

The fishing-boat shall go to sea,
The fishing-boat come back;
And Providence shall guide the boat,
And fish be in its track.

Sabbath School Lessons.

January 31st, 1864.

DEBORAH AND BARAK.

Read Judges iv. 1-17.

Connection.—In taking possession of Canaan, instead of acting as directed, Deut. vii. 2, the Israelites had associated with many of the heathen, Judges i. 21-33. In consequence of their disobedience, they had already relapsed into idolatry twice, suffered punishment, and been delivered when repentant. This third successful struggle of the northern tribes took place about B.C. 1296, or 130 years after Joshua's death.

I. *The Standard Raised, ver. 1-13.*—Jabin, a Canaanitish prince, possessed of the territory north of Israel, had cruelly oppressed Israel—Sisera was his captain. Hazor was ten or fifteen miles north of the Sea of Galilee. Deborah, a prophetess, had, at God's command, directed Barak to raise ten thousand men from the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, and promised that with them He would set Israel free.

Kedesh, a city twenty miles north of the Sea of Galilee—there Barak mustered his men, and with Deborah (whose presence, probably, as God's own messenger, he rightly valued) marched southward about forty miles to Tabor, a hill lying at the south-west of the Sea of Galilee, and the source of the small river Kishon.

Heber, the Kenite. Though invited, the children of Hodab never mingled with Israel. Their former kindness to Israel and Moses was never forgotten, 1 Sam. xv. 6; but here this family of Heber sided with Israel's enemies, and acted as spies to Sisera. *Chariots of iron* were most formidable to Israel, ill armed as they appear to have been, chap. v. 8. Sisera mustered at the river *Kishon*, which runs at the west of Mount Tabor.

II. *Sisera Defeated, ver. 14-17.*—Sisera found Barak encamped on the heights of Tabor, where chariots and horsemen could not reach him.

Up; is not the Lord gone out before thee? Barak seems implicitly to have obeyed the Divine messages brought by Deborah. The time and circumstances seemed all unpropitious, but God was with him.

So he went down to the plain—most unwisely, men would say—the iron chariots had all the advantage of ground; but he gained a complete victory.

APPLICATION.

1. *Learn from Israel's sin and repentance*—That sin is bitter at last: sweet in the mouth, bitter in the belly: at last it stingeth like an adder. That God is most willing to pardon. How often He heard Israel's cry, ver. 3; Psal. lxxviii. 38.

2. *How much good one right-hearted person can do*; with faith in God, courage to dare, and wisdom to direct how to do what is right! Like Deborah. She stirred up Barak, and he stirred up the tribes, and won the day. So when God has a great work to be done, He raises a leader. See the history of the Judges—Luther—Knox. Many a family, workshop, village, and city have been blessed by such a *ONE*, if God was with him.

3. *How much good a right-hearted woman can do!* Deborah was the mover in all this—she was nearer God than Barak. She kept her place as a woman—did not go to the fight, but cheered and advised the warriors. So, without doing anything unseemly, women may be nearer God than most men, and cheering and directing others may do much good. Priscilla teaching Apollos—Timothy's mother—Naaman's little maid. Rom. xvi. 12.

4. *God's presence secures success.* See that you make no mistake—that you are really seeking what is right. Then settle it in your mind, you *cannot* fail of success at last. *Up*—exert yourself, God is your leader, see ver. 14; Jonathab, 1 Sam. xiv. 12; David, 2 Sam. v. 24.—*Edinburgh Series of Lessons.*

February 7th, 1864.

LAZARUS LIVES AGAIN.

JOHN XI. 20-46.

I. *Martha meets Christ, ver. 20-27.*—Ver. 20. Martha, ever ready to act, as soon as she hears that Christ is on his way to Bethany, sets out to meet him. Mary, more retired, sits at home indulging her sorrow. Ver. 21, 22. Martha mingles and tempers her regret at the past, with hope for the future. *I am the resurrection and the life.* It was as easy for him to restore life at that moment as at the last day. *Shall never die*, ver. 26. Evidently Christ speaks of the life of the soul. Martha's confession, ver. 27, is the clearest and most decided we find at that time among the disciples. Her creed, ver. 24, regarding a future state, is most interesting.

II. *Mary meets Christ, ver. 28-35.*—Ver. 28. *She called Mary her sister secretly*—She wanted none to be present whilst Christ talked with them concerning their beloved brother—soothing their sorrow. Perhaps she remembered that among those