

niece the Queen Esther. The Jews slew of their foes 75,000, and this day the devout Jew celebrates the deliverance of his people from wicked Haman by the feast of Purim on the 14th Adar when the Book of Esther is read in the synagogue and the whole congregation exclaim: "Cursed be Haman, and blessed be Mordecai; cursed be Zeresh (wife of Haman); blessed be Esther; cursed be all idolaters; blessed be all Israelites, and blessed be Harbonah who hanged Haman."

I need only refer to the slaughter and captivity of the Jews at the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, when over 1,000,000 perished. "Zion was ploughed as a field and Jerusalem became heaps, and the mountains of the house as the high places of the forest." Under the Romans in the first and second centuries, under the Persians in the sixth, under the crusaders in the twelfth, under Ferdinand and Isabella in the fifteenth century, the Jews suffered the most cruel persecutions. It was then that were fulfilled the terrible prophecies of Deuteronomy xxviii. "Thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore and no man shall save thee. . . . The stranger that is within thee, shall get up above thee very high, and thou shalt come down very low. . . . Thou shalt serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger and in thirst and in nakedness, and in want of all things (v. 48), etc. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest. But the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart and failing eyes and sorrow of mind: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and thou shalt have none assurance of thy life. (V. 67): In the morning thou shalt say, would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes, which thou shalt see." In place of their former warlike spirit would be a spirit of abject fear. I read from a modern chronicler that the fate of the Jews in Spain during the 15th century beggars description. For centuries before, the residence of the Jews in Spain had been most prosperous first under the Moorish rule, but under the Spanish rule in the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella the fires of persecution burned, and in one year at Seville 280 Jews were burned at the stake. In 1492 a decree was issued banishing all who did not become Christians within 4 months. The Jews are said to have offered an immense sum for its revocation, but in vain. For a moment the king and queen hesitated, but Torquemada the Grand Inquisitor dared to liken his royal master and mistress to Judas if they drew back. They shrank from the awful imputation, and the decree was enforced with the most heartrending results to the Jews—men, women and children. The calamities of the proscribed race at that time were likened by themselves to the calamities of the nation at the siege of Jerusalem by Titus in A.D. 70. The number of the banished has been variously estimated from 300,000 to 800,000. Eighty thousand found an entry into Portugal, limited to eight months, on payment of eight golden pennies per head. In 1495 the king, Emmanuel, issued an order for their banishment, but secretly commanded that the children under 14 should be taken from their parents and brought up as Christians. The mothers killed their children with their own hands, threw them into wells and rivers in order to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Christians.

To turn to England; after the conquest by William in 1066, the Jews were brought over, it is said, as engines of taxation. William of Newburgh says: "The Jews are royal usurers," and in this capacity were domiciled in England. Their predominance as usurers is easy to be explained. The Church prohibited Christians from taking interest on money, in this way opening a lucrative trade to the Jews, who were also excluded from commercial guilds and forbidden to employ slaves at a time when manufactures were produced by serf-labour. The rate of interest allowed to them reached the enormous rate of 86½ per cent. The public hatred became so great in the reign of Edward I., that the Jews were soon expelled from England amid horrid cruelties. We do not read of them again in England till the Protectorate of Cromwell. In 1657 they purchased a burying ground, and Cromwell's favourable consideration of them is abundantly proved by his granting to Manasseh Ben Israel, the Jewish advocate, a pension of £100 a year. In 1753 an Act for the emancipation of the Jews was passed by Parliament, but a cry was raised by the fanatics that the Church and religion were in danger, and the repeal of the Act was obtained at the beginning of the following session. It was understood that the Jews had no civil rights in England till 1829. In 1673 they were indicted for worshipping in public in their synagogues, and in 1685, 37 of their merchants were suddenly arrested in the Royal Exchange, under the Statute 23, Elizabeth, for not attending any church. In 1835, David Solomon served as sheriff, though a Jew, a bill having passed through Parliament which qualified him; and in 1866, the last obstacles to the admission of a Jew to Parliament as commoner or peer were removed.*

Two incidents from France will suffice. The people of Languedoc and the central regions (A.D. 1321) signalized themselves by massacres of the detested race, so horrible, that in one place, Verdun, on the Garonne, the Jews, in the madness of their agony, threw down their children to the mob from the tower in which they were gathered, hoping, but in vain, to appease the devilish fury of their assailants. In the following year the plague broke out, and the wildest misdeeds were laid to their charge. The appalling statement is made:—"In whose provinces every Jew was burned. At Chinon a deep ditch was dug, an enormous pile was raised, and 160, of both sexes, burned together. Yet Christianity never produced more resolute martyrs; as they sprang into the place of torment, they sang hymns as though they were going to a wedding."—*Vide Chambers' Encyclopædia* v. "Jews," p. 715.

In 1840 there was a thrilling illustration of Anti-Semitism in what is called by Lucien Wolf in his interesting Life of Sir Moses Montefiore, "The Damascus Drama." It had been asserted that the Jews were required by a secret tradition to make use of human blood in the great Feast of the Passover. This charge of "the ritual use of human blood—the red spectre of Judaism," says Mr. Wolf, "has haunted the whole history of the Jewish dispersion, and has written the greater portion of its martyrlogy." When this Damascus story reached Western Europe, it caused a thrill throughout. A Capuchin friar, Thomas de Calangiano, had unaccountably disappeared, and a cry was raised that

the Jews had murdered him in order to use his blood in their religious rites. A Jewish barber was tortured to furnish evidence, wealthy Jews were thrown into prison, sixty Jewish children from three to ten years old were torn from their mothers and deprived of food in hopes that their mothers would supply evidence of the murder. Fearful injustice was perpetrated, and the details were so harrowing that the Western Jews, headed by Sir Moses Montefiore, brought their powerful influence, backed by an enlightened public opinion, to bear upon the Sultan, and a more humane system for the protection of Jews who had been without the pale of the law was inaugurated.

If we turn to the Roman States, we do not find the Jew better off. On the 15th August, 1858, the *Jewish Chronicle* published the following:—"On Wednesday evening, 23rd June, an officer of the papal police, accompanied by *gens d'armes*, presented himself at the residence of Signor Mortara, an Israelite, and demanded in the name of the holy office the surrender of one of his boys. The same had been secretly baptized by the Christian servant-maid in the house, which had been betrayed to the holy office. The terror and consternation of the Jewish family can easily be imagined when, despite all remonstrance, the order was executed, and the boy, on the evening of the 24th, was transferred to the convent of the Dominicans, in order to be brought up there as a Christian." The child, called Edgar Levi Mortara, was only six years old, and it turned out that his nurse, Mina Morisi, being afraid for its health, had consulted a druggist named Lepori, who suggested that it had better be baptized. The secret was kept several years, but came out through the confessional. Vain attempts were made to recover the child, and, meanwhile, the mother died of a broken heart. The matter did not rest there. Meetings were held in different parts of the civilized world condemning the action of the authorities. At length, all the great European powers—including the Austrian Government—advised the Papal See that the child should be surrendered, but the answer was a firm *non possumus*. It was understood that Edgar Levi Mortara was being educated as a Catholic. That the Holy Father was deeply moved by the powerful influence brought to bear upon the papacy for the restoration of the child was shown in 1869, when the Pope addressed the assembled Canons of the Basilica and Lateran. Among the Catholic students present was Edgar Mortara, whom Pius IX. addressed as follows:—"You are very much endeared to me, my son, because I have obtained you for Christ at a great price. I have paid a very large ransom on your account. A universal invective has broken out against me and the Apostolic chair. Governments and nations, the mighty of the world, and the men of the press, who are also the power of the day, have declared war against me. Even the kings have placed themselves at the head of the campaign, and caused their ministers to write me diplomatic notes on your account. But I do not wish to complain of kings. All I wish is to refer to the outrages, calumnies, and maledictions pronounced by many individuals who appear to feel indignation that the good God should have made to you the gift of the true faith by removing you from the darkness of death, the same in which your family is still immured. They complain chiefly of the misfortune suffered by your parents because you have been regenerated by the holy baptism, and because you have received that instruction which God was pleased to grant you." Nothing has since been heard of Mortara except that in the ordinary course he was ordained a Catholic priest. (To be continued.)

Sabbath School Work.

For the PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

LESSON HELPS.

LESSON XI., Sept. 13th, 1885.

THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON.

2 Kings iv., 18-37. Memorize vs. 32-35.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I am the Resurrection and the Life."—John xi., 25.

Home Readings.

M. 2 Kings iv., 8-17. The Prophet's Chamber.
T. 2 Kings iv., 18-37. The Shunammite's Son.
W. Luke vii., 11-17. The Widow's Son Raised.
Th. Matt. ix., 18-26. The Ruler's Daughter Restored.
F. John xi., 17-44. Lazarus Raised.
S. Acts ix., 32-43. Dorcas Raised.
Sab. 1 Cor. xv., 35-58. Believers to be Raised.

CATECHISM.—QUES. 38.

LESSON HYMNS.

Selected from "The Children's Hymnal": Nos. 156, 161, 44.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

After the translation of Elijah, Elisha took his place as the Lord's prophet in Israel, selecting as his home—Samaria, the capital, and continued in the exercise of his office for sixty years, from time to time making circuits over the whole country. His first public act was to advise the Kings of Israel and Judah in a war against Moab. He is next found aiding a poor widow and her son by the miraculous increase of their store of oil. The miracle of our lesson follows. The woman whose son was raised from the dead lived at Shunem, a place about three and a half miles north of Jezreel, close by the "City of Nain," and on the direct track of Elisha's frequent journeys among the schools of the prophets. The rich and pious Shunammite woman had added to her home a "prophet's chamber" for the express purpose of entertaining Elisha as he came and went. She received her reward in a son sent by God to her childless home at the word of the prophet. Now this only child is snatched away by sudden illness, but through the mother's faith and the prayers of the man of God, is brought to life again.

LESSON OUTLINE AND NOTES.

I. THE CHILD'S DEATH (VS. 18-20).

18.—When the child was grown to such an age as to be able to follow his father to the harvest-field.

To the reapers. The harvest came in the early days of June, and with it often excessive heat. "I know by experience," says the great traveller Thomson, "that this valley glows like a furnace in harvest-time."

19.—My head, my head! The symptoms would indicate sunstroke and inflammation of the brain.

Carry him to his mother. A touch of nature. The father, pressed by the hurry of harvest, and

supposing the attack to be a trifling headache, bids "a lad" (Rev. Ver., "his servant") carry the child home to his mother. "The mother's lap," says Cuyler, "is infancy's first hospital; her bosom is sorrow's first and surest retreat." It is not as the "great woman" in her spacious and elegant home, but as the "mother" that the Shunammite appears in the lesson.

20.—Sat on her knees till noon. "Lay in her arms," as we would say.

And then died. What a blasting of the mother's hopes, centred on an only child! What will this God-fearing, pious woman do in her extremity of trouble? Does she not remember David's prayer (Psalms xx., 42), "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble. . . . Send thee help from the sanctuary."

II. THE MOTHER'S APPEAL (VS. 21-28).

21.—Went up. To the roof or balcony-chamber which had been built and furnished for Elisha's use.

Laid him on the bed of the man of God. Recalling, doubtless, that Elijah had laid the widow of Zarephath's son "on his own bed" in raising him from the dead (1 Kings xvii., 19). She had evidently already set her heart on the restoration of her child to life.

Shut the door upon him and went out. Not hopeless, as we shall see. How dreadful the turning of the key in the death-chamber whence unbelief has driven hope! Hopeless sorrow is earth's heaviest burden.

22.—She called unto her husband. Not through a messenger, but by the unusual course of going in person. She was evidently a woman of promptness and energy, acting now under the stimulus of motherly love and strong faith and hope.

May run to the man of God. Her only hope is in the miracle-working prophet, and in the God whom he and she alike reverence and serve. Mt. Carmel, where the man of God then was, was seventeen miles distant across the Plain of Esdraelon.

23.—It is neither new moon nor Sabbath—i.e., It is not the time of any religious festival. The "new moon," or first day of each month, was, by the law, to be kept holy. (See Num. x., 10; xxviii., 11-15; Ps. lxxxix., 3.) Regular sacrifice to Jehovah had, of course, ceased in the kingdom of Israel through the division of the nation, Jerusalem with all its temples being within Judah, and the priests and Levites having held by Judah. A custom seems to have grown up of resorting to the prophets instead at the festival seasons for instruction—a sort of synagogue worship.

And she said, it shall be well. Marg., "Peace," or, "It is all well," or, "Never mind." The expression is sometimes employed as a salutation, and again, as here, to satisfy or silence a person without giving a definite answer. She kept her husband, who seems to have been a somewhat dull and slow man, and perhaps an unbeliever or idolater, in ignorance of her purpose, lest some obstruction should be thrown in the way.

24.—She saddled an ass, the beast, to this day, ordinarily used for journeys.

Drive and go forward. The servant would run behind the beast, belabouring it with a stick as occasion required.

Slack not thy riding for me. The Rev. Ver. makes the meaning clearer: "Slacken me not the riding." Make all haste.

25.—When the man of God saw her afar off. Mt. Carmel, on the side looking to the plain of Esdraelon, across which they were riding, is exceedingly steep and almost 1,600 ft. high, so that far distant objects could be seen. We need not think of Elisha as upon the top of the mountain, but merely at a commanding elevation.

Gehazi, his servant. The attendant of Elisha, as the latter had been of Elijah. He promises well here, but displayed later a bad cunning and avarice in obtaining fraudulently money and garments from Naaman, and was, in consequence, smitten with incurable leprosy and dismissed from the prophet's service. Further on in the history "he is mentioned as being engaged in relating to King Jehoram all the great things which Elisha had done, when the Shunammite, whose son Elisha had restored to life, appeared before the king, petitioning for the house and land of which she had been dispossessed in her seven years' absence in Philistia (2 Kings viii.)."—*Smith's Bible Dictionary*.

26.—Run now . . . to meet her. The prophet properly treats his hostess and friend with marked consideration and courtesy.

She answered, It is well. "Shalom"—"a word of such ambiguous meaning that the woman's reply cannot be taxed with falsehood. She would not be detained by any unnecessary explanations. She answered, 'It is well'; but at the same time she rushes up the 'hill' and seizes the prophet by the feet. This scene is natural and very graphic. If you ask after a person whom you know to be sick in the East, the reply at first will invariably be, 'Well, thank God!' even when the very next sentence is to inform you that he is dying."—*Thomson*.

27.—She caught him by the feet. Itself a mutely eloquent prayer. (Compare Matt. xxviii., 9).

Thrust her away, as guilty of an offence against her Master's dignity. With like surprise, but suppressing their indignation, did the disciples of Jesus observe their Master conversing with the woman of Samaria at the well's mouth (John iv., 27).

Let her alone; etc. An instance of deep and wise sympathy.

The Lord hath hid it from me. Elisha's ignorance should create no difficulty. God exercises severe economy in the matter of miraculous revelations and gifts. It was but seldom that, as in the case of Joseph and Pharaoh's dream, and Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar's dream, inspired knowledge of past events was imparted. Elisha can ascertain from the afflicted mother the cause of her grief. At the proper moment he shall be clothed with miraculous power.

28.—The woman takes this indirect way of disclosing a loss too grievous to be put into words. "This child was sent me through thy prayers not mine. Was it sent only to mock my hopes?"

III. THE DEAD RESTORED (VS. 29-37).

Gird up thy loins. This consisted in tightening the girdle or belt, and at the same time tucking under it the loose flowing robe, so that the legs might be left free.

Salute him not. Implies urgency. Compare our Lord's instructions to the seventy (Luke x., 4). "The Orientals were famous for elaborate and lengthy greetings. Polite expressions universally exchanged between travellers were not unfrequently accompanied with repeated and elaborate inquiries after personal health and the welfare of friends, and served as a prelude to extended conversation. They were also accompanied with a variety of gestures and forms of politeness. Inferiors, at the approach of their betters, stopped and waited till

they had passed: riders dismounted to exchange salutations. A servant would be specially apt to waste time in this way; and possibly Gehazi had peculiar tendencies in that direction."

Lay my staff upon the face of the child. The staff was the badge of the prophetic gift of might and strength, as was the sceptre of kingly authority. Turner says that "In Samoa the son, or representative of a political head, when sent on any important message to another district, takes with him his father's staff and fly-flapper, to show that his message is with the sanction and authority of the person to whom these belong."

It is not quite clear whether the prophet at first supposed the child to be merely in a stupor, or thought that for once he might delegate his authority to his student follower, or whether he sent Gehazi forward to help the woman's faith by this beginning made of a response to her implied petition for the restoration of her boy to life.

30.—I will not leave thee. A pathetic combination of a desire for human sympathy and of an all-conquering faith like Jacob's at Jabbok. Nor yet is delicate courtesy wanting. She will not venture to say to the prophet "Come"; but leaves her wish to be inferred from the "I will not leave thee."

And he arose and followed her. Having obtained further guidance of the Spirit of God, or changed his purpose at the woman's entreaties, or tested her faith; or having already taken the first step in the sending forward of Gehazi, he now completes his contemplated course of action.

31.—The child is not awaked. The euphemism of "sleep" for "death" was already familiar among the Jews. That the child was really dead is evident from vs. 20, 32.

32.—Shut the door upon them twain; upon himself and the dead child;—and God.

And prayed. In prayer lay the strength of the prophets. (Compare 1 Kings xvii., 21).

34.—He went up and lay upon the child, etc., as Elijah had done in a similar case (1 Kings xvii., 21.) Why this method of procedure was required is not explained. Even our Lord, who brought Lazarus to life by a word, when restoring sight to a blind man, made an ointment of clay and spittle, and anointed his eyes, and bade him go and wash in the pool Siloam.

Some find in the incident of the death chamber an analogy to the work of Christ in saving men:—

"We see with wonder how the God-man stretches Himself upon our cold, lifeless humanity, that was dead in trespasses and sins, and even contracts Himself to the narrow span of our infancy, childhood, manhood; His blessed mouth and eyes and hands come into contact with our own. He breathes upon us the Holy Ghost, and we are quickened and warmed into a new and eternal life. We are thus raised from spiritual death, and our ears hear, and our eyes see, and our hands handle, the Word of Life (1 John i., 1)."—*Terry*.

The flesh of the child waxed warm. Some heat was doubtless communicated from Elisha's body, but the warmth was the result of the rekindling of the life-fire within by divine agency.

35.—Then he returned and walked in the house. To be explained as the result of his strong emotion. He was wrestling with God for the child's resurrection.

The child sneezed seven times, etc., natural tokens of returning animation. Compare the miracle of the gradual restoration of sight to the blind man in Mark viii., 22-25.

36.—Call this Shunammite. She, with all others, had been excluded from the chamber, and was waiting without in hopeful expectancy.

Take up thy son. See 1 Kings xvii., 23; Luke vii., 15. What joy in that mother's heart!

37.—Fell at his feet. Notwithstanding her supreme delight, she did not forget to acknowledge first her gratitude to Elisha, and to the Lord who had had compassion upon her.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS.

1. Our heaviest trials often come through our most highly-prized possessions (ver. 20).
2. God encourages his people to large expectations. (See Ps. lxxxix., 10; ver. 21.)
3. It is to good men and women that we turn in affliction (ver. 22).
4. "Be courteous" (1 Pet. iii., 8), is a precept which ought to be specially remembered by Christians (ver. 26).
5. How precious is an intelligently sympathetic friend (ver. 27).
6. "Oh wondrous power of faithful prayer!" (ver. 33).
7. What neither a mother's love, nor Gehazi's efforts, nor Elisha's staff could accomplish, the power of God accomplished. So nothing but Jesus Christ, the Resurrection and the Life can raise the dead soul (ver. 36).
8. How great the reward of faith (ver. 36)!
9. Faith in God does not exclude the use of means.
- Kindness to God's servants will not fail to bring its reward. (Whole passage.)

LET me halt a moment to suggest to you how beautifully this act of the prophet symbolizes the most effectual methods of raising dead souls to life. Elisha did not shrink from touching the cold, silent corpse and putting himself into the closest connection with it. Even so must every pastor, every parent, every Sabbath School teacher apply the warmth of personal affection and the close contact of a personal interest to each unconverted soul. Nothing but the spiritual contact of the sinner with the Saviour, person to person, the dead heart to the living, omnipotent Christ—nothing but this can impart regenerating grace. In like manner must every Christian bring his very soul into the closest personal sympathy with the individual whom he hopes to win to the Lord Jesus. Mere pity is cheap, costing nothing and coming to nothing. Much of the prayer offered for the conversion of others is about as cheap and worthless. Gospel truth is of little avail when it is flung at an impenitent sinner as a bone is flung at a hungry dog. You have got to give a heart if you want to win a heart. You have got to put yourself into an attitude of personal interest to the friend, to the scholar, yes, to the poorest outcast, if you would draw that one to the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the problems of the time is how to bridge over the deep chasm between the rich, the cultured, the Christianized and the ignorant, degraded and ungodly masses. I know of no other bridge so effectual as that of personal contact—man to man, woman to woman, teacher to scholar, the rich giver to the poor sufferer, the living Christian to the sinner dead in trespasses and guilt. Nine-tenths of all the soundest conversions are the result of individual effort.—*Dr. Cuyler*.

* On the 9th July, 1885, Baron Rothschild took his seat in the House of Lords as the FIRST Hebrew peer.