



LESSON IX. — AUG. 28.

**Elisha and Dothan.**

II. Kings vi., 8-18. Memory verses 15-17. Read verses 1-23.

**Golden Text.**

'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.' (Psa. xxxiv., 7.)

**Home Readings.**

- M. II Kings, vi., 1-23.—Elisha at Dothan.
- T. Psa. xxxiv., 1-22. — The safety of those who fear God.
- W. Psa. lxxviii., 1-17.—'The chariots of God are twenty thousand.'
- T. Heb. xii., 1-29.—'An innumerable company of angels.'
- F. Psa. cxviii., 1-29.—'The Lord is on my side.'
- S. Rom. viii., 28-39.—'Who can be against us?'
- S. Psa. xxvii., 1-14.—'Though an host should encamp against me.'

**Lesson Story.**

All through our lessons upon Elisha and his work we have seen how faithful and devoted he was to God. He was very like Jesus in his power to bless and help. The way to grow like Jesus is to obey him exactly.

There was war between Syria and Israel. The king of Syria would lay plans to surprise the children of Israel, and God would show his plan to Elisha, who would tell his king; so his soldiers would know how to keep out of the trap. This happened three times, and the Syrian king was angry, because he thought some of his own people were false to him. When he heard that the prophet Elisha knew his plans as fast as he made them, and warned Israel, he wanted to get Elisha into his power. The prophet was at Dothan, and thither the king of Syria sent chariots and horses and a great company of soldiers to take him. They came quietly by night and surrounded the little city. Early in the morning when the prophet's servant went out he saw the city surrounded by the enemy. He was frightened, for he saw no way they could escape.

He hurried in and said to the prophet, 'Alas, my master, what shall we do?' Elisha was not frightened at all. He said to his servant, 'Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.' Then he prayed the Lord to shew the servant the Lord's defence. So the Lord opened his eyes; and, behold, the mountain round about the city was full of horses and chariots of fire set there to guard Elisha. Presently the soldiers came into the city. And Elisha asked God to make them blind. God answered the prayer, and they were perfectly blind and could not find Elisha. Elisha led them to Samaria to the King of Israel, and then asked that their eyes might be opened. They were ashamed and frightened; but the king, at Elisha's command, treated them kindly, fed them, and sent them safely back to their king. This ended the war for that time.

God is just as ready to defend his children to-day as when Elisha needed his help. — 'Practical Commentary.'

**Lesson Hints.**

- 'The king of Syria'—Benhadad II., still at war with Israel.
- 'The man of God'—Elisha, to whom God revealed the secrets of the Syrian camp.
- 'Not once nor twice'—but several times.
- 'Which of us'—he thought that only his most intimate advisers knew of his plans, therefore one of them must be a traitor.
- 'One of his servants'—one who had probably seen and heard a good deal about the wonderful works of the prophet.
- 'Dothan'—twelve miles north of Samaria.
- 'A great host'—but no host is great enough to defeat God's purposes in an obedient man.
- 'They that be with us are more'—'If God be for us who can be against us?' 'Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.' (I. John iv. 4.)

'Open his eyes'—to the eye of faith deliverance will be visible in the darkest hours, we need to pray much for the opened eyes with which to see God's love in everything. As the two disciples on their way to Emmaus did not recognize their Lord, so we walk with blind eyes not recognizing the presence of the Saviour who never leaves us. 'Fire'—the symbol of purity and strength. The same fire which burns away the dross of our characters stands between us and our enemies to protect us from all real harm. God's obedient servant is immortal until his work is finished.'

**Questions.**

1. Can we hide any of our thoughts or plans from God?
2. Why were the plans of Benhadad continually defeated?
3. How did Elisha escape being taken captive?
4. Will God take care of us if we obey him?

**Suggested Hymns.**

'God will take care of you,' 'He is able to deliver you,' 'Mighty to save,' 'Jesus knows thy sorrow,' 'Rock of Ages,' 'Abide with me.'

**Practical Points.**

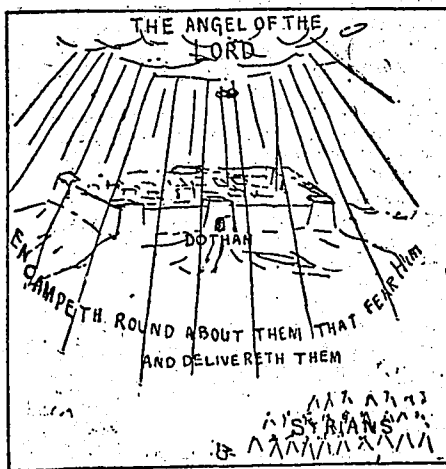
A. H. CAMERON.

Aug. 28.

- 'Man proposes, but God disposes.' Verse 8.
- One man with God can conquer a mighty host. Verses 9, 10.
- No heart trouble is a benefit unless it destroys selfishness. Verse 11.
- 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.' Verse 12.
- Horses and chariots, armies and councils, plots and stratagems, all are powerless to frustrate the plans of God. Verses 13, 14.
- 'Blind unbelief is sure to err and scan his works in vain.' Verse 15.
- Faith sees roses and sunshine where unbelief finds darkness and thorns.' Verses 16, 17.
- 'More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.' Verse 18.
- Tiverton, Ont.

**The Lesson Illustrated.**

We cannot draw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha at Dothan because that would take a Dore to draw, and more time even for him than our Sunday-school allows us. So we must make something simple that will do, and we take our chalk and draw a little square walled city, calling it Dothan. Then



with a bright yellow chalk we draw some clouds right over the city. From them the yellow rays come down in a golden shower all around the city, and at the edge of this ring of light we print the words of our Golden Text, making a golden wall of yellow, dazzling and shutting out the host of the enemy represented here by the tents of the Syrians below.

**Christian Endeavor Topics.**

Aug. 28.—'With your might.'—Ecl., ix., 10: John iv., 27-35.

**From Infancy.**

In the Jewish Church the most urgent commands were given concerning the instructions of the children. They were to be taught the Holy Scriptures from their infancy. These heavenly words were to be

lodged in their hearts so early and so deeply that they would color their first thoughts, sweeten their first affections, and give tone to all their aspiration and desires. This is what we as teachers should seek to do for the young children in our classes. We are to fill their hearts and minds with divine influences—the words which are able to make them wise unto salvation. We have the children when their lives are easily impressed, and when the blessing of our teaching will help to shape them for noble character and great usefulness.—J. R. Miller, D.D.

**Sunday School Management.**

Success or failure depends upon the school's leadership. The best business man (or woman) in the Church should be put at the head, and the utmost care taken in selecting the other officers and teachers. The officers and teachers ought to be persons; of unquestioned piety; of special fitness, as far as available, for the work in hand; of willingness to spend and be spent in making the school a success. Better an entire school managed and taught by one person than a full corps of lazy and perfunctory workers. The selection of Sunday-school officers and teachers is not a matter of Church 'compliment,' or 'policy,' but of the most sacred and far-reaching responsibility. If the Church has not the best, let it use the very best it has, and set itself steadfastly to raising the standard of its Sunday-school work.

A well managed school emphasizes the punctual and regular attendance of its officers, teachers and scholars.

1. Every officer should be at his post fully fifteen minutes before the opening moment, to set in order the work of the day, to get ready and in place, all books, papers, 'helps,' etc.; to provide for absent teachers, to greet and seat incoming scholars, to look after the condition and comfort of the rooms — in short, to have every detail in readiness to begin at the moment set for beginning. The day's victory over all opposing influences will be won or lost in these fifteen minutes of advance preparation.

2. The punctual and regular attendance of teachers is indispensable to success. The roll call of teachers should be maintained in every school. The teachers should be trained to come in advance of the scholars, or to give timely notice to the superintendent of intended absence. Before the school begins every teacher should be in his place with his class; should see that all books, bibles, and needed supplies are in hand; should take up the day's offering from the scholars; should note attendance in the class-book; should see to the proper seating of the class; and should engage them at once in work or conversation leading up to the lesson.

3. The punctual and regular attendance of scholars may be secured in three ways: By setting them a good example of invariable punctuality as officer and teacher. By keeping a class record of tardiness and absence, and having a standard of honorable recognition before the school for those who attend punctually and regularly—such as 'rolls of honor,' public mention or bulletin from the superintendent's desk, etc. By looking up every absent scholar before the next Sunday, either by personal visit, or letter or inquiry, so that no member of the school shall be absent two successive Sabbaths, without a personal visit from a teacher or officer of the school. There are many schools in the land in which this method is persistently and invariably used. The superintendent, for his own good, should make note every Sabbath of the absentees and follow them up, so far as it can be done. — 'Sunday-school Magazine.'

Speaking at the annual mission of the Dundee Town Mission, the Rev. A. F. Best asked: 'Does any rational person think that an hour or an hour and a half in the Sunday-school is adequate religious instruction for a child? Is there not a growing feeling amongst parents in the churches, that if they send their children to the Sunday-school, they have discharged their religious duties to them?' He then passed on to declare his conviction that in the near future the church will have to face the responsibility of providing schools and halls better adapted for the teaching of religion than at present exist, especially in the way of separate class-rooms. — 'Sunday-school Chronicle.'