

the King ordered. Compare this instantaneous universal penitence with the stubbornness of the Jews, Jer. 7, 25-28. Matt. 12, 41.

"Sack-cloth," hair-cloth—irritating to pampered bodies. The crying of the children, the lowing and bleating of herds and flocks would mark the sense of a great common danger. God's word to Jonah, 4, 11, proves that He heard those cries.

v. 8. This—a change of the whole life—is true penitence, Isa. 58, 5-7. Every one must do it for himself, for each has his own favourite sin. Violence—cruelty and rapacity—was the special sin of the Ninevites. See Nah. 3, 1; 2, 12.

v. 9. Same form of words as in Joel 2, 12-14. "The promises of God are certain; but well may the sinner be uncertain whether his is the true penitence that makes him the object of those promises."

*The repentance of God.*—"God saw their works," not their faith, their public confessions, and prayers. These without works are dead. They left off not this or that sin, but "their whole evil way."

"God repented." "Though God changeth the thing, He doth not change his counsel." When we change the outward act, it is because our inward thought has changed, and the word we use for man in such a case is applied to God. That it is only by accommodation to human forms may be seen from 1 Sam. xv, 11 and 29. God foretold to Hezekiah "thou shalt die." Death would have taken place as the result of causes then at work, but when a superior divine cause came in, Hezekiah lived. So here. The very purpose God had in sending Jonah was that Nineveh might be spared.

*Lessons.*—(1) Jonah a type of Christ. "He who had been the prophet of Israel only was after three days' burial restored to life, and then the heathen were converted through him." This fact was "a sacred enigma, a hidden prophecy," in the forefront of the great volume of written prophecy that testified of Him.

(2) "A greater than Jonah is here." How shall we escape if we hear not Him.

#### HOME STUDIES.

M. Jonah	1: 1-17— <i>Jonah's flight.</i>
T. Jonah	2: 8-10— <i>Jonah's prayer.</i>
W. Jonah	3: 1-10— <i>Jonah's preaching.</i>
Th. Jonah	4: 1-11— <i>Jonah's anger.</i>
Fr. 2 Kings	14: 23-29— <i>Jonah's prophecy.</i>
S. Matt	12: 38-45— <i>A greater than Jonah.</i>
S. Matt	11: 20-30— <i>The doomed cities.</i>

#### THE DEATH OF ELISHA.

MAY 27th.—2 Kings xiii., 14-21.

Golden Text: Heb. xi., 4.

*The death-bed of Elisha.*—He had outlived many kings, but now he must die. "God reveals Himself in many ways." Elijah was translated. Elisha lingers through illness, and dies in the ordinary manner. That the wicked king Joash should visit him, and show such emotion in the prospect of his death, is a wonderful tribute to his worth and national influence.

v. 15. See 2 12.—The expression may have become proverbial, on the death of a great man. The one thought in the mind of the dying prophet, is of his country then being wasted by the Syrians. He gives the king a symbolical promise of deliverance, and leaves it to his faith to appropriate much or little of the promise. Eastward, the direction of Gilead which the Syrians had conquered (10, 32). He puts his hand on the king's, to indicate that in the use of the warlike means that would deliver Israel, the power would be from God. Joash could not be ignorant of the meaning of the symbol; and had his faith been energetic, he would have shot every one of the arrows into the ground. The prophet is wroth at his coldness and indifference. Rev. 3. 16.

*Elisha after death.*—The spring following, there was a funeral procession. The corpse was not in a coffin, but simply wrapt in linen cloth. A band of marauding Moabites is seen approaching, and the mourners hurriedly open the nearest tomb. It happens to be Elisha's, and as they cast the corpse on the shelf, it touched the remains of the prophet, and the man "revived."

*Lessons.*—(1.) The bed-ridden christian may be as useful as the active worker or the triumphant martyr. From the sick-bed of Elisha went forth "the arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria."

(2.) Christ has promised us deliverance from sin. Let us then strike with determination against the sins that press and beset us most. Rom. vi., 6-13.

(3.) In life we may seem less honored of God than others are, but our influence after death may be greater. Elisha was not translated, but from the boxes of no other man did ever virtue come forth.

(4.) Elisha dead is a type of Him who "through death destroyed him that had the power of death," who spoiled the strong one in his own house.