

The Sunday School

BIBLE LESSON.

Abridged from Peloubet's Notes.

Third Quarter, 1904.

JULY TO SEPTEMBER.

Lesson VI.—August 14.—Obadiah and Elijah.—1 Kings 18: 1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.

I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth.—1 Kings 18: 12.

EXPLANATORY.

I. ELIJAH'S COURAGEOUS MISSION.—Vs. 1, 2. Elijah remained two years at Zarephath nourished by God's wonderful providence, and waiting till the famine had done its work of softening the hearts of the people and rendering them more impressible.

1. THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO ELIJAH. By an inward impulse, a vision or an audible communication. IN THE THIRD YEAR of his sojourn with the widow of Zarephath. The drought had begun three and a half years before (Luke 4: 25; Jas. 5: 17), but about a year of this Elijah has passed at the brook Cherith. GO, SHAW THYSELF UNTO AHAB. "As the interdiction had been placed on the land by direct announcement to Ahab, so it was fitting that it should be removed in the same way."

God promised, I WILL SEND RAIN UPON THE EARTH. Going with this hopeful announcement, and strong in faith that God would redeem his promise, Elijah might well be confident. Ahab would hardly venture to destroy the prophet till his influence with Jehovah had restored the rain.

2. THERE WAS A SORE (OR GRIEVOUS) FAMINE IN SAMARIA. The capital, and the whole country around. Some grain might have been obtained from Egypt, as during Joseph's time (Gen. 41: 57), but with difficulty, and at a cost prohibitive for the poor. "All was dry, and parched, and barren, and the face of the earth seemed to have been burned up by the wrath of God."

II. AHAB'S ANXIOUS SEARCH.—Vs. 3-6. Samaria, the rich and powerful capital, would be the last of Ahab's cities to suffer. The famine had now come close to the king, and he was stung to activity. Instead of repenting and calling for aid upon Elijah's God, he took another course, and one that was doomed to failure.

3. AHAB CALLED OBADIAH. The name signifies "servant of Jehovah." WHICH WAS THE GOVERNOR OF HIS HOUSE (R. V., "which was over the household.") His lord high chamberlain, or mayor of the palace. NOW OBADIAH FEARED THE LORD GREATLY. What

WELL SPOKEN.

A Chat About Food.

"Speaking of food," says a Chicago woman, "I am 61 years of age and was an invalid more than 14 years."

"Was 5 years in the Presbyterian Hospital on diet most of the time. Had an operation for a dilated stomach, a very serious operation performed by a famous physician."

"After the operation of course the doctors ordered Grape-Nuts as the most nourishing food, and easiest of digestion. That's how I know the stomach will digest Grape-Nuts when it will absolutely refuse all other kinds of food. It has also done wonders for me to brighten up and strengthen my nerves and made me feel a desire to live, for I can enjoy life. What seems so strange to me is that I have never tired of this food since, but like it better all the time. I find it especially good in any kind of soup or broth."

"I have a sister who is an invalid from indigestion and she has been greatly benefited by Grape-Nuts which she eats three times a day and a bowl of milk and Grape-Nuts just before going to bed, in fact she lives on this food, and I also have two neices who used to be troubled with indigestion but used Grape-Nuts with grand results, and so I could go on and name many others who have been helped in the same way." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

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is meant is not terror, but awe, reverence, and trusting, obedient service. His fear of God made him more faithful to man, and doubtless it was because of his religion that Ahab kept him in his post of trust.

4. FOR IT WAS SO. For example. An instance of Obadiah's fidelity to God is now given. WHEN JEZEBEL CUT OFF THE PROPHETS OF THE LORD. These martyrs were not, of course, such extraordinary men as Elijah and Elisha, but members of the largely attended "schools of the prophets," holy youth in training for a life of preaching and teaching AN HUNDRED PROPHETS. "That we find so large a number still in the land, notwithstanding the exodus (2 Chron. 11:16) and the steady growth of impiety, shows that God had not left himself without witnesses."

HID THEM BY FIFTY IN A CAVE, dividing them into two companies for convenience and for safety, as thus they would be more easily concealed.

5. GO . . . UNTO ALL FOUNTAINS OF WATER, AND UNTO ALL BROOKS. "The fountains or springs are the perennial streams; the brooks are the torrent-courses, which become dry in an ordinary summer. Ahab hoped that even in the latter there might be occasional moist places where fodder might be found." TO SAVE THE HORSES AND MULES ALIVE. Strangely enough, Ahab at last begins to feel distressed and uneasy; but do you think it is for the myriads of his suffering people? No, but for the horses and mules, many of which have died; and the rest may soon perish, leaving him an impoverished king. We must remember, however, that the life of the cattle would prolong the lives of the people.

6. SO THEY DIVIDED THE LAND BETWEEN THEM. That the search might be more quickly conducted; every sentence indicates the extreme urgency of the crisis. AHAB WENT ONE WAY. Probably southward from Jezreel, where he seems to have been residing. This favorite and delightful abode was north of Samaria, nearer the center of the kingdom. BY HIMSELF. Accompanied, of course, by a retinue of servants and officers. This personal search was not considered beneath the dignity of a king in the East, where to this day a tribal chief is willing at any time to lead an expedition in search of water or grass. AND OBADIAH WENT ANOTHER WAY. Toward the north, probably meeting Elijah, coming from Zarephath, on the slopes of the Carmel range.

III. OBADIAH'S FEAR AND HESITATION.—Vs. 7-16. This meeting of Obadiah and Elijah brings together in strong contrast two types of religious men, both sincere, but one with the "courage of his convictions" and the other largely lacking it.

7. AS OBADIAH WAS IN THE WAY. Northwest from Jezreel. ART THOU THAT MY LORD ELIJAH? R. V., "Is it thou, my lord Elijah?" The Hebrew puts an astonished emphasis on the "thou," which the A. V. translates "that."

8. I AM. R. V., "It is I." "The prophet wastes no words over his terror and astonishment." GO, TELL THY LORD, who has been seeking me so long and far. BEHOLD, ELIJAH IS HERE. "The last two words are not in the Hebrew, and the sentence is much more graphic without them." "Behold, 'Elijah!'"

9. WHAT HAVE I SINNED? "The main point of the steward's rejoinder is the fear lest Elijah might not remain there to be found of Ahab, and so the king's wrath would be turned against Obadiah, for failing to apprehend the prophet." Therefore he assured Elijah that he is an upright man, and does not deserve to have trouble brought upon him. THY SERVANT. "Rather slave (so vs. 12) in the humility of reverence and Orientalism."

10. NO NATION OR KINGDOM. "Of course Obadiah's words apply only to those countries immediately around Israel, into which Elijah could be supposed to have fled for refuge. But he employs the language of Oriental hyperbole, so frequently found in the Old Testament." WRITHER MY LORD HATH NOT SENT. Ahab wanted Elijah, first that the prophet might remove the plague, and second, that he might take revenge and inflict punishment upon him. HE TOOK AN OATH. Required solemn attestation that the search had been thorough, and fruitless.

12. THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD SHALL CARRY THEE. "Either by a supernatural bodily transition (Acts 8: 30) or by an inward impulse from God (Matt. 4: 1)."

HE SHALL SLAY ME. As the Romans slew a jailer or a guard when he allowed a prisoner to escape (compare Acts 16: 27; 27: 42.)

13. WAS IT NOT TOLD, MY LORD? Elijah would naturally believe that Ahab's steward was an idolator like the rest of the evil court, and certainly Ahab and Jezebel did not know he had saved the one hundred prophets; but Obadiah thought Elijah might have heard of it from some of his prophet friends.

15. BEFORE WHOM I STAND. Elijah uses the same solemn oath before Ahab (1 Kings 17: 1.) "The repetition is suggestive as exhibiting the habit of the man. He was the

ready and patient slave of Jehovah." I WILL SURELY SHAW MYSELF UNTO HIM TODAY. Obadiah knew Elijah would keep his word, and went without further hesitation to find Ahab.

16. AND AHAB WENT TO MEET ELIJAH. "Very readily, it would seem. Anything was better than suspense and famine. And Elijah's very return contained in it a promise of rain." Moreover, the king saw Elijah at last in his own power, and doubtless expected to effect by force what he could not gain by persuasion.

IV. ELIJAH'S BOLD CHALLENGE.—1 Kings 18: 17-18. Confronted with the stern prophet, the recreant king put a bold face upon the matter. "Is it thou," he exclaimed (R. V., "thou troubler of Israel?") Cheyne compares Joshua's indignant charge against Achan (Josh. 7: 25) "Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day." Ahab expected to carry it off by turning the tables on Elijah, putting him in the criminal's dock. He had no word to say about Jehovah, or his own sin and the nation's; no expression of repentance or cry for mercy and forgiveness.

A COSTLY ESTATE.

"What is the value of this estate?" said a gentleman to another with whom he was riding, as they passed a fine mansion surrounded by fertile fields.

"I don't know what it is valued at; I know what it cost its late possessor."

"How much?"

"His soul!"

A solemn pause followed this answer; for the inquirer had not sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. The person referred to was the son of a pious laboring man. Early in life he professed faith in Christ and he soon obtained a subordinate position in a mercantile establishment in the city. He continued to maintain a reputable religious profession till he became a partner in the firm. Labor then increased. He gave less attention to religion, and more and more to his business, and the cares of the world choked the Word. Ere he became old he was exceedingly rich in money, but so poor and miserly in soul that none who knew him would have suspected that he ever bore the sacred name of Him who said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." At length he purchased the landed estate referred to, built him a costly mansion, sickened and died. Just before he died he remarked: "My prosperity was my ruin." What a price for which to barter away immortal joy! yet how many do it! —Sel.

Men carry unconscious signs of their life about them. Those that come from the forge and those from the lime and mortar, and those from the humid soil, and those from dusty travel, bear signs of being workmen and of their work. One need not ask a merry face or a sad one whether it had come forth from joy or grief. Tears and laughter tell their own story. Should one come home with fruit, we say, "Thou art from the orchard;" if with hands full of wild flowers, "Thou art from the fields;" if one's garments smell of mingled odors, we say, "Thou hast walked in a garden." But how much more, if one hath seen God, hath had converse of hope and love, and hath walked in heaven, should he carry in his eye, his words and perfumed raiment the sacred tokens of Divine intercourse! —Parish Visitor.

UPS AND DOWNS.

'Umbrellas, \$1 up,' says a sign in a Fulton street store window.

'How much down asked a facetious customer yesterday.

'All cash down,' the salesman answered, innocently; this is not a credit house.

'But I mean how much do I have to put up for an umbrella put down?'

The salesman looked seriously perplexed. 'We have them for \$1 up, said he.

'I know replied the customer, but I don't want to buy one up. I want to buy it down I can put it up myself.'

'Oh said the salesman, with almost human intelligence beaming in his eye: You are speaking of the umbrella, while I am speaking of the price.'

'Ah I see, the customer responded; it is the price that is \$1 up.

'Then it isn't \$1 down as you said before?'

Exactly.

'Um-er-maybe I'd better call the proprietor And the salesman hurried away to tell his employer there was a crazy man at the umbrella counter.

So you see even the store people have their ups and downs.—Brooklyn Eagle.



Miss Rose Peterson, Secretary Parkdale Tennis Club, Chicago, from experience advises all young girls who have pains and sickness peculiar to their sex, to use Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

How many beautiful young girls develop into worn, listless and hopeless women, simply because sufficient attention has not been paid to their physical development. No woman is exempt from physical weakness and periodic pain, and young girls just budding into womanhood should be carefully guided physically as well as morally. Another woman.

Miss Hannah E. Merston, Colingswood, N.J., says:

"I thought I would write and tell you that, by following your kind advice, I feel like a new person. I was always thin and delicate, and so weak that I could hardly do anything. Menstruation was irregular."

"I tried a bottle of your Vegetable Compound and began to feel better right away. I continued its use, and am now well and strong, and menstruate regularly. I cannot say enough for what your medicine did for me." —\$5000 forfeit if original of above letter proving genuineness cannot be produced.

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