



LESSON XI.—SEPTEMBER 14.

Loving and Obeying God.

Deuteronomy xxx., 11-20. Memory verses 15, 16.

Golden Text.

'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.'—I. John v., 3.

Home Readings.

Monday, Sept. 8, Deut. xxiv., 1-13.
 Tuesday, Sept. 9, Deut. xxx., 11-20.
 Wednesday, Sept. 10, Deut. xxxi., 1-13.
 Thursday, Sept. 11, Deut. xi., 13-25.
 Friday, Sept. 12, James i., 17-27.
 Saturday, Sept. 13, I. John ii., 1-10.
 Sunday, Sept. 14, John xiv., 15-26.

Lesson Text.

(11) For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. (12) It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? (14) But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. (15) See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; (16) In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply; and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. (17) But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; (18) I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. (19) I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live; (20) That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that they mayest cleave unto him; for he is thy life, and the length of thy days; that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

Suggestions from Peloubet's Notes.

Faithfulness is Possible. The Law in the Heart.—Vs. 11-14. For. Why does the lesson begin with For? Moses had just prophesied (vs. 1-10) that the Israelites would in the future become so disobedient to God that their enemies would triumph and they themselves be taken into exile. But in their exile they would remember God's commands and turn again to the Lord; he would restore them to their own land again, and they would enter upon a new life of obedience there. 'For,' Moses goes on to say, 'this obedience is possible; the commandment is not too hard for you.'

The word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth.—God's word must be on our lips as well as in our hearts. 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth . . . and believe in thy heart . . . thou shalt be saved' (Rom. 10: 9). Here and in Romans, the spoken confession is named before the faith in the heart, even though faith is fundamental, because the expression of our faith is the visible and conspicuous evidence before the world.

'The gospel believed is a fountain in the heart; the gospel confessed is the streams through the mouth.'—Robinson.

And in thy heart. 'In the heart and

not in the mouth is cowardice; in the mouth and not in the heart is hypocrisy.'—Robinson. The word could not possibly be higher than 'in thy mouth and in thy heart.' We need not move a muscle to get it. There is no need of either hands or feet.—C. H. Mackintosh. Heathen religions are impressed on the worshipper from without, and the assent of his heart and mind is not even asked. Our religion alone appeals to man's soul to testify to its truth. That thou mayest do it. God's law is not impracticable. It can be done, and therefore it must be done. To know it is not enough.

Paul's application of this passage to Christianity, as found in Rom. x., 4-10, is most important. Paul argues: 'Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down:) or, Who shall descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.) Christ has already come from heaven, in the incarnation; he has already come from the abyss, in the resurrection. You need no more revelation, you need only faith in the revelation that has been given, and an open acknowledgment of that revelation. So Paul goes on to quote: 'The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart;' or, as he explains, in your heart you have faith in Christ, and in your mouth is a confession of him before men. And with these two things 'thou shalt be saved.' So plain and so simple is religion, both in the Old Testament and in the New.

And the Lord thy God shall bless thee. God cannot violate his own nature, and so he cannot bless an unfaithful nation or man. But he is always eager to bless.

Unfaithfulness will bring Ruin.—Vs. 17, 18. Moses now turns to the reverse of the picture. It was less pleasant to paint, but he was a faithful teacher. If thine heart turn away. It is always men's hearts that turn away, never God's. When husband and wife separate, it is often a question which is to blame; but when God's people turn from him, it is always because the church, the bride of Christ, has given its heart to the world. So that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away. Sinners are wont to excuse themselves by saying that they were drawn away, but 'every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed' (Jas. i., 14). If you do not embark on the rapids, you will not be drawn over the cataract. And worship other gods. Idolatry became the great temptation of the Hebrews, and the cause of the nation's downfall.

Ye shall surely perish. Vs. 17, 18 might be written on the title-page of the Bible, as its motto and a summary of its history. Every time the Hebrews forsook God for idols, vast numbers of them perished,—in battle, pestilence, exile, slavery,—until the greatest of all denials, their denial of Christ, was followed by the most terrible of all disasters, the destruction of Jerusalem.

Therefore choose life. You can choose. It is this power of choice that makes the chief difference between a man and a stick or stone. You must choose. Either good or evil, life or death, is yours for eternity. Life is the wise choice. Any other choice is the height of folly.

Illustration. Those that put off deciding for God are as foolish as Archius, a Grecian magistrate, to whom a messenger brought a letter, saying that it contained serious matters and should be read at once. 'Serious matters to-morrow,' laughed Archius, putting it aside. The unread letter was written to disclose a plot by which Archius was slain that night.

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, Sept. 14.—Topic—Delight in God's House. Ps., lxxxiv., 1-4; Ps. c., 1-5.

Junior C. E. Topic.

LESSONS FROM CARMEL.

Monday, Sept. 8.—A lesson in boldness.—I. Kings xviii., 15-17.
 Tuesday, Sept. 9.—A lesson in decision.—I. Kings xviii., 21.
 Wednesday, Sept. 10.—The folly of idolatry.—I. Kings xviii., 26-29.

Thursday, Sept. 11.—A lesson in prayer.—I. Kings xviii., 36-37.

Friday, Sept. 12.—God answers prayer.—I. Kings xviii., 38.

Saturday, Sept. 13.—The people decide.—I. Kings xviii., 39.

Sunday, Sept. 14.—Topic.—Old Testament miracles. IV.—Lessons from Mount Carmel. I. Kings xviii., 30-39.



The Cigarette Habit.

('Presbyterian Review.')

Within recent years the smoking of cigarettes has increased enormously in Canada and in the United States. If adults choose to indulge in this habit one can but protest, but when children are met every day on the streets with one of these things between the lips, it is time to inquire closely into the effects likely to follow.

In the United States a vigorous campaign is being carried on against cigarette smoking among boys. An Anti-Cigarette League has been formed, and Mr. Willis Brown is giving his entire time to the work as field-secretary and organizer. Speaking of the evil as he sees it in the United States Mr. Brown says:—

There is no agency to-day so destructive of the moral and physical life of the young as this insignificant whiterobed plaything of death. This evil of cigarette smoking has become so great that every state in the Union has passed some form of prohibitory laws. Tennessee and Oklahoma entirely prohibit the manufacture or sale of cigarettes or cigarette materials, and this stringent prohibitory measure has been declared constitutional by the United States Supreme Court.

Up to two years ago the cigarette habit gained in popularity until it had honey-combed the shop and store, home and school, yes and the heart of the nation's young. The alarm was sounded not only from the army camp and fireside, from the city street and country lane, but from the hard-headed, unemotional business corporation.

The president of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific railway discovered that cigarette smokers were unsatisfactory railway men, and so issued an order discharging them unless they would abandon the habit. The Chief of the U. S. Weather Bureau, Mr. Willis M. Moore, placed the ban on them in this department of government service. Geo. W. Swift Packing Co., Montgomery Ward & Co., Morgan & Wright Tire Co., say no cigarettes can be smoked by their employees. These facts permit of no argument.

You say, 'Yes, it is a dreadful curse, I am glad my boy doesn't use them.' Let us see if he does not or is not likely to smoke them.

In the past two years it has been my great privilege to visit the public schools of our large cities and speak to thousands, yes, tens of thousands of boys and girls on this subject. In order to secure absolutely reliable information as to the prevalence of the habit and its injurious effects I have made systematic investigations.

In Columbus, Ohio, one of the first schools I visited was the Front Street school, which is situated near the heart of the business section. The pupils here would commonly be classed as the worst—not that they are—but Jews, Negroes, Italians and Poles, newsboys, bootblacks and fruitsellers compose most of the attendants. In the 7th and 8th grades—out of 41 boys 36 had used or were smoking cigarettes; 5 not. Fifth and 6th grades—out of 35 boys, 26 smokers; 9 non-smokers. In the 3rd and 4th grades, composed of boys from 8 to 12 years of age—out of 53 boys only 11 non-smokers. Of the whole number of 129 boys over 82 percent were cigarette users more or less.

The Sullivan school in the same city is recognized as one of the best schools, its pupils coming from the better homes of the