



LESSON II.—OCTOBER 8.

Haman's Plot Against the Jews.

Esther III., 1-11. Memory verses 5, 6. Read chapters I-III.

Golden Text.

'If God be for us, who can be against us?'—Rom. viii., 31.

Home Readings.

- M. Esther 2: 15-23. Esther made queen.
T. Esther 3: 1-11. Haman's Plot against the Jews.
W. Esther 3: 12 to 4: 3. The decree of death.
Th. Esther 4: 4-17. Sorrow in the palace.
F. Esther 6: 1-11. Pride discomfited.
S. Esther 7. The enemy punished.
Ju. Prov. 16: 5-19. Danger of pride.

Lesson Text.

Supt.—1. After these things did King A-has-u-e'rus promote Ha'man the son of Ham-med-a-tha the A'gag-ite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him.

School.—2. And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Ha'man: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mor'de-cai bowed not, nor did him reverence.

3. Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mor'de-cai, Why transgresses thou the king's commandment?

4. Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Ha'man, to see whether Mor'de-cai's matter would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew.

5. And when Ha'man saw that Mor'de-cai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Ha'man full of wrath.

6. And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mor'de-cai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mor'de-cai: wherefore Ha'man sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of A-has-u-e'rus, even the people of Mor'de-cai.

7. In the first month, that is, the month Nis'an, in the twelfth year of king A-has-u-e'rus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Ha'man from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is, the month A'dar.

8. And Ha'man said unto king A-has-u-e'rus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them.

9. If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those who have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries.

10. And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Ha'man the son of Ham-med'a-tha the A'gag-ite, the Jews' enemy.

11. And the king said unto Ha'man, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.

The Bible Class.

God is our Refuge.—Deut. xxxi., 6, 8; xxxiii., 26, 27; Psl. xlvii., 1, 5, 7; lxvii., 5-8; xci., 1-7; cxxi., 2-8; cxxv., 1, 2; cxlvi., 5-10; Isa. xxvii., 4; xxxi., 1, 3, 5, 7; xl., 28-31; xli., 10, 13, 14; xliii., 1-3; li., 12, 13, 15, 16; I John. iv., 4; Rom. viii., 35-39.

Suggestions.

The book of Esther may have been written by Mordecai and edited by Ezra (Smith's Bible Dictionary.) The book has been much criticised, but stands as history, because the feast of Purim (named from the events related in this book) has been an established feast of the Jews since the fourth century before Christ.

King Ahasuerus (the Jewish form of 'Xerxes'), gave a great feast to his nobles and princes, which lasted some days. In

his drunken foolishness he sent for Vashti his favorite queen to appear in the banquet hall, this she properly refused to do, and was immediately deposed from her position. A Jewish maiden, named Esther, was chosen to be queen instead of Vashti.

Esther (meaning a star) had also a Hebrew name, Hadassah (meaning a myrtle), she was an orphan of the family of Kish, captive in the land of Persia. Her cousin Mordecai had brought her up as his own daughter. They lived in Shushan, or Susa, the winter palace of the Persian court. Once when a conspiracy was formed against the king by two of the chamberlains, Mordecai found it out and sent word to the king through Esther. The conspirators were hanged and the loyalty of the old Jew written in the king's chronicles.

Haman, an Agagite, the last of the Amalekites, came into great favor with the king, and was set over all the princes and was outwardly revered, bowed to, or worshipped by all—all except the old Jew, Mordecai.

Mordecai could not join in this ceremony even if he had respected Haman, for the 'reverencing' was actual worship of man; it was making a god out of a human being. Mordecai was loyal to Jehovah, who had so stringently forbidden his people to worship anything or any one but Himself, the God of heaven and earth. Mordecai was a true man who obeyed God though he might be killed for refusing to join in the customs of the land.

The king's servants, perhaps with latent revengefulness for the convictions of the two chamberlains, reported to Haman that Mordecai, one of the Jewish captives, refused constantly to worship him. On hearing this, Haman's rage knew no bounds. Instead of simply having Mordecai slain, he plotted instantly to destroy the whole nation which the victim of his rage represented. Human life is not counted as precious in the East as in the more civilized countries of the earth. It was a comparatively easy task for Haman to gain from Ahasuerus permission to exterminate the Jews in the Persian empire.

The king's secretaries were sent for to write to the rulers and governors of every province of the dominion of Ahasuerus giving orders that every man, woman and child of the Jewish captives was to be put to death without mercy on the thirteenth day of Adar, about eleven months from the time of writing.

What were the people of God to do then? To what refuge could they flee? How should they escape the destroyer? Now came a time of fasting and mourning before God. And God heard and delivered his people when they cried unto him in their sore distress.

Ten thousand talents of silver by one method of reckoning is equal to ten million dollars, and by another reckoning amounts to the immense sum of \$20,000,000.

Haman cast 'Pur' or lots in the first month, Nisan or April. The lot fell on the thirteenth day of Adar, or about the end of March. From this casting of lots the feast of commemoration of the deliverance took its name Purim.

Illustration.

5. Haman's License. Haman's permission to kill all the Jews has been well compared to the license to sell intoxicating liquors. (1) It is granted by a sovereign State. (2) It is a privilege given to a few, (3) to injure and destroy the people. (4) It is given for money. The license is paid for, (5) But all this, and much more, is to be taken from the spoils of the people injured. (6) It is a great injury to the State that grants it. (7) It brings ruin to the Hamans who use the license. (8) The Mordecais and Esthers are laboring against it at great cost and self-denial. (9) They will be successful in the end.—Peloubet's Notes.

C. E. Topic.

Oct. 8. Work where Christ tells you to. John 21: 1-6.

Junior C. E.

Oct. 8. What are some lessons we may learn from God's dumb creatures? Prov. 6: 6-11.

A little girl whispered to her teacher, 'Maggie cannot come because she has no shoes.' The teacher found that shoes was the greatest need in Maggie's home. A discouraged father was helped to find work, and there was sunshine again in that humble home; and what an influence for good that teacher exerted over that grateful family!



Tobacco Catechism.

(By Dr. R. H. McDonald, of San Francisco.)
CHAPTER XVIII.—ITS USE BY WOMEN.

1. Q.—How was tobacco cultivated by the American Indian?

A.—He sat in or near his wigwam and smoked, while his wife hoed the tobacco.

2. Q.—What is the first account we have of snuff taking?

A.—Roman Pane, a Spanish monk, who accompanied Columbus on his second voyage, says:

'They make a powder of the leaves which they take through a cane, one end of this they place in the nose and the other upon the powder and so draw it up.'

3. Q.—How does snuff affect memory?

A.—It injures the memory because that part of the brain lying nearest to the nose and roof of the mouth, is most concerned with memory and the intellectual powers.

4. Q.—What Queen used snuff?

A.—Catherine de Medici, of France, wife of Henry II.

5. Q.—What did Frederic the Great do at the coronation of his mother?

A.—Seeing her take a pinch of snuff, he sent to remind her of what was due to her high position.

6. Q.—Do women now use tobacco?

A.—Thousands of pounds of it are consumed every year by women.

6. Q.—Is dipping snuff confined to the poorer classes?

A.—No, and we are told that circles of young ladies of so-called high standing meet expressly to practice the filthy habit.

7. Q.—What term is applied to this class of tobacco users?

A.—'Dippers.' With a horn or spoon the stuff is placed inside the lower lip and when sufficiently moistened, passed around the mouth.

They also chew a fine stick making a swab of it, dip that in the snuff and rub the teeth and gums.

8. Q.—Have feminine smokers increased?

A.—A tobacco dealer says that nearly half his trade in cigarettes is directly or indirectly among women and girls. They use these secretly.

9. Q.—What was one of the customs of our English grandmothers?

A.—They smoked the pipe in the theatre instead of eating candy or nuts.

10. Q.—Do women chew tobacco?

A.—This habit is said to be quite common among women in some sections of the country.

11. Q.—What relation does tobacco bear toward woman?

A.—It is a relentless foe. It will draw men from her society and make him glory in his solitude; it will introduce him to loose companions and doubtful amusements.

12. Q.—What questions have been asked in regard to the use of tobacco by women?

A.—'If smokers and chewers were to find their wives and daughters following their examples would they encourage the practice? if tobacco supplies a natural want why should not our wives and daughters smoke, and chew, and spit?'

Four Pounds of Steak, Cut Pretty Thick.

(By Cousin Gertrude, in 'Kind Words.')

William Dalton was a good workman, and earned good wages; he could have supplied his family with all the comforts of life, and given his children a good education, had he not been burdened and cursed with an appetite for strong drink. He spent most of his nights in bar-rooms, where, of course, his money went for beer and whiskey, over which he and his companions thought they were having a good time. As he did not have the money in his pocket to pay for what he drank, the drinks were charged.

On Saturday night, as soon as he received his wages, he went to pay his 'debts of honor' at the saloon. We wonder why he did not, sometimes, consider his grocery store and meat market bills 'debts of honor.' There was little left for groceries, to say nothing of good warm clothes and shoes for