



LESSON VII—AUG. 14.

The Shunamite's Son.

II. Kings iv., 25-37. Memory verses, 32-35. Read the chapter.

Golden Text.

'Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.' (Psa. lv., 22.)

Home Readings.

- M. II. Kings iii., 1-27.—Elisha and the three kings.
- T. II. Kings iv., 1-17.—Elisha and the Shunamite.
- W. II. Kings iv., 18-37. — The Shunamite's son.
- T. II. Kings iv., 38-44.—Elisha miraculously provides food.
- F. Luke vii., 1-16.—The widow's son restored to her.
- S. Luke viii., 41-56. — The ruler's daughter raised to life.
- S. Psa. lv., 1-23.—'Cast thy burden upon the Lord.'

Lesson Story.

Elisha was now the great prophet of Israel, through him God worked many miracles. One day as he was passing through the town of Shunem a noble woman invited him to take some refreshment in her house, he did so, and whenever he passed that way she entertained him. Then she told her husband what a holy man Elisha was, and together they planned a little room for the prophet, and had it built off the house, so that Elisha could come and go as he pleased.

Elisha was very grateful for this kindness and wished to do something in return. The Shunamite woman said that there was nothing that he could do for her. But she was childless, so he promised that God would send her a little son. God sent the baby and he grew to be a fine little lad. But one day when he was out in the harvest field watching his father at work he suddenly received a sunstroke and was carried home to his mother. She held him in her arms until noon-time, then he died.

She laid him on the prophet's bed and did not tell any one what had happened, for she had faith that he could be raised up. She rode with great speed to Mount Carmel where Elisha was. Now the prophet saw her coming and sent his servant Gehazi to ask what brought her. The sorrowful mother would not tell Gehazi her trouble, but cast herself at the feet of the prophet and told him. Then Elisha gave his staff to Gehazi and told him to run as fast as possible and lay it on the face of the dead child.

But the mother had no faith in Gehazi and insisted that Elisha himself should come with her. Gehazi could do nothing for the child so Elisha went, and shutting himself in with the child, prayed earnestly to God. The prophet then stretched himself on the child to warm the little body and soon God sent back the life, and the child sneezed seven times and opened its eyes.

Then Elisha sent for the Shunamite woman and she, with a heart brimming over with thankfulness, took her child.

Lesson Hints.

'Carmel'—the mountain hallowed by Elijah's great sacrifice and the fire from heaven. About seventeen miles from Shunem.

Shunemite—a native of the little town of Shunem, three miles north of Jezreel.

Gehazi—Elisha's servant, but a very different man from the prophet. (II. Kings v., 25-27.)

'It is well'—she had no confidence in the servant, so she told him nothing.

'Caught him by the feet'—in humble supplication.

'Thrust her away'—as the disciples would have driven away the mothers who brought their children to our Lord. (Matt. xix., 13.)

'Her soul is vexed'—the prophet was sympathetic enough to know that the woman was in trouble though he did not at first know what the trouble was.

'Did I desire a son?'—she had not asked for this blessing, though she had earnestly

longed for it. She could not understand why the blessing should have been given only to be so suddenly removed. But it was for the glory of God. See John ix., 3.

'Gird up thy loins'—fasten the end of the mantle into the belt so as to be able to run fast.

'If any salute thee'—the salutations of the East are long and elaborate and even to greet one person took much time, so the messenger must answer no one.

'Staff'—the prophet's staff might have miraculous qualities. If it had been but a slight sickness this might have sufficed. But only through the great prophet's most earnest prayer would God raise the dead.

'Sneezed'—the first sign of returning life. The prayer of faith was answered. God could not work through a selfish man like Gehazi.

Questions to Be Studied at Home.

1. Who was Elisha?
2. The Shunamite's child was promised to her, tell of another child who was promised to his mother by God.
3. Why could not Gehazi bring the dead to life?
4. What great miracle did God work through Elisha?

Suggested Hymns.

'Trust and obey,' 'Jesus bids us shine,' 'How firm a foundation,' 'Sound the battle-cry,' 'Rock of ages,' 'He is able to deliver thee.'

Practical Points.

Aug. 14.

A. H. CAMERON.

He who has been helped of God will surely seek deliverance in time of need. Verses 3-7, 16, 25.

What the world calls sickness, the Christian calls health. Verse 26.

Little Faith has often to struggle hard against Giant Despair. Verses 27, 28.

God's ways are not like our ways. Verses 29-31; also Matt. xvii., 19, 20.

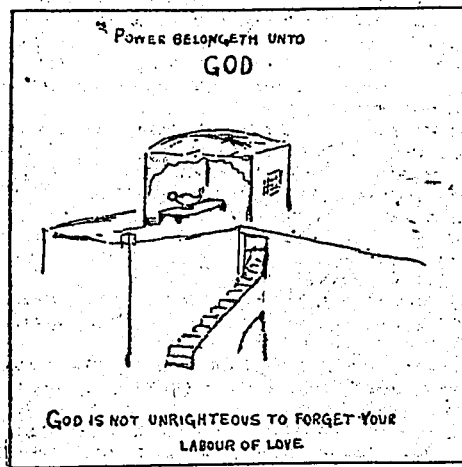
Prayer opens many a treasure house whose lock will open to no other key. Verses 32-35.

He who makes the widow and fatherless to rejoice shall in no wise lose his reward. Verses 36, 37.

Contrast the Pharisee. Mark xii., 40. Tiverton, Ont.

The Lesson Illustrated.

Just a rough outline of an 'upper room,' built by itself upon the broad flat roof of an Eastern house. This was probably the chamber built by the loving Shunamite woman for the visiting prophet. In the room as seen through the open front is the prophet's couch, and upon it a small Eastern lamp. The lamp represents the little son. Tell of his being out in the field, and as you tell of his death rub out the little flame, or



if you have the lamp cut out of paper, turn it down behind the body of the lamp. Then bring it in from the field up the stairs and into the prophet's room. Questions will bring out the story of the mother's journey to the prophet, and of the prophet's prayers in the upper room, till the flame burns again and the little life comes back and the mother's heart is gladdened again.

Christian Endeavor Topics.

Aug. 14.—Exalt Christ.—Matt. xxi., 1-11.

'Aim at the Heart.'

(By Rev. G. B. F. Halloch, D.D.)

Christ is the teacher's great Model. We must 'learn of him.' For great teachers great learners is the rule. In everything we may learn of him, but in nothing more noticeably than in his loving sympathy. Finding in our hearts a desire to do something for Christ, let us learn from his loving sympathy the art of winning souls to him. Christ was always kind and approachable and sympathetic. A poor widow's only son is dead. With broken heart she is following the corpse to the grave. Who is it that sees her, pities her, comes and touches the bier, restoring that son to life and to his mother? That loving, sympathizing one is Jesus. Who is that one standing with those sisters, in love and sympathy, weeping at the grave of Lazarus? It is Jesus. Who is this with all these little children gathered about him, taking them in his arms and blessing them? They do not seem to be afraid of him. Well, it is Jesus. Who was it all the sick, the sinful, and the sorrowing followed so lovingly? And who was it healed and cheered and comforted them all, refusing none? It was Jesus. Would you work for him? Would you do something for him? Then, Christian teacher, 'learn of him.' Learn from his loving, kind and sympathetic ways. This world is groaning and sighing for sympathy, human sympathy, Christian sympathy. We are quite sure it was this in Christ's life which touched the hearts of his followers and attracted so many to him. Learn of him in your Christ-like teaching, and in doing so remember that every scholar's heart is human, and that every human heart is open to the influence of genuine sympathy and affection. Love reaches all hearts.

The advice an experienced pastor gave to a class of young men going out to preach the gospel is just as good for every Sabbath-school teacher. He said, 'Aim at the hearts in preaching. Not every man has a head, but every man has a heart. If you aim at the head you will miss some of your hearers. If you aim at the heart you will hit them all. Aim at the heart.' Good advice is that for every teacher of the young. The true measure of every Christian worker's personal power is found largely in the heart. If you long to win the souls of your scholars to Christ, you must love them. Some one has said 'There is but one rare and precious coin with which you can purchase the costly treasure of a child's heart, and that coin bears the image and superscription, Love. First, love to Christ, and then love for souls for Christ's sake, should be the motto of every teacher. With such an inspiration, no one could fail of success.'

An Important Work.

Of course, it would be an entire perversion of the hours of Sabbath-teaching to employ them in educating political partisans; the names and tenets of contending sections must not be canvassed during the precious minutes given us to devote to more enduring and eternal themes. But, at the same time, that school will fail in fulfilling its end where the scholars are not being equipped week by week for the discharge of the high responsibilities of citizenship. The whole atmosphere of the place, the constant trend of the instruction, the influences which are touching and moulding the impressionable natures of the boys and girls—these things should be preparing them, unconsciously yet powerfully, to render good service to the State. It is of great moment, for instance, that the Sunday-school brings clearly into view the restraints which bound and limit individual liberty. It tells the children that men may not do just what they please. It makes much of the authority of conscience. It points upward to the solemn enactments of law and duty, that 'stern daughter of the voice of God.' It sets God himself in the forefront, an Omnipresence never absent or forgetful, a tribunal that cannot be evaded or escaped. Who of us will say how many it prevents, by planting these hedges round about them, from falling away into the criminal and vicious classes? Who can estimate to what extent it is saving the nation from the increase of those whose moral weaknesses and delinquencies inflict so sore a blow on its honor and strength?—Sunday-School Chronicle.