

Junior Department

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Weekly Topics

June 11.—(Band of Mercy Meeting) "How an animal talked to a prophet." Numbers 22: 28-33.

As stated above, this study is intended to teach kindness to animals and to warn against cruelty. The object of the Band of Mercy is to pledge our Juniors to treat all dumb animals with kindness. Many an animal if it could speak would ask, like Balasam's ass: "What have I done unto thee that thou hast smitten me . . ." Teach that nothing is gained by harsh or cruel usage. Our domestic animals respond more quickly to kind treatment than to harsh. Many of them will resist unkindness and keep a "grudge" against the giver of it. Animals remember and recognize their friends, and, on the other hand, do not forget their enemies. For the sake of the creatures themselves it pays to be kind to them. Teach, too, that unkindness to the brutes is positively harmful to those who manifest it. It does them no good and does us harm. Cruelty of spirit and temper grows on us. Many a boy by throwing a stone at an unoffending cat or dog has cultivated a cruel resentful spirit in his heart and has become indifferent to the finer traits of kindness, benevolence and charity as he has grown older. We should never inflict pain unnecessarily. The delight sometimes shown in the sufferings of birds, beast or reptile is evidence of a barbarous disposition. The disposition to tease or torture some innocent victim is one of the first evidences of a savage nature and the first step to an unfeeling and cruel heart and life. Boys that are cruel to animals will soon be cruel to boys, and will show a spirit in later life that is utterly opposed to that of a gentleman. Impress on your Juniors the cruelty of neglect as well as of actual maltreatment of their pets. To have birds, cats, dogs, poultry, ponies, rabbits, and other popular pets is well. To properly care for them is praiseworthy; but to neglect them and thus cause suffering is cruel. Clean quarters, fresh water in the hot summer weather, careful feeding, and such points of care must be observed. Neglect is not always a proof of a cruel disposition; but it is of a thoughtless one. Our animal pets relish cleanliness in their persons, houses, food and drink as well as we do ourselves. Let us provide them with such. The proper care of our pets will cultivate thoughtfulness, attention to details, thoroughness, punctuality and other such minor virtues in our Juniors, as well as the more prominent and important ones of kindness, mercy and gentleness. Warn against the infringement of the right of the animals and birds. A mother bird has a right to rear her young un molested, therefore, do not disturb, rob or destroy her nest. Even the cattle, sheep, colts and such animals have a right to quietly feed in their pastures, therefore, do not disturb or frighten them for "the fun of the thing." Be just! Be kind! Be gentle! Be generous! And the results of such will be manifest. Confidence will be reposed in you because worthy of it, and mature character as man or woman will resemble His "who went about doing good."

June 18.—"Hinderers or helpers." Num. 32: 6-18.

Recall the story of the study of May 7. The scene of to-day's lesson is within easy distance of Canaan as that was. The time is near to pass over and occupy the promised land. Nearly forty years have passed since the spies were sent "from Kadesh-barnea to see the land." Caleb and Joshua alone of the twelve showed a brave courageous spirit

and a trustful heart (see verse 12.) Now that the time has come to possess the land there are some who prefer to remain out of it. The spirit of discord is at work. Moses eventually overcomes it, and by partial compromise with the complainers secures their co-operation. So it amounts to this. We all belong to one of two parties that are found in almost every "camp." The camp may be used to represent a town, a church, a school, a home; but there are sure to be in it those who help and those who hinder. Every good work needs helpers. Show how we may help, e.g., by our

Heartiness.

Energy.

Zealors.

Prayers.

Hearty, energetic, laborious, prayerful helpers! Every church, Sunday-school, League, needs them. With them success is sure. Without them work is hard, a few have to do it, and success is small or delayed. Be a helper! Show how we may hinder, e.g., by our

Hesitation.

Indifference.

Neglect.

Distrust.

Example.

Refusal.

How many persons when called to work begin to make excuse. They say, "I don't know," "I don't care," "I can't," "I don't think so," "I won't," etc., and not only keep themselves idle, but by their example keep others idle, too. We cannot afford to be a "hinderer." For the sake of the work as well also of our own we ought to work. We must work if we are to feel as our Lord felt, and do like him, for he said, "I must work the work of him that sent me," and "my meat and drink is to do the will of my Father, and to finish his work." Of which class has your League the most—"helpers" or "hinderers"? And to which do you yourself belong?

June 25.—"What God says about studying our Bibles." Deut. 6: 6-9.

The wilderness journey is about over. The Promised Land is near. Moses addresses the people. Deuteronomy contains the report of his sermon. His subject is obedience. He reminds them in this fifth chap. (v. 1)—That God's Word has been given. His commandments have been taught them. (v. 2)—The object of God's Word as thus given to them. They are to "keep" i.e., obey it. Prosperity is promised them if they thus live. (v. 3)—This calls for attention. "Hear." Give heed to the Word. God's Word thus first comes to our minds. (v. 4, 5, 6)—The emphatic word here is, "love." God's Word is to dwell in our "hearts" also. We are to love and obey it. (v. 7)—This says "teach" it at home. To the "children" in the "house" the Word of God is to be taught. Rabbi Judah said, "The boy of five ought to apply to the study of the Sacred Scriptures." Rabbi Solomon said, "When the boy begins to talk his father ought to converse with him in the sacred language and to teach him the law; if he does not he seems to bury him." (v. 7)—Also speaks of God's Word in our conversation. "Talk of them when thou walkest by the way." God's Word is not as frequently on our tongues as it ought to be. We talk freely of less important matters. Why not of it? (v. 8)—"Sign" is the word to emphasize. It means witness. If God's Word is obeyed by us, our lives will show it. By holy life and pure conduct we will prove that we are keeping the commands of God. (v. 9)—This calls for a place for God's Word in public life. "Dates" calls for publicity and prominence to the Word in civic affairs. The village, town or city must exalt the Word by obedience as well as the private citizen. (v. 10-13)—These refer to the nation, and the conditions of

national prosperity and greatness are given. So it is shown that the individual, the home, the city, the country, all need the Bible. We cannot do without it. It is to be in our minds, hearts, homes, conversation, lives, town and nation. With it there we shall prosper. Remember that we are pledged to read it every day.

July 2.—Dominion Day Topic, "Our own country." Deut. 11: 12.

For this meeting nothing better can be suggested than a patriotic programme. Assign to some of your more capable members the preparation of one or two papers on such subjects as: "The size and extent of Canada," "The blessings of being a Canadian," "How God has blessed our country," etc. "Why our country needs the Bible," etc. These, with suitable hymns, and, if practicable, an address from your pastor, will make a better meeting than any short article here could do.

Confederated provinces, 1867.

"A land which God careth for" (v. 12).

Natural resources unlimited.

A free and united people.

Dominion from sea to sea.

A loyal part of the British Empire.

Put some such exercise on your black-board.

July 9.—"What God wants us to choose." Deut. 30: 19, 20.

"Life," "Love," and "Obey" are the central words of this Scripture lesson. God wants us to choose "life," and that we may truly live we must "love" Him and "obey" His Word. By thus choosing we have every "blessing." Make it clear that life is goodness. Mere existence is not living, according to this standard. Life and death are not applicable to the body only. Many are said to be dead even when they are living. God wants us to choose His service because only in it is real true life found and enjoyed. And this life must be a matter of choice. It cannot be forced upon anyone. The will is supreme. If we will not hearken and heed we must die rather than live. A bad man does not know what God means by life. "This is life eternal, that they may know the Father and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," and we are to choose to know Christ! This is why God "sent" Him into the world. . . . And to know Christ is the way to "love" God. Love is life. And knowing and loving God we shall "obey" Him. Obedience is life. So "life," "love," "obey" are the important words for study. Show that we are choosing either life or death, either blessing or cursing, by the way we treat Jesus Christ. There is no neutral ground. We are either "for" or "against" Him. Show that it will choose Him and His service He will confess us before His Father, and eventually own us in His eternal kingdom.

Summarize your teachings by the following Blackboard Exercise.

CHRIST.

Heartily.

Only.

Obediently.

Steadily.

Eternally.

NOTE.—We cannot too urgently press upon our junior workers the use of the board in their meetings. Appeal to the eye as well as the ear. Draw out the Juniors' suggestions along the lines of your presentation and point by point, as you progress, give them something to remember. Our topic treatment is only suggestive. The original thinker and worker will not be limited to any other person's thoughts or words. The best we can do is to set you thinking for yourselves and thus ensure the maintenance of your own personality in your meetings. Do not hesitate to put such an acrostic as the above before your meeting. The two words in capitals "CHOOSE CHRIST" are vital. The others follow in turn and show us the why and how of our choice.