

GETTING THE BOOK THAT GETS US

The International Sunday School Lesson For August 19 Is "Finding The Book Of The Law."—II Chron. 34:14-33.

By WILLIAM T. ELLIS.

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That is a red letter day in the life of a young man of parts when he first meets the masters of literature. Shakespeare, once but a great name, becomes a land of Arcadia; Tennyson moves the noblest sentiments of his heart; Browning summons him to the soul's home on the heights; Scott leads him into the golden fields of romance, and Hugo shows him that he is a blood brother to all humanity. The ending of these beginnings who can tell?

Especially momentous is the occasion when a person of sensitive nature first finds the Bible for himself as a living book, and not as a mere article of ecclesiastical furniture. He has known it always as a repository of texts, from which sermons were preached, and as a book much affected by religious people. But of a sudden, in a shining, transfiguring hour he realizes that the Book is for him individually—that it is a truth

with present import, that it is delicately attuned to his immediate need and attitude, and that it is directly for him, a clear, insistent and authoritative message of duty and destiny.

The discovery of the Bible, as each person makes it for himself, is as great an occasion as Columbus' discovery of America, or as King Josiah's discovery of the old Book of Law. This is the one vital, comprehensive, power-imparting and eternally contemporaneous volume. It continues year after year to be the "best selling book of the week." It is as its name declares, "The Book."

A King's Treasure
It was while treasure hunting that the priests found among the silver and gold of the temple the better riches of the Book of the Law. Josiah had been instituting reforms as last week's lesson showed, and in the progress of the work this particular and precious roll—possibly the original; what if the Ark of the covenant should be found? The discovery recalls the principle that we get light as we go on; the converse of which is that "Every duty we omit obscures some truth we should have known." Because the temple had been neglected, its guidance had been lost.

Some of us cherish the hope that after Jerusalem passes out of the power of the Turk there will be momentous discoveries in the subterranean chambers and passages of Mount Zion. Many priceless treasures that have been lost may be recovered. What if the Ark of the Covenant should be found? Occasionally a miner or adventurer discovers a "lost mine." Lost arts there are, also, and lost peoples. There are even lost Bibles today, as in Josiah's time; a preacher rescued one from an ash barrel, and it now adorns the pulpit of a great New York church. Some Bibles are lost in the bottoms of trunks and in garrets; and some are effectively lost in glass cases and on parlor tables. In every case it is a dire calamity when a person or a people lose the Bible.

It was a special copy of the Law

that was found by the priests; in the sense that one's own Bible is dearer and clearer and fuller of meaning than any other, there is a difference in Bibles. The passing of the cumbersome family Bible is not to be regretted where it is supplanted by the more convenient and usable individual Bible in the best translation. He is poor indeed who does not possess his own Bible, more familiar to his fingers than any other book.

King Josiah found his in a temple. That is where it would naturally be looked for; although it is sometimes lost from modern churches. People go to church to find out what the word of God is; they do not want a garbled edition of the daily paper, nor some man's homiletical essay on the topics of the times, nor even man's ingenious comments on the Book itself; they want the word, plainly and directly presented and expounded.

The Cornerstone of Reform
This great find was exactly what was needed to make Josiah's reforms deep and abiding. There is no permanent basis for religious progress except a generally read Bible. There is a deal of talk to-day about an "ethical revival," but no merely ethical revival can come to stay; it must be sustained by study of the Scriptures. Impulses and emotions pass, the Bible remains. No matter how many converts a revival may gain, most of them will lapse unless they are fed and nurtured by intelligent, persistent study of the quickening Word. It is a portentous fact that only where the Bible has been a living book has Christianity flourished in vitality and fruitfulness. Many a soldier will testify that it was worth his while to go into the trenches and become acquainted with a pocket Testament.

Even a purely secular body like the National Educational Association, has spoken out in unmistakable terms concerning the indispensability of the Bible in any complete scheme of modern education. The pre-eminent importance of the Bible in public instruction and progress is indicated by Huxley's saying, "The Bible has been the Magna Charta of the poor, the oppressed."

After all, the world needs and must have, some invariable rule of conduct. The final appeal is not to convention, reason or conscience; for those are fallible. The supreme court of ethics is the old Bible, which has for centuries moulded the lives of the best people of the world.

A Book That Does Things
No other writings have the Bible's power to make men squirm. It has the keenest, subtlest, most biting and most burning language ever penned, as well as the gentlest, tenderest and most comforting. The power of the Book to move men to action is prodigious; it has caused wars, overturned empires and been the dominating influence in shaping the course of history. It has nerved men to battle and it has bent them to the dust in contrition. The power of the simple Word of God to transform lives is none the less marvelous because an everyday spectacle. President Wilson's long training in the ethics and language of the Bible has been wonderful fruit for the world. Well did the Psalmist say, "The entrance of Thy Word giveth light," and again, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word."

Young King Josiah so felt. The reading of the newly-discovered Law stirred his spirit's depths. He rent his clothes in anguish as he contemplated his people's sins afresh in the light of this revelation. It has been said that truth can only be understood in the light of a deed; conversely, a deed can only be understood in the light of a truth. Josiah felt as if the unshaped stone from the mountain was about to fall upon his nation to crush it. For the first result of an accession of God's light is an intense hatred for sin. That is why the purest souls are most concerned over their own impurity.

What he learned, moved Josiah to know more. We go through present knowledge to greater knowledge. He has that pre-eminently royal trait of the noblest human spirits, a thirst for truth. Therefore he sent the priests to inquire further concerning the will of Jehovah. Willingness to know the will of God is a sign of the truly religious. Some there be who lament the decline of the old-fashioned, hilarious camp meeting from this continent; but since its place is being more than filled by the Summer Bible conferences, which are characterized by education instead of excitement, though with no less devotion, one can scarcely regret the change which the times are witnessing.

The messengers reported to a woman prophet, Huldah. She gave Jehovah's word to Josiah and it was a dire message. With a "Thus saith Jehovah" she foretold the fulfillment of the curses which the King has read in the newly discovered Law, because the chosen people had forsaken God and worshipped idols. Causes produce effects; "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." Suffering follows sinning. "God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Doom was the destiny of the delinquent Jews.

Right here comes in the working of a higher law than the laws of nature; a law written in the character of God. The gracious Jehovah was mindful of Josiah's faithfulness. His tender-hearted humility had pleased the great King. Thus, for Josiah's sake, He promised to avert the evil prophesied, so that His faithful servant should never see it. In this manner, Josiah stood in the breach between the nation and its just Lord. For his sake the people were spared; even as many a community has been spared by the remnant of the righteous in it.

Troop 16 Scouts on Hike to Clark's Ferry

Troop 16 of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church, with Charles Mehring, third assistant scoutmaster, in charge of thirteen Boy Scouts, left Harrisburg Saturday morning for a hike to Clark's Ferry bridge, taking the road to Marysville and starting their hike from there.

They arrived at their destination after a delightful walk about noon; they then had a good swim and a fine time preparing lunch. After lunch and a good rest they hiked back to Marysville, arriving home about 7:30 p. m. All the scouts were enthusiastic over the hike and are looking forward to many more.

WILBERT HOLBERT, Scribe.

Harvest Time on For Scouts of Troop 4

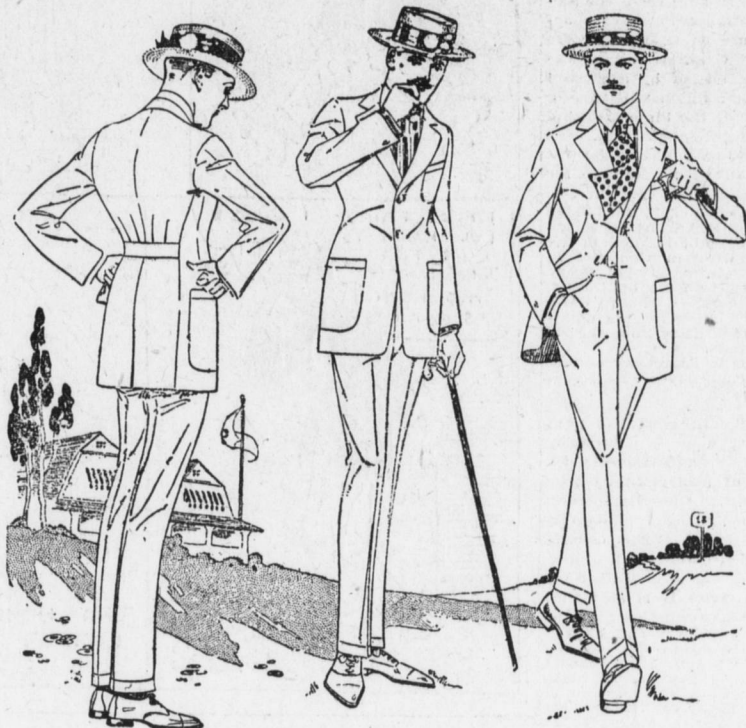
This is harvest time for Troop 4, Scouts; at least they are hauling crops from their Bellevue gardens by the bagful. The Scouts that planted half of the plot in potatoes are getting a little over two bushels apiece, nice big murphys, too.

Troop 4 has lost two of its best members this summer. Scouts Quinter and Herman Holopple, both first class Scouts, have moved to New Windsor, Md. Quinter was the crack Scout debater of Harrisburg, while Herman excelled in first aid work.

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