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The Sunday School

BIBLE LESSON.

Abridged from Peloubet's Notes.

Second Quarter.

THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON.

Lesson VII. August 14.—2 Kings 4: 25-37.

Read the Chapter. Commit Verses 32-35.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee, Psa. 55: 22.

EXPLANATORY.

Sickness and Sorrow in the Home. (1) Sickness often leads men to see both this world, and the spiritual world, and eternal things in a new and truer light. Many, like Jacob, from a pillow of stones in the night of sorrow, have seen visions of heaven and of their Father, and have received the messages God's angels have brought. Countless stars, invisible by day, shine upon us in the night. (2) Sickness and sorrow help us to sympathize with others and fit us for the blessed ministry of comforting and helping others. (3) By the very intenseness of our love for our sick and dying children we gain comfort from our Heavenly Father, who loves us, his children, more than we can possibly love our children. We mean only good to them; therefore he can mean only good to us.

Immediately the mother sets out to find Elisha at Mount Carmel, sixteen or seventeen miles distant. Probably he lived near the scene of Elisha's great sacrifice.

25. THE MAN OF GOD SAW HER AFAR OFF. From his hilltop, looking down into the valley.

26. RUN NOW. Elisha knew that only some matter of great importance could bring the woman there. IS IT WELL WITH THEE? Hebrew, "Is it peace to thee?" AND SHE ANSWERED, IT IS WELL. She said but one word, "Peace." The cautious mother wishes to have no words with the servant; it is his master that she is in quest of.

27. SHE CAUGHT HIM BY THE FEET, etc. The falling down, clasping the feet, etc., are actions witnessed every day in the East. I have had this done to me often before I could prevent it. GEHAZI CAME NEAR TO THRUST HER AWAY. Deeming her importunity excessive, or such liberties beneath his master's dignity, just as the disciples tried to drive away the mothers who brought their children to Jesus. THE LORD HATH HID IT FROM ME. His prayer for light had not yet been answered. Often the Lord had told him what was coming; but in this case he let him learn from the suppliant herself, as the best way for both.

28. DID I DESIRE A SON? Did I ask the favor? Was it not sent freely? Why, then, does the same power take it from me? She did not say, but implied that her son was dead. She could not yet realize that "This better to have loved and lost Than never to have loved at all."

29. THEN HE SAID TO GEHAZI. His attendant. GIRD UP THY LOINS. In preparation for a journey. TAKE MY STAFF. His prophetic staff, the symbol of his authority. IF THOU MEET ANY MAN, SALUTE HIM NOT. The Jewish salutations, like those common in the Orient today, were elaborately formal, and occupied so much time as to be a serious hindrance when there was reason for haste. It is said that a complete formal salutation between two persons may consume from one to three hours. LAY MY STAFF UPON THE FACE OF THE CHILD. In expectation that through this the prophetic power would go forth and restore the child. He may have thought that the child was not really dead. (v. 33).

30. I WILL NOT LEAVE THEE. She had great faith in Elisha, but little in his staff. She wanted his presence, his personal sympathy and aid. Perhaps she knew more about Gehazi's character than did Elisha himself.

31. AND LAID THE STAFF . . . BUT THERE WAS NEITHER VOICE, NOR HEARING. His mission was a failure. The wrong man was behind the staff. It was the prophet who gave power to the staff.

Illustration. An electric wire is of no account unless the source of electricity is behind it. It fails, too, if in some part there is a bad conductor. Gehazi's spirit was a bad conductor of the Spirit of Life.

33. HE WENT IN THEREFORE, AND SHUT THE DOOR UPON THEM TWAIN. Perhaps himself and the mother; more probably himself and only the dead boy. He prayed in secret, and his Father rewarded him openly. In secret he could best commune with God. So Jacob wrestled with the angel alone in the night. AND PRAYED UNTO THE LORD. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man," which "availeth much." "The Lord does not allow great deeds to be accomplished without battles and struggles, labor and perseverance." "The best things of life must come through prayer; for (1) Prayer brings us

into close communion with God. (2) Prayer answered leads to a realization of the fact that the good gift comes from God. (3) The value of the gift is enhanced by the earnest seeking. (4) Thus faith, and love, and patience, and spiritual life are increased, and the character ennobled.

34. AND HE WENT UP, AND LAY UPON THE CHILD, etc. He used whatever means were in his power, though the means alone could never have brought the child to life. So James tells the elders who pray with the sick, to also anoint him with oil, one of the commoner remedies of the day. So Christ sometimes used means as the channel of his healing power.

35. HE RETURNED, AND WALKED IN THE HOUSE TO AND FRO. There had been signs of life in the flesh of the child becoming warm. But there was a great struggle of faith in the prophet. This was a new experience of what the Lord might do through him, and he could not know the Lord's will at once. THE CHILD SNEEZED SEVEN TIMES, AND . . . OPENED HIS EYES. These were the first acts of restored respiration, and they are described as successive steps.

36. TAKE UP THY SON. Compare Elisha's action (1 Kings 17: 23) and our blessed Lord's (Luke 7: 15).

37. SHE . . . FELL AT HIS FEET. The first impulse, even before taking up her son. She was full of gratitude for the great blessing.

Some Practical Lessons.—1. A prophet's chamber is a blessing to every house and to every heart. It is like the ark in the house of Obed Edom, bringing a perpetual blessing. It brings to the home a religious and intellectual atmosphere, which does more for the training of character, more for the transfiguring the home labors and joys, than any direct instruction can accomplish.

2. It makes all the difference in the world whether the prophet or Gehazi is behind the staff. The best thing in a sermon is the man behind it. The most important thing in teaching is the teacher. The French king said, "I am the state." Very largely the preacher must say, "I am the sermon," and the teacher, "I am the lesson."

3. Have we dead souls under our care? We must put our living souls to them, mouth to mouth, eye to eye, heart to heart. That is not enough; we must pray mightily. The work is too great for us. They are too dead to be revived by our life. As the mother prayed to Elisha (v. 30) must we pray to God. The highest work of a teacher is not to walk around giving out goodness as a flower does perfume. He must first get the blessing himself before he can give. Even Elisha's mantle is not enough for all time, nor for the greatest deeds.

Illustration. How suddenly the electric light darkens if the connection with the dynamo is broken! I was in an electric car one day, and it quickly stopped. The conductor looked up to the wire, and said, "Lost the power." Ah, how true! There was plenty in the wire above, but the up-reached finger did not touch it. How dead we were in all matters pertaining to progress! A touch, the power came, and we were off again.

4. Our hearts are God's highways through which he sends his blessings to other men. God reaches men through men; through human experience and love, the power of the Spirit touches other hearts. When God would revive his work among his people, when he would have a great reformation, when he would comfort the mourner, and deliver men from the pit of destruction, and bring them into his kingdom, it is almost always through human hearts. This is one of the greatest blessings God bestows upon his children that their hearts may be his highways.

5. We often send a dollar to the poor, when what they most need is our sympathy and love. The money should express the heart.

6. Dr. McLaren suggests that "the day will come, not here, but in the upper chamber, when parted ones shall clasp each other again; and many a mourner shall hear Jesus say from the throne what he once said from the cross, 'Woman, behold thy son; son, behold thy mother.'"

Notes of Reform.

Gov. Black, of New York, has signed a bill to prohibit the sale of liquor in department stores.

Ninety-two per cent. of our crime is the result of intoxicating liquors.—Christian Work.

The saloons in New York city are giving free drinks to anyone wearing a uniform of the United States navy or army.—Union Signal.

Friends of temperance in Scotland are jubilant over the fact that the duke of Life is refusing to grant sites for distilleries on his estates.

Let us all, who desire to avoid gout, rheumatism and dyspepsia, shun ale, beer, porter, stout, and all other kinds of fermented and distilled liquors.—Dr. Norman Kerr.

The statement is made that alcoholic candy is largely sold in Manchester and other English towns. It is said to be imported from Germany, and an analyst declares that it contains proportionately as much alcohol as does beer.

Sale of intoxicating liquors is prohibited throughout the entire Congo Free State, with the exception of certain districts west of the Inkissi, on the Lower Congo, where trade was established long before the Congo Free State was in existence.

Last week in a certain Pennsylvania community three men are known to have died as the result of their love for strong drink. Two were ground to pieces on the railroad track while the third had simply come to the end of his vital resources and gave up the struggle for life.—Pennsylvania Commonwealth.

NEARLY DISCOURAGED.

The Experience of Mr. Ralph Giberson, Who Suffered Greatly From General Debility.

From the Advertiser, Hartland, N. B.

Ralph Giberson, postmaster at Monquart, Carleton Co., N. B., is also known as a prosperous agriculturist and an enthusiast in his line. Now stalwart and rugged, weighing 250 pounds, he scarce would be recognized as the man who six months ago was the picture of one suffering the terrible symptoms of general debility. He was run down in health, suffered much from dizziness, almost blindness, general dullness and depression of spirits. He had a poor appetite and such food as he ate gave him great distress. He was incapacitated for the work that fell upon him and was well nigh utterly discouraged. The symptoms bordered on to those by which hypochondria is manifested. Through reading the Advertiser he learned of the particular benefit that several of his friends in this vicinity had received by the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and by the hope held out by their testimonials he secured a supply and took them according to directions. The result was almost magical; immediately his symptoms began to become less disagreeable, and he steadily gained until now he is perfectly free from his old troubles. He gladly and freely gives this testimonial, that all who may read it may know the remedy if ever they are troubled with general debility.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills cure by going to the root of the disease. They renew and build up the blood, and strengthen the nerves, thus driving disease from the system. The genuine can only be had in boxes, the wrapper around which bears the full trade mark, "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People."

The first shipments of the new war bonds were made from Washington Monday. They consisted of one thousand bonds of \$20 each and one thousand bonds of \$500 each. There are about 300,000 persons to whom bonds will be allotted and forwarded in due course by express.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT TO AGENTS!

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Then I heard of Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills, and got a box of them, and they have indeed worked wonders with her. I can recommend them very highly as the best remedy I ever heard of for complaints similar to those from which my daughter suffered."

Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills never fail to do good. They cure palpitation, faintness, dizziness, smothering sensation, weakness, nervousness, sleeplessness, anaemia, female troubles and general debility. Sold by all druggists at 50c. a box or three boxes for \$1.25. T. Milburn & Co., Toronto, Ontario.

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