sarepta.
- S. James v., 12-20.—Elijah was a man like ourselves.
- S. Luke xii., 22-32.—The Lord's abundant Provision.

Lesson Story.

About seventy years in the history of Judah and Israel have passed since our last lesson. Jeroboam had reigned over Israel for twenty-four years, he was a wicked ruler and those who came after him were wicked. Ahab, in whose reign Elijah prophesied, was the worst of all. Ahab's wife, Jezebel, was an exceedingly bold, bad woman who urged the king on to all kinds of sin. Jezebel did her best to utterly destroy all worship of the true God, she filled the country with idols and idolatry, and spent vast sums of money in introducing this 'new system of religion.' Our next lesson will show us the fate of this idolatry, and of all such things as set themselves up against God.

Outwardly the kingdom of Israel seemed to be prospering politically, but the life of the nation was being sapped by the fearful idolatry with its accompanying vices and immorality. Then God raised up a prophet and reformer; Elijah, the Tishbite, suddenly appeared before King Ahab with a message from Jehovah. For years there shall be no rain or dew until God commands it. The people may make all sorts of prayers and sacrifices to their idols for rain, but none shall come until the Lord Jehovah, the God of Nature, orders it.

As soon as his message is given, God sends Elijah away to the east to hide beside a brook and receive food from the ravens. After a while the brook dried up and God told Elijah to go to Zarephath, where he would find a widow who would receive him into her house and sustain him.

When Elijah reached the gate of the city of Zarephath, he saw the woman gathering sticks. He asked her for a drink of water and as she turned to get it he called to her to bring him a little bread, too. Then the woman told him of her own sore need, she had no food, in the house but a handful of meal and a few drops of oil, this she was just intending to make into a last meal for herself and her son.

Then Elijah spoke God's message to the widow, 'Fear not,' and promised that if she would first make a cake for him of the last handful of meal, her barrel of meal should not give out nor should her cruse of oil be found empty until the famine was over.

The woman believed God, and for her faith she had a constant supply of meal and oil, with which she nourished Elijah and the rest of her household for over two years, until the famine was over.

Lesson Hymn.

Is thy cruse of comfort failing?
 Rise and share it with another,
 And through all the years of famine
 It shall serve thee and thy brother.
 Love divine will fill thy storehouse,
 Or thy handful still renew.
 Scanty fare for one will often
 Make a royal feast for two.

For the heart grows rich in giving;
 All its wealth is living grain;
 Seeds which mildew in the garner,
 Scattered, fill with gold the plain.
 Is thy burden hard and heavy?
 Do thy steps drag wearily?
 Help to bear thy brother's burden;
 God will bear both it and thee.
 —M. C.

Lesson Hints.

'Elijah' means 'my God is Jehovah,' Elijah was a strong man, of rugged countenance, clad in the garment of rough camel's hair, such as was worn by the highlanders of Gilead. (Such was the dress of John the Baptist, forerunner of the Messiah.) Elijah had nothing to lose in this encounter with Ahab, his only possession was faith in Jehovah, and this faith no man could take from him.

'Shall not be dew nor rain,'—water means life in those eastern countries. No rain; no crops; a three years' famine. This famine was but the preparation for Elijah's work of reform. The people must suffer before they will realize their sin. God must punish them to show that he is the true and only God. Perhaps the reason that the punishment took the form of famine was that the Israelites had been worshipping heathen idols, Baal and Astarte, as the 'gods of nature and produce.'

'Hence'—Elijah must hide from Ahab, or the king would torture or kill him for prophesying the famine.

'Cherith'—probably in Gilead, east of the Jordan.

'Zarephath'—near Sidon, on the coast of Phoenicia.

'Water'—water was scarce, but it was never refused to a stranger. The eastern laws of hospitality demand that each man shall stand ready to share with a stranger the last drop of water in his leathern bag.

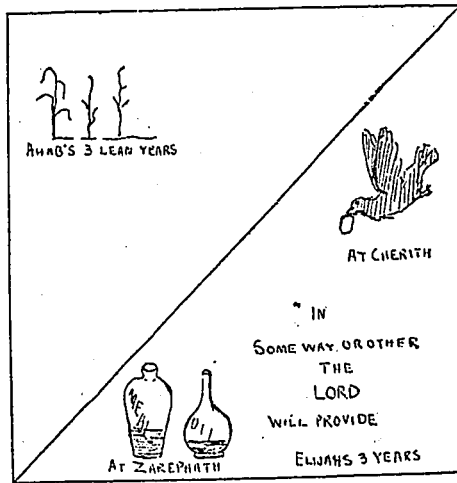
Questions to Be Studied at Home.

1. Who was king of Judah at this time?
2. Was this king of Judah a good man?
3. How many kings had Israel between Jeroboam and Ahab?
4. Was Ahab a descendant of Jeroboam?
5. Was Jezebel an Israelite?
6. Who said there should be no more rain or dew?
7. Why did God send the famine?
8. How did Elijah live at Cherith?
9. How did he live at Zarephath?
10. Why did the widow's meal and oil last so long?
11. How long did Elijah stay at Zarephath?

Suggested Hymns.

'Cast thy bread upon the water,' 'Scatter seeds of kindness,' 'While the days are going by,' 'Rescue the perishing,' 'To the work, to the work,' 'Do something for Jesus to-day.'

The Lesson Illustrated.



Practical Points.

A. H. CAMERON.

JULY 10.

James v., 17, 18.
 True prophecy is always preceded by earnest prayer. Verse 1. Compare James v., 17, 18.

By faith Elijah, at God's bidding, hid himself near the brook Cherith. By faith he drank of the brook and counted the ravens as the angels of God. Verse 2-6.

When the Lord dries up one source of comfort he supplies another. Verses 7-9. Phil. iv., 19.

Faith eats and drinks when infidelity would die of starvation and thirst. Verses 10, 11.

'Man's extremity is God's opportunity,' Verse 12.

Elijah's faith, which came by the word, was so strengthened by holy communion at Cherith that the famine, fearful as it was,

could not loose his grip on the promise of God. Verses 13, 14.

They who do God's bidding cheerfully and promptly will experience a joy the worldling cannot know. Verses 15, 16.

Christian Endeavor Topics.

July 10.—The consecration of ability.—Hag. ii., 1-9; Mark xii., 29-31.

Memorize the Scriptures.

In the years before Sunday-school privileges were so common, and when privileges of attending religious services of any kind were limited more use was made of the memory. They had not so many helps, but they did have the word in its entirety, and not in the form of quarterlies and lesson leaves, all good enough, and necessary for home study. To this book they applied themselves with results in a general knowledge of its contents and a vital influence on their lives which put the average Sunday-school teacher of to-day at a decided disadvantage.

Bishop A. G. Haywood, D.D., of the M. E. Church, South, says his mother committed the four gospels to memory before she was grown, and in a section where there were no Sunday-schools. When she was past seventy years old she still remembered so accurately that she could correct, on the instant, a misplaced word in a quotation; and many of the psalms became hers forever in the same way, and other portions of God's word. I have read of the mother of Bishop Kavanaugh to-day in the biography of her illustrious son, of how, when her sight with advancing years began to fail, she committed to memory large portions of scripture, a part of Richard Baxter's 'Saints' Everlasting Rest,' and about forty hymns. So that she could sing when she could not see, and see perfectly after she became blind. The paradox is plain. So the boy who had his Testament taken from him and burned by the parish priest, rejoiced that the priest could not burn the chapters he had committed to memory.

Let all who have the training of children committed to them insist on passages being memorized. Let old and young exert themselves to this end. Do it regularly and with system. Then you will find it not so difficult to remember the text. As you grow older you will find most available the scripture committed to memory in youth. I shall never forget the first verses of the Sermon on the Mount my father taught me. The word laid up in our minds will be useful. The Psalmist said, 'Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.'—J. B. Kanaza, in 'Sunday-school Teacher.'

A resourceful teacher, however, will by no means feel himself limited to the bible for the materials through which to convey religious teaching. He will recognize the fact that there are many things coming under the direct notice of his scholars in everyday life which are so charged with spiritual lessons as to make most suitable subjects for original parables. He will also find that there are many objects which, because of their being easily accessible and familiar to the children, lend themselves readily to educational treatment.—'Light and Leading.'

The Teacher's Need.

Of all people, next to the minister of the gospel, there are none who need more the vigorous, constant, gracious cultivation of piety in their own souls than the Sunday-school teacher. It is a very harassing work unless it is a work of the heart. It is a very worrying and monotonous work unless the affections are all in it. It is a very disappointing work unless there be strong faith as to the ultimate result. And all this qualification of heart is to be found in one way, and that is by looking ever to the cross and depending in humble trust and love upon the Saviour himself. Let your faith be simple; let your love be continually fed by communion with Christ; let your works be all sanctified and hallowed with prayer; keep your own heart, with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life: yes, the issues of your Sunday-school life; of your work in the class; your care for the children—the issues of all depend, under God, on the state of your own heart. Ask him to keep it, and then you will be able, like the apostle, to keep ever the one thing constantly before you, and by God's grace you will achieve even something of the apostolic success.—Dr. Guinness Rogers.