

can keep things from getting any worse than they are now.

"But that's awful hard, Uncle," whined Bert.

"Hard! I should hope so. I don't want you to find confession so easy that you can get right over it, and be ready for the next time. I hope you will have an experience you will remember. Now, if you accept my offer, you can't be off too soon on your errand. But do not try to lay the blame on somebody else. Own up your own fault like a man, or, at least, like a boy there is hope of making a man of."

Bert groaned, and looked around, as if for some escape; but his uncle gave him no further encouragement, and, after a few minutes, he started up, seized his cap, and crying, "I'll do it," rushed downstairs and out of the house.

Confession was hard, as Bert supposed, but he got through with it; and things soon looked brighter. Mr. Green was not very hard to pacify, especially as his daughter soon began to be better. Uncle John kept his part of the agreement, and Bert's trouble passed away.

Possibly the uncle might have done a little differently to better advantage; but the effect seems to be good so far. Bert has been pretty careful for some time what he allows himself to be led into. Uncle John says the bitter taste of the medicine is in his mouth yet.—N. Y. Observer.

DR. OUYLER ON THE THEATRE.

A great many extravagant things have been uttered in regard to the drama and the American stage. The most extreme views have been taken by persons looking at the matter from exactly opposite points. Some persons, looking only at a refined company assembled to witness the performance of such a master-piece of genius as Hamlet or Othello, have not hesitated to speak of the theatre only and always as a school of mental and moral instruction. Others, looking at a promiscuous crowd of immortal beings who go to witness a performance which inflames sensual desire, following from the play-house to the neighboring dram-shop and the dark haunt of infamy, have not hesitated to say that the theatre is only the vestibule to perdition. For myself, I have tried to be influenced by neither extreme; but have always endeavored to see the average result of not an ideal institution, but the actual one. I have looked at the whole system in the gross, as a totality; and, looking at it thus for thirty years, as a Christian teacher, who is held responsible to God for the future of those committed to my charge and their immortal souls, I formed long ago a very decided opinion. When young men again and again have asked me counsel in regard to this question, I have always frankly said that the safest side of the theatre is the outside. Many good people drink wine, for good people do sometimes set very bad examples; yet I would say to every young man: the only course of safety is to touch not, taste not that which may arouse the lurking appetite, to the ruin of body and soul. I have not believed that the average theatre is the best place to spend time or money. And remember that every young man should be taught that he must render an account to God for both time and money. It is not the best place to learn correct lessons for the stern conflict of life. I do not believe it is the best place to preserve that delicate purity of heart that we should strive for. For youthful passion is like tinder—easily kindled; and when the flame has once broken out, oh! it may need the grace of God to extinguish it. It is not the best atmosphere to cultivate spiritual strength or reach spiritual enjoyment. It is not the best place, commonly, to find a companion for the heart and the life. Since death may overtake us in every path we ever choose for ourselves, certainly—although our martyred President spent his last conscious hour there—we would not choose it as the place to die.

CANINE SAGAITY.

A gentleman of wealth and position in London had, some years ago, a country-house and farm about sixty miles from the metropolis. At this country residence he kept a number of dogs, and among them a very large mastiff and a Scotch terrier; and, at the close of one of his summer residences in the country, he resolved to bring his terrier with him to London for the winter season. There being no railway to that particular part of the country, the dog travelled with the servants in a post-carriage, and on his arrival at the town-house was brought out to the stable, where a large Newfoundland dog was kept as a watch-dog. This latter individual looked with anything but pleasure on the arrival of the little intruder from the country, and consequently, the Scotch terrier had not been very long in his new home when this canine master of the stable attacked him, and, in the language of human beings, gave him a sound thrashing. The little animal could, of course, never

hope by himself to chastise his host for this inhospitable welcome, but he determined that by some agency chastisement should come. Accordingly, he lay very quiet that night in a remote corner of the stable, but when morning had fully shone forth he was nowhere to be found. Search was made for him, as the phrase says, high and low, but without success; and the conclusion reluctantly arrived at was that he had been stolen. On the third morning after his disappearance, however, he again showed himself in London, but this time not alone; for, to the amazement of every one, he entered the stable attended by the big mastiff from Kent. This great brute had no sooner arrived than he flew at the Newfoundland dog, who had so badly treated his little terrier friend, and a severe contest ensued, which the little terrier himself, seated at a short distance, viewed with the utmost dignity and satisfaction. The result of the battle was, that the mastiff came off the conqueror, and gave his opponent a tremendous beating.

When he had quite satisfied himself as to the result, this great avenger from Kent scarcely waited to receive the recognition of his master, who had been sent for immediately on the dog's arrival, but at once marched out of the stable, to the door of which the little terrier accompanied him, and was seen no more. Some few days afterwards, however, the gentleman received a letter from his steward in the country, informing him of the sudden appearance of the terrier there, and his sudden disappearance along with the large mastiff; and stating that the latter had remained away three or four days, during which they had searched in vain for him, but had just then returned home again. It then, of course, became quite clear that the little dog, finding himself unable to punish the town-bully, had thought of his "big brother" in the country, had travelled over the sixty miles which separated them, in order to gain his assistance, and had recounted to him his grievance; it was plain also that the mastiff had consented to come and avenge his old friend, had travelled with him to London, and, having fulfilled his promise, had returned home, leaving the little fellow free from annoyance in the future.—Chambers' Journal.

HEAVY THINGS.—"Iron is heavy," said a friend, as I took hold of a slender bar which he held in his hand. "Yes," was the reply, "but not so heavy as gold, for that sometimes sinks men in destruction and perdition." There are many people, who, notwithstanding this fact, are willing, yes, anxious to load themselves with such a burden. The man who would run a race lays aside every weight. The man who swims for his life, divests himself of every encumbrance; and yet men who feel and admit the necessity of putting forth their utmost efforts to save themselves from this untoward generation, still continue to load and burden themselves with things that perish with the using;—with gold, that encumbers us here, and can not help us hereafter. Our Saviour has declared that the deceitfulness of riches chokes the word of God; that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven; that the rich are in especial danger; and an apostle has taught us that "the love of money is the root of all evil," and yet, in spite of all these warnings, persons persist in loading themselves with worldly possessions which must hinder their spiritual progress, and possibly imperil their eternal interests. Let us "take heed and beware of covetousness," lest at the last, we weep and howl with the rich, for the miseries which shall come upon us, when our gold is cankered, our garments moth-eaten, and the treasures which we have amassed shall perish in the flames of the burning day.—The Christian.

MINISTERING.—Pure religion and undefiled is "ministering," not the other thing, "being ministered unto." "It is handing over the morning paper to another for first perusal. It is vacating a pleasant seat by the fire for one who comes in chilled. It is giving up the most restful arm-chair or sofa corner for one who is weary. It is "moving up" in the pew to let the new comer sit down by the entrance. It is rising from your place to darken the blind when the sun's ray stream in too brightly upon some face in the circle. It is giving your own comfort and convenience every time for the comfort and convenience of another. This is at once true civility and real Christianity. If we mean to copy the spirit of the Master, we must be ready in every relation of life, and at every hour of the day, to give up being waited upon, and to practice this self-sacrificing, beneficent, and "ministering" graciousness of spirit and conduct.—Rev. A. J. Stone, D. D.

—They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord: but such as are upright in their way are his delight.

THE DIAL AND THE SUN.

(From the Spanish of Jose Roas, a Meccan Poet)

BY WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

A dial, looking from a stately tower,  
While from her cloudless path in heaven the sun  
Shone on its disk, as hour succeeded hour,  
Faithfully marked their flight till day was done.

Fair was that gilded disk; but when, at last,  
Night brought the shadowy hours twixt eve and prime.

No longer that fair disk for those who passed  
Measured and marked the silent flight of time.

The human mind, on which no hallowed light  
Shines from the sphere beyond the starry train,

Is like the dial's gilded disk at night,  
Whose cunning tracery exists in vain.  
—Church Union.

SCHOLAR'S NOTES

(From the International Lessons for 1877 by Edwin W. Rice, as issued by American Sunday-School Union.)

FEBRUARY 4.]

LESSON V.

ELIJAH AND AHAH. (About 900 B. C.)  
Read 1 Kings xviii. 6-18. Recite vs. 17, 18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day.—Josh. vii. 26.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Wicked rulers trouble a nation.

DAILY READINGS.—M.—1 Kings xviii. 6-18. 7.—Joel i. 10-20. W.—Jer. xv. 1-12. Th.—Ps. xxviii. 1-9. Fri.—Amos vii. 10-17. Sa.—Heb. xii. 6-17. Su.—Jer. ii. 19-20.

CONNECTED HISTORY.—While Elijah dwelt at the widow's house her son fell sick and died; he restored the child to life, he rebuked Ahab.

TO THE SCHOLAR.—Read the sad death of the widow's son, the wonderful miracle of raising him to life by Elijah, and vs. 1-4.

NOTES.—Obadiah, (servant of God) Twelve persons of this name are noticed in the Bible. This one was a governor of Ahab's palace. Jewish tradition says he is the same as Obadiah the prophet, and the captain of Ahab's third company of fifty men, and that his widow asked aid of Elijah. 2 Kings iv. 1. Baal, (the "the Baalim") plural of Baal, referring to the various forms or names under which Baal, the supreme god of the Phoenicians, was worshipped.

EXPLANATIONS AND QUESTIONS.

Lesson Topics.—(I.) ELIJAH'S INTERVIEW WITH OBADIAH. (II.) ELIJAH'S INTERVIEW WITH AHAH.

I. ELIJAH'S INTERVIEW WITH OBADIAH. (5.) Obadiah, see Note; fountain, springs, perennial streams; brooks, torrent-courses, full in the wet season, but dry in summer; Isaac not ill, or "that we cut not off (ourselves) from the beasts;" "all" is not in the Hebrew. (6.) divided the land, this careful search for food by the king and his chief officers shows how severe the famine was, by himself, not that they each went alone, but merely each went a different way. (7.) Art thou that, etc., or "Art thou here, my lord?"—Bavilion. (8.) What have I sinned, Obadiah thought to obey Elijah would prove his death. (10.) no passion, none where Ahab's power reached; took an oath, of dependent kings or nations that Elijah was not in their domains. (12.) spirit . . . carry thee, that is, help Elijah to disappear. 1 Kings xviii. 3. letter in the Bible, persons are said to have been suddenly borne away by the Spirit (2 Kings ii. 11; Acts viii. 39); but I . . . fear the Lord, or "since I fear the Lord," Ahab will slay me. (13.) was it not told, Obadiah pleads his kind act as a reason for not putting his life in peril now. (15.) As the Lord, a form of solemn oath.

I. Questions.—State the great miracle wrought while Elijah was at Zarephath! How long had the famine now lasted? v. 1. How came Obadiah to meet Elijah? Who was searching for grass with Obadiah? Why does this prove the famine very severe? How did Obadiah greet Elijah? State Elijah's command. Obadiah's answer. Why he made it. How had Elijah been sought for? Where had he been all this time? How hidden? Under whose direction? What good act did Obadiah plead? How did Elijah assure him?

II. ELIJAH REBUKES AHAH (17.) "Art thou," etc., or "Thou here, O troubler of Israel?" that is, "Do you venture here?" (18.) I have not troubled Israel, but thou, Elijah makes no apology or plea for Ahab, but boldly charges the king with sin! Recite.

II. Questions.—How did Ahab learn where Elijah was? Whether did he go? What did the king say to Elijah? Why? What was Elijah's answer? Had Ahab troubled Israel? Why does sin generally bring trouble? What facts in this lesson teach us—

- (1.) The value of serving God among even wicked men?
  - (2.) Of the perfect safety of those whom God protects?
  - (3.) That the sinner is the troubler of any people?
- Illustration.—Thou! Elijah. Many of our troubles

are God dragging us, and they would end if we would stand up, on our feet, and go whither He would have us.—Becker.

sin brings trouble. In his illustration this by the following.—If I were going along a street, and were to dash my hand through a large pane of glass, what harm would I receive? "You would be punished for breaking the glass!" "Would that be all the harm I should receive?" "Your hand would be cut by the glass." So it is with sin. If you break God's laws, you will be punished for breaking them, and your soul is hurt in the very act of breaking them.

WHEN THE WICKED RULE THE PEOPLE MOURN.



FORMS OF SALUTATION IN THE EAST.

LESSON VI.

FEBRUARY 11.]

ELIJAH AND THE PROPHETS OF BAAL (about 900 B. C.)  
Read 1 Kings xviii. 19-29. Recite vs. 25-29.

GOLDEN TEXT.—How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.—1 Kings xviii. 21.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Men must choose whom they will serve.

DAILY READINGS.—M.—1 Kings xviii. 19-29. 7.—Matt. vi. 10-24. W.—Josh. xxiv. 14-25. Th.—2 Peter ii. 1-9. F.—Matt. vii. 13-23. Sa.—1 Chron. xx. 18-30. Su.—Pa. cv.

CONNECTED HISTORY.—Elijah having reproved Ahab for his sin, demanded that the priests of Baal be gathered at Mount Carmel.

TO THE SCHOLAR.—A careful reading of vs. 22-24 will show that the priests of Baal were compelled by the people to submit to the trial proposed by Elijah. They may have hoped to escape by some accident or deception, but Elijah required every act of the preparation and of sacrifice to be done in the most public manner. If, as some suggest, Baal was the "fire god," the trial by fire seems yet more strikingly appropriate.

NOTES.—Carmel, a ridge of mountains about 19 miles long; 500 feet high at the sea, and 1,600 feet high at the south-east end. It extends south-east from the Mediterranean at a point due west from the Sea of Galilee. This sacrifice was near the south-east end, at Zarephath, or "place of burning." An old well or spring has been found 250 feet below this "placio," and the Kishon River is not far away, about 1,600 feet lower.

EXPLANATIONS AND QUESTIONS.

Lesson Topics.—(I.) ELIJAH'S CHALLENGE. (II.) BAAL'S FAILURE.

I. ELIJAH'S CHALLENGE. (19.) Mount Carmel, see Note; prophets, false prophets or teachers, groves, prophets of Acherah, the chief goddess of the Phoenicians, eat, or "eat from," Jezebel's table, got together with her, but fed by her. Jezebel, wife of Ahab. (21.) Baal, Heb., "dance a round" or whirl around, first toward Jehovah and then toward Baal; two opinions, or "two parties" if the Lord, do this, and follow one or the other wholly; answered not a word, so the convicted sinner is silent. Matt. xii. 12. (22.) I only, one against 450; the trial fair enough for the latter. (23.) give us, Baal priests to chop the animals. (24.) the god that answereth by fire, Baal-worshippers accused themselves and fighting to their god, and thus had no excuse for refusing this challenge. It is well spoken, "the word is good" (Hebrew); the people agree to this trial.

I. Questions.—What bold demand did Elijah make? Of whom? What number of prophets did he call for? Where was the meeting held? What plain question did Elijah ask of the people? Why? With what result? How many prophets of Jehovah were present? How many of Baal's? State nine conditions of the challenge of Elijah. Why were so many particulars named? Who approved of the trial?

II. BAAL'S FAILURE. (25.) Choose you, as proposed in v. 23, your gods, rather "of your god"—that is, Baal (Speaker's Copy). (26.) O Baal, hear us, or "answer us" "heaped, or damped up and down at the altar, as drosses of the West now do. (This is from the same word as that translated "heap" in v. 25.) (27.) Thee, God, language at their cry, "Hear us," or "great voice" (Hebrew); thinking, or "meditating," thinking, praying, or hath a part, as if to overtake according. (28.) after the manner, or, cutting and measuring themselves as they worshipped did and he now (see picture); knives, properly, short blades; sheaves, short spears. (29.) prophets, or, as also prophets. 1 Sam. xviii. 10. time of: 1. Sabbath eve, about 3 p.m. according in Josephus; neither voice . . . answer, nor, Baal failed not only to send fire, but even to give any answer whatever.