

III. How the Lord defends him. *Vs. 16-18.* *Fear not*,—Elisha knew in whom to trust; perhaps this new servant, who was a “young man” (v. 17), had not seen any miracle wrought by him. *They that be with us, &c.* The angels, represented by the horses and chariots of fire, *V. 17.* *Are more*,—more numerous, (Gen. xxxii. 1, 2: Psalm lxxviii. 17: Matt. xxvi. 53); or more mighty (chap. xix. 35). *V. 17.*—*Open his eyes*,—give him spiritual vision, such as was given to Stephen (Acts vii. 55, 56: and to John (Rev. i. 10). *And he saw*,—could we but see them, the angels are constantly surrounding and ministering to the wants of God’s people (Psalm xxxiv. 7: Luke xvi. 22: Heb. i. 14). *V. 18.*—*When they (the Syrians) came down, &c.*,—the blindness was to be only for a time (v. 20). Compare Gen. xix. 11. This rendered them powerless to harm him.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.—1. Let us ever be lovers and promoters of peace, both public and domestic (Matt. v. 9). 2. God knows and can frustrate the worst devices of wicked men (2 Sam. xvii. 14: Job v. 12, 13: Psalm xxxvii. 7-9). 3. How safe and happy are they who trust in Jesus (Luke xii. 4. 5: Acts xxi. 13).

QUESTIONS FOR THE SCHOLAR.—Who began this war? In what way did Elisha serve his country? Did the king regard his instructions? With what result? What did Benhadad think was the cause of his defeat? What did his officers tell him? What did he resolve on doing? Did he act wisely or foolishly in this? Did he succeed in taking Elisha? Why not? What do angels now do for us? Can anything harm the children of God? Are you his children? What may we learn from this lesson?

LESSON XXII. JUNE 9TH, 1872.

GOD’S DELIVERANCE. 2 Kings vii. 1-11.

Picture the distress in Samaria; the legions of Syria surrounding it (chap. vi. 24), and the people dying of hunger within it (vi. 28, 29), with no prospect of relief. But now the scene changes.

I. Elisha prophesies plenty to-morrow. *V. 1.*—*Thus saith the Lord, &c.* Humanly speaking, it was very unlikely that the siege would be raised so soon, if at all. But the Lord promised it, and he brought it to pass (v. 16). Our extremity is His opportunity. *A measure*,—containing a peck and a pint. *Shekel*,—about 60c. of our money. These were probably the usual prices. *In the gate, &c.*,—the gates of cities were used as courts of justice (Deut. xvi. 18); as places of concourse (Psalm lxix. 12); and as markets (Neh. xiii. 19, 20).

II. The sneers of one of the courtiers at his announcement, v. 2. *On whose hand, &c.*,—a great favourite and constant companion of the king, on whose judgment he relied much. *If the Lord would make windows, &c.*,—if he would rain down bread from heaven. He disbelieved and mocked at the prophet’s word; although God fed Israel in that way forty years (Ex. xvi. 35: Psalm lxxviii. 23-25), and could do so again, rather than allow his promise to fail. *Thou shalt see it, &c.*,—see vs. 17-20. This was not a mere accident, but a punishment for his unbelief. He was a bold bad man, and God would warn others to beware of his example. Compare Luke i. 19, 20. No sin is more hateful to God (Mark xvi. 14: Rom. xi. 20).

III. How the promise of God was fulfilled, vs. 3-11. *Four leprous men*,—Jewish tradition says these were Gehazi and his three sons. They were “without the camp,” as required, Lev. xiii. 46. *V. 4.* Their course was a reasonable one. They were starving: perhaps the Syrians would pity and save them: *their only hope lay in them.* The condition of perishing sinners is just like theirs; only there is no “if” about Jesus saving such as flee to him. (John vi. 37: Heb. vi. 18.) *V. 5.*—*Twilight*,—of evening, probably: see v. 9—a favourable time for imaginings things. *V. 6.*—*The Lord had made, &c.* Compare 2 Sam. v. 24: chap. xix. 7. A panic seized them, much like that recorded, Judges vii. 22. Whether the noise proceeded from natural causes not understood, or was wholly