

but comes in frequently to spend the evening, and when the pitcher of cider is brought from the cellar, this boy would often drink so much of it as to become quite intoxicated. 'It was really shocking,' to use her own words, 'to see such a depraved appetite.'

"Then why do you give it to him?" I asked.

"Why, we could not be so inhospitable as to refuse him a little cider! he would be offended; he is a nice boy otherwise, and his parents are among our best friends."

"And yet," I said, "you'll set before him that which is surely driving him to a drunkard's grave."

"How can you talk so! it's only cider!" was her reply.

"Only cider!" yet a truer name was never given it than 'The devil's kindling-wood,' as one of our reformed men calls it; and that you, Jason, should sell any one cider, even when it is sweet, grieves me beyond expression."

"Well, now, mother, there's no use making such a fuss about it; if I hadn't sold it to him some one else would, so where's the difference?"

"That's exactly what the saloon-keepers say; and you certainly do not uphold them in selling liquor."

"By no means," replied the deacon, decidedly. "But I reckon there's some difference between sweet cider and whiskey."

"A difference, yes, I grant it; but sweet cider becomes sour, and then it is an alcoholic drink, just as much as any liquor, and boys who begin by drinking cider when it is sweet, soon grow to like it when it 'sparkles,' and then to like it when it is old and 'hard.' The more I see the effects of cider drinking the more strongly I am opposed to it. I know it is a common drink among farmers, but more than one farmer's boy has been ruined by it; and how any father can so blindly allow cider to be kept in his cellar for his own and the neighbors' boys to drink is more than I can understand."

"Well, now, John Powelson's drank cider ever since he was a boy, and he's been a church member these twenty years. It ain't made him a drunkard, and it never will."

"No, Jason, Mr. Powelson is not a drunkard; but unless I am greatly mistaken his boys are not likely to escape so easily."

"If I'd known you was going to take it so hard, I wouldn't a promised he could have it. But I told him I'd bring it tomorrow, and I suppose I'll have to now."

The following day Deacon Jones loaded the barrel of cider, which was already hissing and foaming, as if a band of demons were confined within, and were struggling with might and main to grasp their victims before time—into his wagon. Mounting the seat, he rode away toward the village, where he left the cider, and pocketing the money, which somehow did not seem much of a satisfaction to him after all, drove slowly homeward.

"I don't know but Mary's right after all," he soliloquized as the horses joggled along, taking their own gait over the dusty highway, where on either side stretched the richly tinted woodland, or the now barren meadows and pastures, with now and then a herd of cows filing slowly homeward.

"If I'd fed them apples to the pigs," he continued, as he flicked the off horse lightly with the whip, "mebbe I'd a got just as much out of 'em; they do say as how apples is powerful good for pigs."

But let us see what became of that barrel of cider. It was proposed by one of the boys to add to it a half gallon of alcohol, as he had been told that would improve the flavor, and add also to the "keeping" qualities of the cider. This was accordingly done, with the added result of making it much more intoxicating.

The neighbor's boy had to be carried home on several occasions from the effects of it, in such a condition as to surprise and grieve his parents, who had been ignorant of the fact that their only son had developed an appetite which had been carefully guarded against in their own home, on account of hereditary tendencies. Too late the discovery was made to save the boy! The hereditary longing for drink, which had lain dormant for years, had been aroused, and like a lighted match to the fuse, it increased with frightful rapidity. Tom and Joe were often his companions at the saloon now; the alcoholic fluid in their

father's cellar was becoming tame to their taste.

But now their father begins to demur. What! his boys in a saloon! The companions of tipplers and bar-room loafers! In vain he protests, and their mother's tears are alike unavailing; every evening finds them at the saloon, where, with cards and dice, drink and vile jest, the hours are filled.

At last one evening after several drinks have been disposed of, a quarrel arose over a game of cards. Words led to blows. Enraged beyond control, Tom seized a heavy bottle, and with strength born of frenzy dealt his brother a crushing blow upon the head. As the blood trickled from the wound and formed into a little pool upon the floor where he lay, the door opened and John Powelson entered as he often had done lately to try to persuade the boys to go home.

The awe-stricken crowd parted to give him admission. Horrified he gazes upon his son. In another moment he is kneeling at his side with his head upon his arm.

"Go for a doctor, some one, quick!" he commands, and two men dart out of the room to do his bidding. "O Joe! my boy! my boy! to see you come to this!" he wails.

The dying boy's eyes unclose. "Father," he murmurs faintly; "cider did it; that was the starting point; if it hadn't been for that, I wouldn't be here now."

"Tom didn't mean to do it," he added, after a moment, as the now thoroughly-sobered brother, realizing what he had done, threw himself upon the floor by the side of Joe and wept aloud. "It wasn't him; it was the drink did it. Tell mother I—"

His words came more faintly, the heart fluttered feebly, and—he was gone. One son's life put out in shame and darkness, and twenty years in the penitentiary for the other is the result of cider-drinking in John Powelson's family, while the neighbor's son, a victim to his ill-advised so-called hospitality, after breking the hearts of his parents, eventually filled a drunkard's grave.

And shall any call it harmless, even though 'tis "only cider"?

"Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth."—*Union Signal*.

## MOTHERS, LEND A HAND AT THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSON.

BY PATSEY PRESTON.

In the corner near me in Sunday-school is a most fascinating class of keenly interested little people. The other day I asked their teacher how she managed to so entirely absorb them. "O," she said, "I think the reason they like the lesson is that each one knows something about it beforehand, the Golden Text, if not more. That too is the reason that they come so regularly, because after the trouble with the learning they are not easily influenced to stay at home. Before the mothers joined in this scheme the children often did not know what I was talking about. Now they listen for that place to come which they do know about, so that they may have a chance to talk some too. While waiting they take in a great deal that otherwise would have been lost."

If mothers would only insist that their children should learn their Sunday-school lessons! The every day lessons come five days in the week, and every care is taken that they are prepared; but the one day Sunday lessons are usually neglected. What must the children infer from this?

Could an Apostle Paul entertain and instruct a goodly number of children in one of our International lessons, in the half hour generally allotted, when the intervening history, and the story, and the moral, and the entertainment, must all be taught in those thirty minutes? If hard for him, I wonder what is the success of some of our teachers! And yet the mothers complain that Mary and Bobby are unwilling to go to Sunday-school; it must, of course, be the fault of the teaching. Probably we grown people have all had the experience of going to a lecture which lay over unfamiliar ground, and known how difficult it was to fix our thoughts upon it. Just this, plus wiggling neighbors and other diversions, is the case with the children. Can we blame them for voting it stupid?

In day-school poor recitations and bad behavior are punished, but in Sunday-

school the poor teacher has no weapon of authority or defence.

I so often think of a little girl whom I encountered on a Saturday's morning visit. She was, with furrowed brow and intent look, poring over a book. I knew the child well and expressed my wonder that she was not enjoying her sunny holiday. "Oh, I must learn my Sunday lesson, or mamma will make me wear a calico dress to church, because she says that she does not like to see little girls dressed up and knowing no lesson." My friend was right. This child saw that her mother thought the lesson of more worth than the finery. I wish that there were more like her. And if afterward there could be a chat over the day's lesson with them, it would be such a good way to keep the facts in mind. They would like to do that; we none of us object to ventilating our ideas when we have any, and are patiently listened to.—*Presbyterian Observer*.

## THE GRADED SYSTEM.

We hear much talk in some quarters about the graded system in Sabbath-school instruction. An enthusiast upon the subject makes the following suggestions as to plan and working:—"Take for example a school of two hundred and fifty strong. A main room, a pastor's room and an infant room. Divide, by the carpenter, the main room into four separate rooms. You will see that now we have six different apartments. Now we are ready to organize:—Go! primary (infant) department, secondary department, intermediate department, junior department, senior department and old folks department—six in all. Give two teachers to each department—two and two. The pastor and an elder for the old folks department. The pastor ought never allow himself to become superintendent of the school. He is pastor of it as well as pastor of the congregation because the school is one part of his congregation. A section for each room; one general section, an actual superintendent superintending the whole school. A superintendent ought not to teach. He has no time."—*Presbyterian Observer*.

## SCHOLAR'S NOTES.

(From Westminster Question Book.)

LESSON VII.—FEBRUARY 15, 1891.  
ELIJAH TAKEN TO HEAVEN.

II Kings 2:1-11.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 9-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"And Enoch walked with God and he was not for God took him."—Gen. 5:24.

HOME READINGS.

M. 2 Kings 2:1-11.—Elijah Taken to Heaven.  
T. Gen. 5:21-24; Heb. 11:1-6.—Enoch Taken to Heaven.

W. Matt. 17:1-9.—Elijah on the Mount.  
Th. Acts 1:1-12.—The Ascending Lord.  
F. 2 Thess. 1:1-12.—The Second Coming.  
S. 1 Thess. 4:13-18.—Meeting the Lord in the Air.  
S. Tit. 2:1-15.—Looking for that blessed Hope.

LESSON PLAN.

I. The Last Walk, vs. 1-4.  
II. The Last Miracle, vs. 5-8.  
III. The Last Request, vs. 9-11.  
TIME.—B.C. 896-890. The exact date is uncertain.  
PLACES.—Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho, the Jordan, on the eastern shore of which Elijah was translated.

OPENING WORDS.

Two years after the murder of Naboth Ahab was slain at Ramoth-Gilead, in battle with the Syrians. His son Ahaziah succeeded him. To him Elijah was sent with a warning of death because of his idol-worship, and called down fire from heaven upon the soldiers sent to arrest him. 2 Kings 1:3-37. Only one other act of Elijah of a public character is recorded—viz., the sending of a message in writing to Jehoram, king of Judah. 2 Chron. 2:12. Of the close of his ministry we have a record in this lesson.

HELP IN STUDYING THE LESSON.

V. 1. *Gilgal*—Six miles north of Bethel, the location of one of the schools of the prophets.  
V. 2. *I will not leave thee*—no dread of the final parting could deter Elisha from seeing the last moments and hearing the last words of the prophet. *Bethel*—twelve miles north of Jerusalem.  
V. 3. *Sons of the prophets*—young men in the schools of the prophets. V. 4. *Jericho*—twenty miles north-east from Jerusalem, and twelve miles from Bethel. V. 8. *His mantle*—the badge of his prophetic office. *Were divided*—compare Ex. 14:21; Job 3:13. V. 9. *A double portion*—"Let a first-born son's double portion (see Deut. 21:17) of the prophetic spirit descend upon me." V. 10. *A hard thing*—the granting of this request was not in Elijah's gift, and he knew not yet if God meant to bestow it. *If thou see me*—if he was able to retain to the end the same devoted perseverance and to keep his eye set and steadfast on the departing prophet, the gift would be his. V. 11. *Chariot of fire*—one of the multitudes of God's invisible host. (See 2 Kings 6:17; Ps. 68:17.)

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What was the subject of the last lesson? Why was Naboth unwilling to sell his vineyard to Ahab? By what wicked plot did Ahab get possession of it? What judgment did Elijah denounce against Ahab? Title of this les-

son? Golden Text? Lesson Plan? Time? Place? Memory verses?

I. THE LAST WALK, vs. 1-4.—How did the Lord purpose to take Elijah to heaven? Who went with him from Gilgal? What request did Elijah make? What was Elisha's reply? Where did they go? What did the sons of the prophets say to Elisha? What was his answer? Whether did Elijah say the Lord had sent him? What did Elisha again say?

II. THE LAST MIRACLE, vs. 5-8.—What took place at Jericho? Where did Elijah go from Jericho? What did some of the sons of the prophets do? What miracle did Elijah perform at Jordan?

III. THE LAST REQUEST, vs. 9-11.—What did Elijah say to Elisha after crossing Jordan? What did Elisha ask? On what condition did Elijah say his request should be granted? What took place as they went on and talked? What became of Elijah?

WHAT HAVE I LEARNED?

1. That it is the Lord who takes our friends from us.  
2. That God confers signal honor on signal services.  
3. That spiritual gifts are more to be desired than anything else.  
4. That dying Christians are taken into heaven to be forever with the Lord.  
5. That a life of trouble may have a glorious hereafter.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW.

1. What places did Elijah and Elisha visit together? Ans. Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho.  
2. What parting request did Elisha make of Elijah? Ans. I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit rest upon me.  
3. What was Elijah's answer? Ans. If thou see me taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee.  
4. How were they separated? Ans. A chariot and horses of fire parted them, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

LESSON VIII.—FEBRUARY 22, 1891.

ELIJAH'S SUCCESSOR.—2 Kings 2:12-22.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 12-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."—Zech. 4:6.

HOME READINGS.

M. 2 Kings 2:12-22.—Elijah's Successor.  
T. Zech. 4:1-14.—"By My Spirit."  
W. Acts 2:1-21.—The Spirit on the Apostles.  
Th. 1 Cor. 12:1-13.—The Gifts of the Spirit.  
F. 1 John 2:20-29.—The Unction of the Spirit.  
S. Rom. 8:1-11.—The Spirit is Life.  
S. Gal. 5:16-26.—Walk in the Spirit.

LESSON PLAN.

I. The Mantle of Elijah, vs. 12-14.  
II. The Spirit of Elijah, vs. 15-18.  
III. The Power of Elijah, vs. 19-22.  
TIME.—B.C. 896-890. The exact date is uncertain.  
PLACES.—Jordan, Jericho.

OPENING WORDS.

The Lord had chosen Elisha to be the successor of Elijah, and by divine command he had been anointed to that office. 1 Kings 19:16, 19-21. From that time he had been Elijah's constant companion until his master had been taken from him. By the miracles of this lesson Elisha was accredited before the prophets and the people as the divinely-appointed successor of Elijah.

HELP IN STUDYING THE LESSON.

V. 12. *Elisha saw*—and was thus assured that his request (vs. 9, 10) was granted. *My father*—these words express what Elijah was for Elisha. *The chariot of Israel*—what Elijah was for the whole nation. V. 13. *Took up the mantle*—the same that Elijah had cast upon him as a symbolical call to the prophet's office (1 Kings 19:16, 19), and which he now leaves to him as a sign that his prayer is fulfilled and that he must undertake the leadership of the prophets. V. 14. *They parted*—a proof that he inherited his master's power. V. 15. *Came to meet him*—as now their spiritual father and leader. V. 19. *Naught—harmful*. V. 21. *Cast the salt*—a symbolical act, in which salt is not the healing agent, but an emblem of the divine agency by which the spring was made pure.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What was the subject of the last lesson? How was Elijah taken from the earth? Title of this lesson? Golden Text? Lesson Plan? Time? Place? Memory verses?

I. THE MANTLE OF ELIJAH, vs. 12-14.—What did Elisha see? Of what was this a token to Elisha? v. 10. What did Elisha say? Where did he go? What did he take with him? What miracle did he perform?

II. THE SPIRIT OF ELIJAH, vs. 15-18.—What did the sons of the prophets say? How did his passing over the Jordan prove this? What reverence did they show him? Why did they thus honor him? What did the sons of the prophets propose to Elisha? What reason did they give for this search? How long did they continue it? With what result?

III. THE POWER OF ELIJAH, vs. 19-22.—What did the men of Jericho say to Elisha? Why did they say this? What did he tell them to bring him? What did he do? Why did he cast salt into the fountain? What was the result? Who healed the waters? Of what was this miracle a proof?

WHAT HAVE I LEARNED?

1. That God's servants are the true strength and defence of nations.  
2. That God prepares his chosen servants for their work.  
3. That the one who prays for grace and strength to do the Lord's work will not find his prayer vain.  
4. That our hearts, like the waters of Jericho, need to be purified.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW.

1. Who saw the translation of Elijah. Ans. Elisha.  
2. What did Elisha cry out as he saw it? Ans. My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!  
3. What miracle did Elisha perform at Jordan? Ans. He smote the waters of Jordan with the mantle of Elijah, and they were parted.  
4. What did the sons of the prophets say when they saw him? Ans. The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha.  
5. What second miracle was wrought by Elisha? Ans. The impure water of Jericho was healed.