

lands. He spoke of his own conversion—and how, when listening to an earnest address by Mr. Campbell at Pictou shortly before he went out to India ten years ago, he (Mr. Murray) felt constrained to devote himself to the service of the Master. He had been led during the intervening years to prepare for the ministry and to offer himself for service in Central India. His salary is provided by one congregation, that of St. Paul's, Montreal. Mr. Campbell exhorted his hearers to be in full sympathy with Christ. He pointed out the immensity of the field and the scarcity of missionaries. In Central India, where our missionaries labour, there is a population of ten millions, and among these we have a force of five missionaries. As many as the whole population of Nova Scotia die in those states every year,—die without the knowledge of Christ. Mr. Campbell made a powerful appeal to the consciences of his hearers. Dr. Burns briefly conveyed to the missionaries the earnest good wishes and sympathies of the people. Prayer was offered by Rev. P. M. Morrison, A. Simpson and H. H. McPherson. Among the ministers present were Dr. Todd, of Tarrytown, N. Y., Rev. Andrew Wilson (one of our veterans from the West), Rev. Mr. Snodgrass (son of Dr. Snodgrass), and Rev. Mr. Burnfield, of Brockville.

The first farewell missionary meeting held in Halifax was when Rev. John Geddie and his wife left for the South Seas in November 1846—nearly thirty-nine years ago. Dr. Geddie will ever be remembered as the honoured pioneer of a noble band who have done service in the foreign field. What changes since the 13th of November, 1846! Our pioneer missionary travelled over this country, but had not the advantage of one mile of railway. He went to Boston in eight days through a succession of terrible storms, and he had to go round Cape Horn before getting to the Pacific. We have had farewell meetings in Halifax in connection with the departure of George N. Gordon, J. W. Matheson, Samuel F. Johnston, Donald Morrison, James Gordon, Joseph Annand and J. W. Mackenzie and Hugh Robertson, all New Hebrides missionaries; and John Morton, Kenneth Grant, Thomas Christie and J. W. MacLeod for Trinidad; and now we have to add the meeting on Sunday night to bid farewell to Messrs. Campbell and Murray. If we count the wives of missionaries and other ladies who have gone into the field, we find that about forty Presbyterians have gone from Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island to labour in heathen lands.

When Dr. Geddie left us in 1846 the foreign missionary movement was confined to the "Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia." It gradually extended so as to embrace the whole Presbyterian family throughout the Dominion. The church which supported him has become identified with the Presbyterianism of all British America; and the missionary spirit which he was the first to kindle by actual personal enterprise now finds expression in missions to Trinidad, Central India, and Formosa, as well as to the New Hebrides.

Of the missionaries whom we have sent forth Dr. Geddie, Mr. and Mrs. Matheson, Mr. and Mrs. Johnston, the Gordons, Mr. and Mrs. Morrison "lie dead on the field of battle"—a gallant band of ten whose bodies rest in honoured graves—whose souls have gone to God, and whose characters and names are precious to the Church as a stimulus to greater zeal and self-sacrifice.

While ten are gone and a few have dropped from the ranks on account of impaired health or other reasons, the majority are still in harness, toiling diligently as the Master directs. When Mr. Geddie left Halifax in 1846 the annual contributions for missions to the heathen by the Presbyterians of British North America amounted to less than \$1,000. This year, 1885, the receipts amounted probably to \$70,000.

Taken all in all the mission work of our Church is in a very hopeful state, and the interest in it is steadily increasing. Among the most helpful agencies to-day are the "Women's Presbyterian Societies," which diffuse much information and collect a large amount of money.

## Sabbath School Teacher.

### INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

Sept. 1885. NAAMAN, THE SYRIAN. (2 Kings 5: 1-14.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."—Psalm li. 7.

#### INTRODUCTION.

After our last lesson two other miracles are reported before this. At Gilgal the sons of the prophets were eating pottage, with which wild gourds had been mixed. They began to feel the poisonous effects, and cried out: "There is death in the pot." Elisha cast a handful of meal into the pot, and then commanded them to eat. They did so and found that all injurious qualities were gone—destroyed by miraculous power.

The next miracle is somewhat similar to our Lord's, by which He satisfied 5,000 men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two small fishes (John vi. 5, 14). A man of Baal-shalisha brought the man of God twenty loaves and some ears of corn. He commanded his servant to give them to the people that they might eat. The servant objected that the quantity was so small that it was not worth while placing it before a hundred men. Elisha said: "Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the Lord, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof." And it was as he said, they ate and left thereof.

And now we reach an incident that is most instructive as an illustration of the great salvation provided in Christ.

#### EXPLANATORY.

Naaman, the General of the Syrian host, was held in high esteem by both king and people on account of victories won by him. These victories were won probably over the Assyrians with whom the Syrians were engaged in war about this time. This General is the object of interest in this chapter.

I. The Great Malady.—All his honour and happiness were marred by a great affliction. He was a leper. For the symptoms of leprosy see Lev. xiii, and for the ceremonial by which the clean were restored to the camp and sanctuary, see Lev. xiv. It is amongst the most awful of all the afflictions to which our poor bodies are subject. It is regarded as a decomposition of the juices of the body, such as takes place after death. A living death—in which the body falls away in pieces, until vital organs are reached and the sufferer is released.

The terrible nature of this disease makes it a suitable type of sin, which is a living death. And how many like Naaman, who have all that heart could wish of this world's good, are dead while they live? When it is not realized the danger is none the less but all the greater. But there are few who do not at times feel discomfort at the thought that all is not right. In the midst of prosperity they may hear the voice at any time say: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

The clause, "But he was a leper," is very often and very suitably used to illustrate the fact that in this life there is a thorn amongst the roses in every home and every heart.

II. The Remedy Revealed, ver. 2, 3.—The war between Israel and Syria assumed the form of marauding expeditions. A young girl was taken captive and served in Naaman's house. No doubt the leprosy was the great grief and subject of frequent conversation in the home.

The little girl thought of the great Prophet who was a subject of frequent conversation in her home in the past, and said to her mistress that she could recover her lord of his leprosy if he were in Samaria. The word is eagerly caught, as drowning men catch at straws, and reported to the king who at once proposed to test the suggestion.

That is the way in which the Lord often works. What He hides from the wise and prudent He reveals unto babes. (Matthew xi. 25.) "He hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the mighty." (1 Cor. i. 27, 28.) Joseph and Daniel are instances in which captives have brought blessings to their captors. Wherever we are we should endeavour to impart some good to our fellow creatures, and "he that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto eternal life." (John iv. 36.)

III. The Remedy Sought, ver. 5, 6.—There were some mistakes made by the King of Syria and Naaman that are instructive.

(1) Applies to the wrong person.—He sent a letter to the King of Israel with a very costly present, asking him to cure Naaman of his leprosy. He no doubt thought the king could make Elisha do what he liked. A mistake sinners still make when they apply to men for aid. In the presence of death the minister is often more depended on than the Master. "It is not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord." The King is put to confusion, and misunderstanding the situation, regards the application as a pretext for war.

(2) Comes in great pomp, ver. 9.—He came to the King and afterwards went to Elisha in his chariot, accompanied with a retinue of soldiers becoming his dignity at home. He feels his position and of course expects that everyone else will feel honoured in receiving a call from him.

That is precisely the mistake that many people make now—a days with respect to the Church. They stand upon their dignity and feel that they honour the Church by attending and the ministry by condescending to listen to their message. And unfortunately the Church encourages such impious pride by hiding for such by making concessions that are dishonouring to the Master in whose presence we are but as worms of the dust. Elisha did not so dishonour his Lord.

(3) Comes with purchase money.—The gifts that Naaman brings are very costly. The ten talents of silver are worth \$16,000, and the six thousand pieces of gold are equal to \$48,000. Besides that he brought ten changes of raiment, an oriental custom still existing. This was what he expected to pay for his cure, and no doubt thought that it was ample reward.

So men come to Christ thinking that they can reward Him. Their gifts to the Schemes of the Church, and their services in different ways rendered, are thought to establish a claim upon His favour. See the story of the Pharisee and the Publican in the temple, for the difference between the true and false spirit in which to come to the throne of grace. (Luke xviii. 10.)

IV. Naaman's Pride Humbled, ver. 10.—When he came and sat in his chariot before the door, he expected, as he afterwards himself said, to be taken a great deal of notice of and was greatly offended at the treatment he received. But the Lord knew his heart and directed his servant Elisha in his conduct towards him.

(1) Sent a servant.—Elisha did not go to the door to receive him and make a great ado about him. He sent Gehazi his servant with a message. How irritating to the pride of a man who was such an idol at home.

(2) Go and wash in Jordan.—This seemed more offensive still. Naaman was familiar with the ways of magicians and false prophets. They gave themselves importance by pretentious ceremonies, and he expected some such performance now. Instead of that, the simple command to wash in Jordan—without even an interview with the Prophet—is most disappointing.

He is indignant and turns away in disgust. All his fine display and costly presents treated as of no account, and himself as if he were a common man! Asked to wash in muddy Jordan, whilst at Damascus they gave the pure waters of Abana and Pharpar! Too absurd!

(3) Money despised.—He also expected no doubt that the Prophet would have an eye to the money, and be delighted when he saw all that he had for him. But there is not a word about it, and afterwards when in a different spirit he pressed it upon Elisha, it was rejected. How differently Elisha appeared to him now! A man above this world's appetites and desires!

V. Remedy Applied, ver. 13.—His servants reasoned with him wisely and said: "If you had been asked to do some great thing you would do it. Why not obey when it

is simply wash and be clean?" That seems reasonable. He tries—dips himself seven times in the river and his flesh that had decayed away returned, as pure as the flesh of a child.

How much like the way in which sinners treat the Saviour! They will have something different from what He prescribes. Some unusual experience—convulsion of feeling, overpowering joy or overwhelming conviction of sin, something other than the simple "believe and be saved." That is all, and "Whosoever heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

How wonderful that the divine patience waits to receive those who are so stubbornly disobedient when they do come!

VI. Naaman's Gratitude, ver. 15.—He returns to give thanks and how thankful he must be to have escaped from that awful disease! "What shall we render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards us?"

(1) Acknowledges God.—That is the first thing the soul does. Recognizes that Jehovah is the true God and only God. A great lesson for Naaman to learn. We all need to learn it more fully that His claims may be remembered.

(2) Offers a gift.—He would like to make some return for this great kindness. But Elisha will not accept it, because he wishes to teach Naaman that the spirit of the Jewish religion is not mercenary but a spirit of love that delights to do good to man for his own sake.

(3) Worships God.—He resolves after this to worship no other god. And asks that in order that he may do so acceptably a load of *Jehovah's earth* be given him upon which to offer sacrifices. He is still labouring under the delusion that Jehovah is a local divinity and can only be worshipped rightly on Jewish soil. But he asks one concession. His position requires that he should go with his master to the house of Rimmon, and bow in the house of Rimmon, when his master worships. He hopes this will be forgiven by Jehovah.

He is evidently much in the dark, but Elisha does not enter into explanations. The time of the Gentiles did not yet come. He dismisses him with the words: "Go in peace." The conduct and punishment of Gehazi, which follow, are most instructive. Let us read and beware.

#### ILLUSTRATION.

A little girl was taught by her teacher that "no swearer can enter into Heaven." She heard her father swearing one day, and went and sat behind the door, crying. Her father asked her what she was crying for. She told him what her teacher said, and that she was crying because she was afraid that he would not get to Heaven. He hesitated a few moments and then said: "Well, my dear child, by the help of God you will never hear me take the name of God in vain again." It was the turning point in his life.

#### PAYING CLERGY AT FUNERALS.

People do not call a doctor or a lawyer to do work for them without making him compensation; but, when they wish to have their dead buried, if they are connected with no parish, they call in the minister they choose and accept his services without paying him, without thanking him, without the thought that he has done any more than his duty. The clergyman may be put to both inconvenience and expense by the demand upon his time, but it is thought that his vocation covers the service that he renders, and that nothing more needs be said about it. In the rural districts the ordinary pastor can bury all the people in parts adjacent to his parish and still have time to spare, but in cities and large towns it is a tax which by the long-suffering and Christian courtesy of the clergy has been borne without complaint, but which is more of an exaction than they feel that they ought to submit to. No clergyman should fail to respond to any demand made upon him for the poor. In sickness and in death the minister of Christ is always their friend, but when people who can afford a retinue of carriages at the funerals of their friends, do nothing for the maintenance of religious worship, and sponge upon the busy clergy for the burial of their dead, it is carrying meanness to a point where, like the darkness of Egypt, it is a meanness that can be felt. It is often, no doubt, through forgetfulness that the services of clergymen to unchurched people, in the burial of their friends, are not remunerated, but it is an oversight that ought no more to happen, where people have means, than they neglect to pay the doctor or the undertaker. The clergy seldom complain of these exactions, but they come so often, where the population is large, that a word in their behalf is like a word in season; it needs to be spoken at large, and to be heeded by all decent people in the matter of the burial of their dead.—*Boston Herald.*

#### BIBLE CHARACTERS.

Written in the East, these characters live forever in the West: written in one province, they pervade the world; penned in rude times, they are prized more and more as civilization advances; product of antiquity, they come home to the business and bosoms of men, women and children in modern days. Then it is any exaggeration to say: "The characters of Scripture are a marvel of the mind?" In our day character painting is much attempted by certain writers of fictitious narrative, but their method excludes them from a serious comparison with Homer, Virgil, and the sacred historians. They do not evolve characters by genuine narration. They clog the story with a hundred little essays on the personality of each character. They keep putting their heads from behind the show and openly analyzing their pale creations and dissecting them, and eking them out with comments and microscoping their poodles into lions. These are the easy expeditors of feeble art.—*Charles Reade.*

THE attendance at the Ontario Business College, Belleville, within a short period has embraced students from fifteen different Provinces and States. This fact shows how thorough is the work done, and how widespread is the reputation of this institution.