



LESSON VII.—AUGUST 13.

Josiah and the Book of the Law.

II. Chronicles xxxiv., 14-28.

Golden Text.

I will not forget they word. Ps. cxix., 16.
Commit verse 21.

Home Readings.

Monday, Aug. 7.—II. Chron. xxxiv., 14-28.
Tuesday, Aug. 8.—II. Chron. xxxiv., 29-xxxv., 6.
Wednesday, Aug. 9.—II. Chron. xxxv., 7-19.
Thursday, Aug. 10.—II. Chron. xxxv., 20-27.
Friday, Aug. 11.—II. Kings xxii., 8-20.
Saturday, Aug. 12.—II. Kings xxiii., 21-30.
Sunday, Aug. 13.—Ps. cxix., 125-136.

(By Davis W. Clark.)

The temple was a junk-shop. Its floors sagged hopelessly. There were wide breaches in its walls. All the fine gold had been stripped off to buy worthless truces with heathen invaders. All the goodly and significant articles of furniture had been crowded like lumber in the unoccupied rooms surrounding the courts, and their places had been filled with the altars and symbols of alien religions. The ritual of the Hebrew faith had ceased and the dust of civilization, the deposit incident to a great city, steadily accumulated in the unkempt building. Among other things which had disappeared in the two hundred years of neglect, was the yellow scroll of the law. If they had only known it that old parchment was the nation's palladium. If it had been preserved the kingdom would have been preserved. It was the written will of Jehovah. Obeyed, the sceptre would not have departed. Aside also from the indescribably precious contents, it was a souvenir of the highest value. What hands had penned it! What eyes had scanned it! What lips had read it aloud to what wondering congregations! But its very existence had long been forgotten, if not entirely, at least to the great mass of the people.

Quick and great were the gains of honoring Jehovah in the restoration of his temple, undertaken by the good king. The custom of hiding treasure maintained. The high priest probably secreted the money collected for the work of repair. He probably put it under some of the old plunder in one of the unoccupied rooms. It was while ransacking the place for the hidden treasure, that he made the most remarkable find of that age. He unearthed the only, the long lost copy of the Bible. One tradition says it was beneath a heap of stones. Another says it was in the ark of the covenant which Manasseh had tossed aside with sacrilegious hands.

The results of this discovery were important and beneficent. A rule of life, both for individuals and the nation, was found. A standard of conduct and character, to which king and peasant, priest, civil and military officer, all alike might resort.

No wonder that at the first reading the king sprang to his feet and rent his clothes in regret and fear that the will of Jehovah had been so long and grossly neglected.

Because of the low standard of education which maintained in those comparatively crude days, need of an interpreter and interpretation was imperative. Some one with an inner light, a sense for the divine must needs be found. It was in this way that Huldah enters the trinity of women prophets and joins Miriam and Deborah.

KEY AND ANALYSIS.

I. Condition of Temple and contents.
1. The scroll of the law. Its intrinsic value. Its value as a souvenir. Results of its loss.

2. The finding of the Law. How. By whom. Under what circumstances.
3. Results of finding the Law. In general. Upon the king in particular.
4. Need of an Interpreter. Whence it arose. Huldah.

THE TEACHER'S LANTERN.

It is an ancient story with modern application. There are many to-day to whom the Bible is as perfectly a lost book as it was to Josiah and his contemporaries. To them it is as if it had never been written. Out of sight it is out of mind.

The public display of the Bible on the sacred desk is to be commended. It is an exalting of the Word. An object lesson. In sight it is in mind.

Yet the Bible is never to be a fetish. The Bible is only God's vehicle. By it he comes to our minds and hearts. To worship the vehicle is idolatrous. If the Book could speak it would cry as the angel did to John, 'See thou do it not.'

The life is more than the book. In the ultimate analysis it is not so much what a man knows as what he is.

Interpretation of the Scripture is the distinct and important function of the Christian ministry to-day, as it was of the prophet in olden times. Not that the ministry has an exclusive monopoly of this function. Many unordained persons interpret skillfully. As general education increases, the need of specific interpreters decreases.

Here is an old-time illustration of the principle which Jesus enunciated, that 'he who does shall know.' Josiah was 'doing.' It was when he began to repair the temple that he found the Book.

The Bible is a potent book. Its reading brings things to pass. It provokes either revolt or obedience. Josiah sought an interpreter to make its contents plain to him. Jehoiakim reached for a knife and cut it into shreds. The Bible receives the same opposite treatment to-day.

It should not be thought a thing incredible that the Bible was lost in that early and crude age, when those who could read it could be counted on one's fingers. The Bible was practically lost again in the Middle Ages, even in those seats of art and learning, the monasteries. It is said that Luther was twenty years old before he ever so much as saw a Bible.

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, Aug. 13.—Topic—The building of character. II. Peter i., 1-11; Jude xx., 21.

The religious life is not static, but progressive. Here is another challenge to progress in which the Scriptures abound. The figure is that of the erection of a building. The building materials are the things that pertain to life and godliness. The plan is of divine revelation, like the pattern which God showed Moses in the mount. The structure is forever building, never completed. The Christian graces are to be laid up like stones in their ranges. Jude joins his voice to that of Peter when he cries, 'But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, keep yourselves in the love of God.'

Junior C. E. Topic.

LESSONS FROM MONUMENTS.

Monday, Aug. 7.—The Bethel monument. Gen. xxviii., 16-19.

Tuesday, Aug. 8.—The Mizpah monument. Gen. xxxi., 45-52.

Wednesday, Aug. 9.—The Ebenezer monument. I. Sam. vii., 10-12.

Thursday, Aug. 10.—The oak-tree monument. Josh. xxiv., 24-27.

Friday, Aug. 11.—Rachel's monument. Gen. xxxv., 19, 20.

Saturday, Aug. 12.—Absalom's monument. II. Sam. xviii., 18.

Sunday, Aug. 13.—Topic—Lessons from monuments. Josh. iv., 1-9.

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Keep the Children Awake.

It was a wise answer received from an experienced teacher to the question, 'How would you test a person's ability to teach children?' Tersely he said, 'Can he keep the children's minds awake?' The mind cannot take food while it is asleep. It is the work of the teacher to keep the mind in a receptive state as well as to impart information.

Now, just recall that when you were making a long railway journey you were weary and almost asleep, with no interest in your surroundings, until you heard the name of a familiar station called, and you remembered that years before you had lived just a few miles beyond this station. You look from the window with new interest as familiar objects greet you, and you become so wide awake that drowsiness does not return until you have sped miles beyond. Does not this experience, which probably comes to one or more passengers on every train crossing the country, suggest to the teacher that the mere mention of familiar names and games and associates of earlier years will often stir the class into renewed mental activity?—The Melbourne 'Spectator.'

'Traded With God.'

An old German taxidermist who had come suddenly into a fortune had determined to build a fine house for his old age.

The house was but just completed when there rang through the streets of the city an alarm of fire. A business man, who was a friend of the old German, noticed that the fire was in the same section of the city where the taxidermist's new house was situated. He hurried as quickly as he could to the place, and found that the house was indeed in the path of the flames. He was informed, however, that the old German, instead of looking after his own house, had hired all the men he could find and had them pouring water on the roof of an orphan asylum, a short distance away, where he himself was leading them. His friend rushed through the smoke and told him there was yet time to save his own house, but the old man only smiled, and said:

'This house is full of babies.'

A second time he rushed to where the old man was, and pulled him out, and urged him to turn his attention toward his own house. Then the old man, drawing himself up to his full height, raised his clenched hand over his head, while his face, grimy with smoke and stained with blood from a wound on his brow, grew radiant with the glow of a great purpose, as he exclaimed:

'It is not my house any more! I traded it to God for this!'

Surely that old German taxidermist had the spirit of Christ's chivalry.—'Christian Age.'

Don'ts For Teachers.

(The Rev. A. Y. Haist, in the 'Evangelical S.S. Teacher'.)

'Don't worry.' Worry is harder than work. Always honor your Master with your hopeful trust and confidence in his willingness to help you in all your work and to grant you all your reasonable requests. Cultivate a clear, crystal-like faith in God. Rely upon the Saviour. He has said: Cast your cares upon me. Trust him and don't worry.

Bound to Grow Something.

'Dirt is bound to grow something or other,' said an old farmer. 'It's the natur' of it. If it 'tain't trees or corn, it's briar or weeds.'

'When I cleared up that wood lot, the ashes of the log heaps hadn't scarcely cooled before up sprang a passel of jimson weed and poke and alders. I knew I must get corn or grass to save it.'

Human nature is another kind of soil, so rich in possibilities that will not lie idle. To rid it of jimson weeds and poke means to get it to raising corn or grass.

'Overcome evil with good.' Put a good habit in the place of a bad one. Of course, Christ must destroy the evil. He will help build up the good.—'S. S. Messenger.'