

Our Mission Union,

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Something Valuable.

Do any ask after all that has been said, "Why attach such importance to 'the Bible?'" I answer:

"This Book unfolds Jehovah's mind,
This Voice salutes in accents kind,
This Friend will all our need supply,
This Fountain sends forth streams of joy,
This Mine affords us boundless wealth,
This Good Physician gives us health,
This Sun renews and warms the soul,
This Sword both wounds and makes us whole,
This Letter shows our sins forgiven,
This Guide conducts us safe to heaven,
This Charter has been sealed with blood,
This Volume is the Word of God."

OUR COLUMN FOR PREACHERS AND TEACHERS.

NUGGETS OF GOLD FROM THE S. S. LESSONS.

BY REV. JOHN MCEWEN, Secretary S.S. Association of Canada.

[October 4.] Elisha at Dothan. [2 Kings vi. 8-23.]

Jehoram, son of Ahab, is king of Israel, and ninth king since the separation. His character is described in chap. iii. 1-5.

Ben-Hadad, the son or worshipper of Hadad—the sun, king of Syria.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON.

The war carried on between the two countries was closed with the death of Ahab. Read 1 Kings xxii, 29-39. There had been a few years of comparative peace, with occasional incursions for plunder, or possibly to obtain the person of the king. See

HOW THE FAITHFUL ARE DEFENDED.

and how rulers who seek to be faithful are encouraged and helped. The Syrians are unexpectedly outwitted in all their plans; at places previously agreed upon, they made ambushade; but Elisha was secretly giving counsel to the king, and thereby thwarting the evil of Benhadad, and bringing safety to Israel.

Observe the name given to the prophet, "The man of God." His special servant to whom God revealed His will, and the plans of His enemies. So frequently did this occur, that Benhadad suspected treachery in the camp. vs. 9-11.

One of his servants had the true reason, (supposed to be Naaman the healed leper). v. 12. Language expressing the utmost secrecy, but clear in God's sight.

This is the terror of the wicked and the joy of the righteous.

WRATH AGAINST ELISHA.

Horses and chariots and a host. The surprised and alarmed servant, vs. 14-16. Read Psalm xxxiii 16. The weak of faith are always fearful.

The man of God is a man of prayer. vs. 17, 18; Ps. xxxiv. 7; lv. 18; xci. 11; Matt. xxvi. 53. We are not to regard this as a special revelation to the servant, but the opening of the mental vision to what is always about us. Heb. i. 14. "A wall of fire around us." Pray for insight as well as sight

A LESSON FOR JEHORAM AND BENHADAD.

This prayer to smite with blindness is not to be taken in a purely physical sense, but denoting visual and mental bewilderment by which they did not know Elisha. He leads them to Samaria. Mark his counsel to the King. vs. 21, 22. Contrast Elisha's course with that of Elijah. Rom. xii. 20.

[Oct. 11.] The Famine in Samaria. [2 Ks. vii. 1-17]

Last lesson closed with turning an enemy into an ally. "Then came they no more into the land of Israel." vi. 23. But how often men outlive hopeful impressions; and as these fade, memory forgets, and they get back to their former state of mind, and aggravated by impenitence.

So it was with Benhadad,—hence this fresh invasion in the siege of Samaria. vi. 24-33.

I. STUDY THIS LESSON IN THE LIGHT OF ITS SIX CHARACTERS.

ELISHA—the threatened and tried believer. vi. 31, 32.

JEHORAM—a weak and wavering doubter. vi. 27, 33.

SAMARIA the miseries of a backslidden people.

LEPERS—like men of the world—outside and in great straits. vs 3-11.

THE KING'S COUNSELLOR—a scoffing sceptic, who laughs at the Divine Word. v. 2.

THE SYRIANS—the avowed and persistent enemies of God, who become the prey of their own fancies and are overthrown.

II. LOOK AT THE LESSON IN THE LIGHT OF 2 Pet. i. 4.

Promises made, and speedily fulfilled. This will furnish a memorable working plan of the lesson.

Deliverance Promised.

Deliverance Doubted.

Deliverance Wrought.

III. LOOK AT THE LESSON ON THE DIVINE SIDE OF THE STORY.

1. A strong faith honoured by a startling revelation. v. 1.

2. A wonderful reach and compass of resources in God's hands for the succour of his people. Read again vii. 4.

3. A sovereign control of human instincts even while selfish.

4. God's ways scorned by the natural man.

5. Convincing fulfilments of the word of the Lord.

These plans will apply in the order of their numbering to the primary division, the intermediate, and the senior.

PERSONAL SEARCH.

Am I trusting or doubting? John xx. 27, 29.

Am I realizing the faithfulness of God in promising? 2 Cor. i. 20.