

FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL

International S. S. Lesson.

LESSON II.—THE TRIUMPH OF GIDEON.—OCT. 13.

(Judges vii. 13-23.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear."—Psa. xxvii. 3.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Victory with God.

ANALYSIS.—The **D**ream of the Soldier, v. 13-15.
Directions for Israel, v. 16-18.
Defeat of the Midianites, v. 19-24.

TIME AND PLACE.—B.C. 1222, 200 years after Joshua's death. Ophrah near Shechem.

INTRODUCTORY.—About two hundred years had passed since Joshua's death. The Israelites had, by their idolatry, brought upon themselves during that period, four oppressions by their heathen enemies. From three of these they had been delivered by Judges whom God had called for the purpose. 1. By Othniel. 2. By Ehud and Shamgar. 3. By Deborah and Barak. Judg. iii. 1-6; 81. The fourth oppression, by the Midianites in connection with the Amalekites and other "children of the east," was complete and very severe, lasting about seven years. Judg. vi. 1-6; also see v. 11.

The Israelites again cried to God for deliverance. The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon and told him he should be Israel's deliverer.

After overthrowing the altar of Baal in his own city, and building in its place an altar to the Lord, Gideon aroused the people against their oppressors. He gathered an army of thirty two thousand men. He then asked the Lord for further signs to assure him of his success. These were granted him. By the command of God he now sifted his army until only three hundred picked men were left. With this handful he was ordered to make the attack, as told in to-day's lesson.

THE DREAM OF THE SOLDIER, v. 13-15.—Following the command of God Gideon, together with his servant Phurah, went stealthily down into the camp of the enemy. Standing in concealment, God brought to his ears a conversation between two of the Midianites strikingly prophetic of the coming victory. One of them related to his companion a dream. He had seen in the vision a cake of barley bread, the food of the poor and of the beasts, and so suggestive of the scarcity among the Israelites, roll down into the midst of the army and into the tent of its leader, overturning everything in its course. Such was the dream, and the trembling listener was quick to interpret it. "This," said he, "is nothing less than the sword of Gideon." Already the panic had begun, it would soon spread and permeate the whole army. Gideon with breathless attention grasped the import of this conversation from his place of hiding. He realized this strange coincidence was no thing of chance but the ordering of God, and he saw how near the brink of complete dismay and discomfiture the host of Midian was. So worshipping God Gideon returned to his little company of three hundred men and told them what he had seen to encourage him in going up against the enemy. "Arise," he cried, "for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian."

THE DIRECTIONS FOR ISRAEL, v. 16-18. Strategy formed a strong feature of ancient warfare. The directions for action given by Gideon to his little army were exceedingly wise. He divided them into three companies, so as to produce the impression of surrounding the enemy, and to each man was given a trumpet and a torch usually carried only by the leaders. The torches or lamps were for a time concealed in jugs, the breaking of which at the right moment would suddenly throw a glare upon the Midianites confusing them, and giving the idea of a great multitude. Together with the breaking of the jugs was to be given the battle-cry of Israel, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," in which God was acknowledged as the source of power, the real commander, the one in whom they trusted for victory. It was a very simple plan yet wonderfully effective, as all God's plans are.

THE DEFEAT OF THE MIDIANITES, v. 19-28.—The plan was carried out in every detail, and the result was an unqualified triumph for Gideon's followers. Surprised, confused and dismayed, the mighty host of invaders dazzled by the flaring torches, and terror stricken by the tumult, turned upon each other and compassed their own destruction. The panic was universal. Encumbered with women, children, and plunder as nomadic invaders always are, they scattered over the country through which Gideon immediately sent runners arousing the people. The Lords of the Jordan were occupied by the Israelites, and the destruction of the invading host was complete. The Midianites were so utterly annihilated that they do not reappear on the page of history.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

"There is a wonderful future before the Endeavor movement, on one condition; that its leaders and members persistently offer it to God for the filling and renewing and thanksgiving of the Holy Ghost."—Rev. Andrew Murray.

Promises.

First Day—Promised peace—Isa. xxxii. 1-6.

Second Day—Promised joy—Jer. xxxiii. 1-11.

Third Day—Promised strength—Deut. xxxiii. 24-29.

Fourth Day—Promised guidance—Ps. xxxii. 6-11.

Fifth Day—Promised honor—Rev. ii. 7, 17, 20-29.

Sixth Day—Promised heaven—Matt. xiii. 37-43.

PRAYER MEETING TOPIC, Nov. 10.—"MY FAVORITE PROMISE, AND WHY IT IS DEAR TO ME," 2 Pet. iii. 8-14. (A memory meeting suggested.)

Better work means better workers. Thus the question we have to consider becomes a personal one. We are so apt to shift the responsibility for the effective working of our societies to the shoulders of the leaders that it is well for us to pause a moment and ask the question, "Am I as one of the rank and file doing all my duty?" So many of us bewail the lack of interest in our societies, the lack of real service for Christ and the Church, when the solution of the difficulty lies with ourselves. We cannot expect the society to labor as a whole, with earnestness and effectiveness until you and I as individual members are doing all we can. But then we need equipment for service; many young people are discouraged in their effort to serve the Master, because they rush headlong into the field of labor unequipped and untrained. There are two things necessary for this, the knowledge of one's weapons and the power to use them. The first may be gained by a study of the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit; the second by receiving the Holy Ghost. What we as Endeavorers need to learn and emphasize is that no matter how much tact, energy or talent we may possess our work cannot be effective if it is done in any less power than that of the Holy Spirit. If our committees, prayer-meeting, lookout, social and all the others are anxious to do better work, let them wait upon God for the baptism and filling of the Spirit: then they can begin to be useful, but not till then.

For Christ and the Church.

THE SEVENTH PROVINCIAL CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR CONVENTION AT BRANTFORD.

On Tuesday afternoon of last week we bought our tickets for Brantford, and boarded a handsome car that had been reserved for the delegation of Toronto Juniors, and Junior workers. Along the outside of the car was stretched a streamer bearing the inspiring legend, "The Girls and Boys for Jesus," while Union Jacks fluttered loyally from each corner. It was a happy company that filled the car, and the journey to the Convention city was relieved of all weariness by hearty singing and most delightful fellowship. The Juniors had a song of their own, and a prize of a silver C. E. badge was offered to the one who would first learn it by heart; a bright little fellow from Woodgreen Methodist Church entered the contest and in a very short time proved himself worthy of the prize. At Brantford we were met by Mr. Frank D. Mills of Toronto and some members of the reception committee, who conducted us to the Convention headquarters in Zion Presbyterian Church where we were all duly billeted. We were too late for Tuesday's meetings, but we gathered sufficient information to be able to give the gist of the day's work. The round-table conference on committee work was the most interesting feature of the afternoon gathering, and developed many helpful hints and suggestions. President G. Tower Ferguson also delivered his annual address in which he dwelt on the various evidences of progress in the Endeavor movement during the past year, and closed by giving as a motto for the future the text, "speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." In the evening, addresses of welcome were delivered by the Rev. Dr. Cochrane, Mayor Watt and President Hopkins of the local union to which Mr. E. A. Hardy B.A., of Lindsay replied gracefully. Rev. Wm. Johnson of Wardville brought the first session to an end with an impressive address on "The Spirituality of C. E. work." Wednesday morning we were early awake. The sunrise prayer-meeting in Brant Avenue church was led by Mr. Best, Secretary of the local Y.M.C.A. and many endeavorers enjoyed the blessing of this early gathering at the throne of grace. A breakfast for Junior workers followed presided over by C. J. Atkinson Provincial Junior Superintendent. This was one of the most delightful incidents of the Convention. It was our privilege to be there, and we append some notes gleaned from the bright conference on Junior work that took place around the table. In the St. Thomas Disciple Society eighteen Juniors have joined the church in six months. The boys and girls of this Society hold a weekly meeting in the local Old Folks Home. Another Junior society gave a picnic to the old ladies in a widows' home, and