

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FIFTH YEAR, 1877. APRIL.
FIRST QUARTER: STUDIES ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

B. C. 894.] LESSON III. NAAMAN THE LEPER; or, God's Way of Healing. 2 Kings 5, 1-14. April 15.

EXPLANATORY.
NAAMAN. How enviable his position; how pitiable his condition! General of the army, favorite of the monarch, popular with the people, dwelling in a palace, possessor of riches—yet who would have exchanged places with him? A leper. Victim of a disease whose every symptom is a picture of a worse malady—1.) Hereditary; 2.) Contagious; 3.) Loathsome; 4.) Deceptive, and almost painless, so that the leper could scarcely realize his condition; 5.) Incurable; 6.) Deadly. How all these characteristic group around the word—Sin!

A LITTLE MAID. Note 1.) Her forgiving spirit and generosity toward those who had grievously wronged her; 2.) Her fidelity to her master's interests; 3.) Her sympathy, feeling for others' trouble; 4.) Her simple faith in God and his prophet. She said: See: 1.) The power of a word; 2.) The power of one in lowly condition; 3.) The power of a child; 4.) The power of God to bring good out of evil.

HIS LORD. Ben-hadad, the king of Syria. A letter. A king's letter, a captain's journey, a stately procession, a priceless present—all the result of a child's word! There are good words for all to speak, and good works for all to do, and not even the least shall lose their reward. Silver—gold—raiment. Altogether worth from forty to sixty thousand dollars. That thou mayest recover him. Ben-hadad, supreme in Syria, supposed that Jehoram was absolute master in Israel, controlling prophets as well as common people. How utterly does the world fail to comprehend the things of God!

KING.....SENT. Crowns do not confer happiness: and even a king finds limits to his power. Quarrel. He supposed that the letter and the visit were to find pretext for a new invasion. A closer intimacy with the Lord and his prophets would have lessened his alarm. Elisha...sent. A plain man calm, while the king is terror-stricken; a subject rebuking his sovereign's want of faith. To me. Not arrogance, but consciousness of Divine aid. He knew the might of the Arm on which he leaned.

NAAMAN.....ELISHA. Naaman, with princely retinue and dazzling splendor, yet under his robes concealing the leprosy skin and the aching heart. Elisha, in humble surroundings, yet swaying a more than royal sceptre. The seeming is not always the real. When a sinner seeks for mercy let him not come in state, but on his knees, in the poverty and nakedness of his soul.

ELISHA SENT. He does not honor the Syrian captain by his presence, but sends a command and a promise. He would respect the ceremonial law, show the dignity of his office, humble Naaman's pride, and teach him the duty of obedience. Go and wash. 1.) A simple act; 2.) A self-denying act; 3.) An act of obedience; 4.) Of perseverance; 5.) Of faith. When Christ comes to cleanse a sinner's heart, he commands as a king, expecting unquestioning obedience to the divine plan.

WROTH. He had already planned an impressive way of healing, altogether befitting the dignity of a Syrian nobleman. Now he finds himself treated precisely like a common outcast leper. Recover the leper. He wanted to be rid of the "leper," yet preserve the grandeur of the "captain." How many cling to their own uncleaned hearts, from which they would fain be free, because they cannot receive salvation on their own terms, and in their own proud way. Abana and Pharpar. The Barada and the Awasj, two crystal streams winding in beauty through the country of Damascus, only to be lost in the desert, fit types of the worldly morality, intellectual culture, cold ceremonialism, which men would substitute for the old saving gospel.

HIS SERVANTS. Well for him, in that moment when his destiny hung poised, that he found wise advisers—and better, that he followed their suggestion. A little child. Gone, the chalky, clammy skin—in its place comes the glowing freshness of childhood. He is "a new creature."

A NOBLE Christian woman died lately in New York—let us give her name, Miss M. A. Dansey—and her will dispensed blessings in a manner that contrasts strongly with the exit of others who had heaped up their millions. She had an inherited fortune of above \$500,000, of which she gave to her relatives \$184,000, and to 31 benevolent societies \$335,000. She had done what she could. Her works shall praise her in the gates.

G. O. H.

THOUGHTS OF HOME AMID THE LABOURS OF PROFESSIONAL LIFE.

The following playful and beautiful lines were written by Chief Justice Tenterden, than whom there were few more gifted or learned jurists:—
In the noise of the bar, and crowds of the hall,
Tho' destined still longer to move,
Let my thoughts wander home, and my memory recall
The dear pleasures of beauty and love.

The soft looks of my girl, the sweet voice of my boy,
Their antics, their hobbies, their sports;
How the houses he builds her quick fingers destroy,
And with kisses his pardon she courts.

With eyes full of tenderness, pleasure and pride,
The fond mother sits watching their play;
Or turns, if I look not, my dullness to chide,
And invites me like them to be gay.

She invites to be gay, and I yield to her voice,
And my toils and my sorrows forget;
In her beauty, her sweetness, her kindness rejoice;
And hallow the day that we met.

Full bright were her charms in the bloom of her life.
When I walked down the church by her side;
And, five years passed over, I now find the wife
More lovely and fair than the bride.

Spurgeon's Tabernacle was filled to its utmost capacity the other evening, to bid good-by to Uncle Tom, the hero of Mrs. Stowe's sensation tale. He is an old man of nearly ninety—tall, stout, and healthy. His autobiography has had a speedy sale, and must have been profitable to him in a commercial point of view. It is as sensational as Uncle Tom's Cabin itself. Whether correct as a matter of history, I cannot say. The old gentleman was the guest of the Earl of Shaftesbury, who presided at the valedictory service. He carries home with him a well-filled purse of English gold. He bears the attentions which he received easily.—Cor. Nosh. Ad.

There is now no easier road to open public favor than the way of song. Our preaching has become too dry, formal, and burdensome. The former mode of speaking in chants and measured sounds had degenerated to nasal singing; but even that had a power beyond the prosy preaching or scolding declamation. The return to song is hailed with delight. Let every young minister learn to sing. Study the music thoroughly; select the best songs; and be so prepared that when opportunity offers, every note shall tell for Jesus.—Herald of Gospel Liberty.

HEGEL'S DESK.—When some one presented Hegel's desk to the venerable Gosner, thinking he would prize the relic, he turned it into the kitchen table for his hospital and declared it had never been so usefully employed before. He esteemed it more as a table on which to cut the bread for the starving than as a desk to record the wild abstractions of the intellect.

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