

of he came in the spirit and power of that great prophet. Learn John v. 35.

AFTERNOON. THE SPIRIT OF ELISHA. (2 Kings ii. 12-25.) The mantle of Elijah fell on his servant, and now Elisha took it, and with it smote the waters and they were divided as before. By this, the sons of the prophets who saw him, knew that the spirit of Elijah rested upon him, that is, that he was endued with Elijah's prophetic power, and was to take Elijah's place. And they came and did him reverence. But they wanted him to send fifty men to seek the body of Elijah, and they went, but contrary to his will, and could not find it. He knew that it had ascended up to heaven; they thought it had been cast on some mountain. Two miracles followed (ver. 19-22.) Elisha healed the waters of Jericho, by pouring salt into a spring, the present *Ain es Sultan*. Salt was a symbol of incorruptibility, and of the power of life which destroys death, and, as such, formed the substratum for the spiritual power of the Divine word. (Ver. 23-25.) Elisha, mocked by some boys at Bethel, who called him a bald-head in scorn and derision, turned round and cursed them, and two bears came out of the wood and tore forty-two boys to pieces. This may seem harsh, but the spirit of the boys was that of the inhabitants of Bethel, and the judgment was (comp. Luke xxiv. 51, Acts i. 9). Elijah and Moses were the intended to inspire the whole city with a salutary dread of the majesty of God, whose servant the prophet was. Never mock at the infirmities of others. Elisha was not an old man (ch. xiii. 4) so that his baldness must have been a natural defect.

MAR. 25. MORNING. THE FORERUNNER SLAIN. (Matt. xiv. 1-14.) Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great and Malchace. He was tetrarch, or governor of Galilee and Perea, and had secretly married Herodias, the daughter of Aristobulus, his half-brother, and the wife of Herod Philippus another half-brother. He heard of the fame of Jesus, and though he was a Sadducee, and did not believe in the resurrection, his conscience being alarmed, he said, "This is John the Baptist. He is risen from the dead." How did John die? Herod had put him in prison because he had reproved him for his sin, and, awhile after, at a feast held in his palace, not far from Machærus, Salome, the daughter of Herodias, having pleased him with her voluptuous dance, he promised to give her whatever she should ask. Instigated by her mother, she asked for the head of John. Herod was sorry perhaps, because he feared the consequences of such an act, yet for his oath's sake, and them that sat with him, he sent an executioner to the prison, which was not far distant, and the head of the Baptist was brought while the feast yet lasted. It was a fearful crime. The oath itself was wrong, and ought not to have been kept, but what he thought his honour was of greater importance than his justice. The morning text is Rev. ii. 10, which teaches us not to fear imprisonment or death, but to anticipate the crown of life.

AFTERNOON. To be spent in a review of the lessons of the quarter. Our space being limited, we cannot dwell on them,

but able teachers will easily find questions on each of these subjects.

THE VALUE OF PRAYER.

BY REV. W. HUDSON.

TRUE prayer occasions new relations to God. It is obvious that the man who prays does not stand towards God as he stood before he began to pray; and one for whom prayer is made is also in a new relation. When, therefore, a man truly prays, he brings into operation what would otherwise be inactive. To pray is to strike a chord, and produce fresh pulsations; and no finite mind can tell the distance in time or space at which those pulsations will be felt. Every prayer makes a contribution towards an ultimate condition of things out of which one or more destinies will arise; and it may be found at last that the "much prayer" of those who could not otherwise work for their Lord and Master, will have contributed more largely to human good than the noisy "works" of those who would not pray.

Prayer brings profit to man as a thinker. If he gains wisdom who has fellowship with wise men, what must be the operation and the effects of daily communion with God? Prayer will not, without the use of other means, bring learning or great intellectual attainments; but there is a grand truth in the saying of the great reformer, that he has studied well who has prayed well. All godly people, however, are thoughtful; and it is beyond doubt that religion, of which prayer is one part, has been the chief means of developing the powers of some of the most able-minded men. And no wonder, for in prayer there are before the mind the most glorious subjects of thought. Such subjects must supply to those who are in full sympathy with them the most nourishing and stimulating intellectual food; and it is a mournful fact that many keep themselves in such a state

that they are unable to appropriate that food, though they are generally too proud of heart to confess a fact so much to their dishonour.

And prayer yields direct spiritual profit. God is infinitely good, and longs to bestow on His children the greatest blessing they can receive; but He has declared that it must be sought and even implored. He will be "inquired of"; and we have already seen that pardon, peace, and the new life are sure to him who rightly approaches God. Thenceforward the habit of prayer will check the tendency to worldly-mindedness. It will hallow his whole life, direct his thoughts into ways of truth and purity, and make religion the leading force in his existence. With him, therefore, thought about secular things will not be "worldly" thought. He will have in active daily operation a means by which the great influence of such things can be effectually dealt with, and thoroughly counteracted. Therefore he will be able, by Divine aid, to use the world without abusing it, and to steady and calm himself amidst all its excitements.—From "The Everlasting Sign."