

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON.

The International Sunday School Lesson for Next Sunday, September 27, 1914.

THE CALL TO SERVICE.

Prepared by J. L. Cuninggim.

ISAIAH VI. 1-8.

1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me." (Isaiah vi. 8.)

HOME READINGS.

Monday, The Call of Isaiah, Isaiah vi. 1-8.

Tuesday, The Call of Samuel, 1 Samuel iii. 1-18.

Wednesday, The Call of Jeremiah, Jeremiah i. 4-10.

Thursday, The Call of Ezekiel, Ezekiel ii. 1-10.

Friday, The Call of Amos, Amos vii. 14-17.

Saturday, The Call of the Four Disciples, Matthew iv. 18-22.

Sunday, The Call of Saul, Acts, ix. 1-9.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED.

In the year that king Uzziah died (v. 1.) This statement gives us the date of Isaiah's call, fixing it at about 740 B. C. And, what is far more important, it furnishes the occasion of his call. Uzziah as king of Judah was marvelously prospered of God; his reign of fifty-two years was one of great splendor. But in the very midst of his glory he dishonored God, going into the temple to offer incense upon the altar. Because of his sinful sacrilege God smote him with leprosy; he was dethroned and died in the leprosy house. Such a shocking incident was calculated to stir the conscience. We may well believe that it was the contemplation of the great king's terrible affliction brought on himself by his impious act that led to Isaiah's vision of God.

Above it stood the seraphims, etc. (v. 2.) The character and form of these creatures are a matter of speculation. The thing that impresses Isaiah is their attitude of reverence, humility, and service. In the presence of the holy Jehovah, smitten with the sense of unworthiness to look upon him or to be seen of him, they stand ready to render obedience to every command.

And one cried unto another, and said, etc. (v. 3.) The song of the seraphim was antiphonal, the one part crying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts," the other part responding, "The whole earth is full of his glory." The word "holy" thrice repeated for emphasis, originally meaning only separateness, is here used to characterize the inner character of Jehovah as the sovereign, sublime, and sin-aborring God. The glory of Jehovah, which the seraphims see everywhere present, is but the outward manifestation of his holiness.

And the posts of the door moved (v. 4.) Even the physical surroundings bear testimony to the holiness of Jehovah, the smoke filling the house particularly emphasizing, as seems probable, the divine wrath against sin.

Then said I, Woe is me! etc. (v. 5.) Isaiah has had a wonderful vision. He has seen Jehovah of hosts high upon his throne in kingly majesty; he has seen the seraphims, his ready messengers, stand abashed and covered in his presence, while they continually declare his holiness; he has felt the foundations rock and seen the air grow dark with divine displeasure. The vision which he beholds brings to him a deep conviction of his own iniquity, and he cries out: "Woe is me! for I am undone." In contrast with the song of the seraph choir his own lips are unclean. Nor, indeed, is he alone in his sinfulness. The whole nation is guilty. Even their very worship is but unclean in the sight of Jehovah the Holy One.

Then flew one of the seraphims, etc. (v. 6, 7.) Following conviction of sin comes the cleansing. The live coal, or hot stone, taken from off the altar, is typical of the purifying power of God's Spirit, through whom the iniquity is taken away. It is applied to Isaiah's lips because his feeling of conviction was focused at that point, and perhaps also in anticipation of his mission as a spokesman for God.

I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, etc. (v. 8.) Jesus said: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (Matt. v. 8.) So with Isaiah as soon as his iniquity is cleansed, his ears are open to hear the divine voice. The word spoken is not addresses to him individually and by name, but is a general invitation. He hears it "not as command, but request, and answers, not of compulsion, but of freedom."

THE LESSON APPLIED.

It is interesting to note that circumstances under which men and women feel the call to some definite service. An investigation of a large number of instances shows that the circumstances vary widely. Very frequently the Spirit of God uses the prayers of parents to impress upon the child some definite duty. Sometimes the conscience is quickened and a decision reached as a result of the death of some loved one. In a large number of cases some word or deed of a pastor has turned the current of the life into a definite line of service. "One day when I was a small child our pastor laid his hand on my head and said: 'This boy will be a preacher some day.'" This is the testimony of one. "Once our pastor held prayers in our home and prayed especially for me, and from that day I have felt called to the ministry," so another experience runs. Such experiences may be multiplied indefinitely.

Before Isaiah heard the call to service he had a vision of God's holiness and of his own uncleanness. He was purified and made fit to be God's messenger before he was sent forth to speak for him. Such an experience is always essential to real service. A life that has not felt the cleansing and vitalizing power of God's Spirit is but poorly prepared to represent God to men. A life that has not been cleansed of sin and made anew by divine power is not apt to hear God's call to service.

Young people who are considering the problem of their life work are sometimes perplexed with the question as to whether they ought to give their lives to some special form of Christian service, such as the ministry or missionary activity, and they wonder what constitutes a call. The experience of Isaiah throws light on this question. The "Home Readings" for the week give illustrations of others who were called to special service for God, and they represent various types of experience. All of these are instructive to us, showing, as they do, that God has not shut himself up to one plan in dealing with men, but has manifold methods in making known his will. But the call of Isaiah is perhaps most illuminating. It is a call born of a consciousness of need. The vision of God which he saw not only convicted him of his own sinfulness, but it brought him to a realization

of the iniquity of his people. As soon, therefore, as his own life, was made to feel the divine power, his thought was of them and their need of a messenger from God. In this painful realization of his people's condition he hears the voice of God calling for some one to go.

Another characteristic of Isaiah's call is suggestive. It was a general request directed to any who would answer. The Lord did not say, "Isaiah, will you go?" but "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" It was Isaiah himself who made the call an individual matter. Here is food for reflection. Are we not too much inclined to demand of God more than we have a right to expect? We know the appalling need for men for the ministry and the mission fields; we hear the insistent call for laborers. If we have ourselves seen God and felt his power in our lives, is this not enough to justify us in offering ourselves for the service? It was so with Isaiah.

This leads us to still another fact about Isaiah's call that is worthy of note. It came not as a command, but as a question. Isaiah did not wait to be driven by compulsion; he freely offered himself. It is just at this point that many make mistakes, waiting for some compelling power to drive them into the service, instead of accepting the invitation that is constantly being heard. Paul felt that necessity was laid upon him to be a minister. "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel," he said. But this was not the experience of Isaiah. Nor is it the experience of multitudes of God's faithful servants with whom the call is a glad acceptance of a privilege rather than a reluctant yielding to necessity.

LESSON QUESTIONS.

What was the occasion of Isaiah's call?

What is indicated by the attitude of the seraphim?

What attitude of God is emphasized by the cry of the seraphim?

What is indicated by the rocking of the foundations and the appearance of the smoke?

How was Isaiah affected by his vision?

What was the significance of the live coal, and why was it applied to Isaiah's lips?

What was the character of Isaiah's call?

Does God call all his special servants in the same way?

Is a realization of the great need for laborers in itself a call to service?

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Not a Good Prophet.

To the Editor of The Press: Sir:—A few days after war was declared a clergyman, "Made in Germany," but at present living in Roxborough, felt moved to do the prophet act. He informed us that within six weeks from that date Paris would be occupied by German troops; the Czar of Russia "would be hiding in Moscow," for the very good reason that St. Petersburg has shared the unfortunate fate of the capital of the French Republic, and that the Kaiser, "on a warship" in London would dictate terms of peace.

Well, well, well. He probably believed it, too! Seems to me, though, unless the reverend gentleman is not a good deal better preacher than he has proved himself prophet, he should hunt another job.

Thomas J. Barnes. Philadelphia, Sept. 13, 1914.

The American soldiers are soon to leave Vera Cruz. After their departure we shall know whether, in the absence of the cat, the mice will get into mischief or just play innocent games like prisoners' base and man-in-the-ring.

Prinzip, who slew the archduke of Austria, say the alienists, is suffering from meglomania, a form of exaggerated ego. Some of the war lords who got into the game later on are similarly afflicted.

A friend in need seldom hates to tell you so.

Summer Constipation Dangerous.

Constipation in Summer-time is more dangerous than in the fall, winter or spring. The food you eat is often contaminated and is more likely to ferment in your stomach. Then you are apt to drink much water during the hot weather, thus injuring your stomach. Colic, Fever, Ptomaine Poisoning and other ills are natural results. Po-Do-Lax will keep you well, as it increases the Bile, the natural laxative, which rids the bowels of the congested poisonous waste. Po-Do-Lax will make you feel better. Pleasant and effective. Take a dose to-night. 50c. at your Druggist.

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Has Your Child Worms?

Most children do. A coated, furred Tongue; Strong Breath; Stomach Pains; Circles under Eyes; Pale, Sallow Complexion; Nervous, Fretful; Grinding of Teeth; Tossing in Sleep; Peculiar Dreams—any one of these indicate Child has Worms. Get a box of Kickapoo Worm Killer at once. It kills the Worms—the cause of your child's condition. Is Laxative and aids Nature to expel the Worms. Supplied in candy form. Easy for children to take. 25c., at your Druggist.

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I purchased Swamp-Root of Mr. C. J. Burnside, Druggist, of 202 Main St., Ripon, Wis.

Very truly yours, THOMAS J. LYNCH, 525 Newberry Street. Ripon, Wis.

I have read the above statement that Thomas J. Lynch bought Dr. Kilmer's Swamp-Root at my store and made oath the above statement is true in substance and fact. C. J. Burnside.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 15th day of November, 1911. F. A. PRESTON.

Letter to Dr. Kilmer & Co., Binghamton, New York.

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"What has he done?" inquired Congressman Wayback.

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