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*Poem
State Sun

SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. XXXII.

AUGUST, 1898.

No. 8.

The Thinning Ranks.*

The day grows lonelier; the air
Is chillier than it used to be.
We hear about us everywhere
The haunting chords of memory,
Dear faces that once made our joy,
Have vanished from the sweet home
band;
Dear tasks that were our loved employ
Have dropped from out our loosened
hand.

Familiar names in childhood given,
None call us by save those in heaven;
We cannot talk with later friends
Of those old times to which love lends
Such mystic haze of soft regret;
We would not, if we could, forget
The sweetness of the by-gone hours,
So priceless are Love's faded flowers;
But lonelier grows the waning day,
And much we miss upon the way,
Our comrades, who have heard the call
That soon or late must summon all.

Ah, well! the day grows lonelier here.
Thank God it doth not yet appear
What thrill of perfect bliss awaits
Those who pass on within the gates.
Oh! dear ones who have left my side
And passed beyond the swelling tide,
I know that you will meet me when
I, too, shall leave the ranks of men,
And find the glorious company
Of saints from sin forever free,
Of angels who do always see
The face of Christ, and ever stand
Serene and strong at God's right hand.

* Poem selected for Memorial Service at the Illinois State Sunday-school Convention.

The days grow lonelier, the air
Hath waftings strangely keen and cold.
But woven in, O glad, O rare,
What love-notes from the hills of gold!
Dear crowding faces gathered there,
Dear, blessed tasks, that wait our hand,
What joy, what pleasure shall we share,
Safe anchored in the one home-land!

Close up, O comrades, close the ranks,
Press onward, waste no fleeting hour!
Beyond the outworks, lo! the banks
Of that full tide, where life hath power,
And Satan lieth under foot,
And sin is killed e'en at the root,
Close up, close fast the wavering line
Ye who are led by One divine;
The day grows lonelier apace,
But heaven shall be our trysting place.
—Margaret Sangster.

Sunday-school Thermometer.

The "Sunday-school Thermometer" device is a sort of wall chart, home made or purchased, for indicating the rise or fall of weekly attendance and weekly offerings. It is a large drawing representing two thermometers, with red tapes which can be raised or lowered. Inquiries having recently come concerning the method, it may be noted that E. C. Romine, 728 Huntington Street, Philadelphia, furnishes a chart of strong paper (10 x 40 inches), mounted on rollers, at one dollar. In ordering, the present average attendance and offering of the school should be mentioned.—S. S. Times.

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Sunday School Banner.

W. H. WITHROW, D.D., EDITOR.

TORONTO, AUGUST, 1898.

Sunday-Schools at the Conferences.

The subject of our Sunday-schools occupied a prominent part in the late Annual Conferences. Some of the most indefatigable Sunday-school workers rendered very valuable service on the Sunday-school Committee. In their reports the growing importance of this department of church work was duly emphasized. Our statistics show that through our Sunday-schools more than through any other means has the growth of our church in recent years been secured. It will be still more so in the future, and those who are brought into the Church of Christ in early youth and trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord will be far more valuable members of that church than those who are converted after years of sin has

wasted their powers. All souls are intrinsically valuable, and the brand that is plucked from the burning at the eleventh hour is cause for great gratitude to God, but for usefulness in his service they are of far less worth than those who devote their youth and plenitude of their powers. The scars of sin will remain, the bird with the broken wing shall never soar as high again. Hence the infinite importance of gathering into the fold of Christ the lambs of his flock.

The Home Department was strongly emphasized by the Editor in his visits to the Conferences, and in his letters to those he could not visit. There is a deep and growing interest in this important Sunday-school extension movement.

Studying the Lesson.*

It is thought by some, that the preparation of the Sunday-school lesson during the week, is of very little importance, imagining that if they scan the lesson over for a few moments on Saturday, or perhaps Sunday morning, that is quite sufficient; this is a mistake, for certainly there is no way of preparing a lesson without taking some amount of trouble.

"Great works are wrought, not so much by strength as by perseverance," it is said. And in witness to this assertion, we may call in the old fable of the hare and the tortoise. We have only to decide what we really wish done, and nine times out of ten, perseverance will do it, little by little, step by step, hour by hour, daunted no more than the tortoise, and like him, just going on.

"To be successful nothing should daunt us," which surely means that, no matter what obstacles we encounter, we must still persevere, and by so doing we shall behold many of our greatest stumbling-blocks, transforming themselves into stepping stones, while others will have vanished altogether.

There must, however, be method in the toil.

The best time to begin the study of the lesson for the following week is as soon as possible after the previous lesson.

* A paper by Miss Lottie Lay, in the *St. John Bulletin*

It is a good plan to first read over the whole lesson, and get the text firmly fixed on the mind. This gives us material to think over at odd times during the week. Having fixed the text, divide the lesson, as nearly as you can, into five equal parts, allowing a portion for each day. Begin on Monday with the first portion. Tuesday learn the second portion and review that which was learnt on Monday. Wednesday learn the third portion, and review that which was learnt on Monday and Tuesday, and so on. This gives us Saturday to review the whole lesson and analyze it, as to what it teaches.

We should also study the maps which deal with the geography of the lesson. The location of the places mentioned in the lesson should be as familiar to us as that of St. John's, Harbour Grace and Carbonear.

I am fully aware that the foregoing is somewhat different from that outlined in our lesson book, but we cannot all reach the end by the same means. There are some, perhaps, who read the lesson and it is nothing but a series of sentences; whereas others read it, and the sentences fall into rhythm and music. If we find one method is unsuited to our several abilities, we should try another, and then if, after all we can do, failure comes instead of success, we will even welcome it, well believing, that, if our inner eyes were but opened, we should see in our vanquishment but the preparation for victory.

The Art of Asking Questions.

BY REV. JESSE S. GILBERT, A.M.

A very essential element in success in the Sunday-school teacher's work is the art of asking questions. All great teachers have been expert in this.

Socrates, the old barefooted philosopher of Athens, had a method of awakening a dull or frivolous pupil by simply plying him with questions. Beginning with something easy and self-evident, he would proceed, step by step, until the power of a great truth had penetrated the mind of the listener.

How often did the Prince of teachers, as in the case of Simon, the Pharisee, by the home-thrust of a deftly-put ques-

tion, reach down to the heart and conscience.

Like everything of any worth, the art of asking questions can only be secured by earnest and faithful effort. Special preparation is needed. The teacher who merely asks the questions as given upon the leaf or in various helps goes through a rather dry routine. These helps are useful as models, and when not slavishly followed are a great benefit. They should be used, however, as the builder may study other men's models, or the artist visits museums and galleries. They are suggestive, and open up lines of stimulating thought, and when used for suggestion and mental stimulation are of great benefit.

Each teacher, then, should make his own questions. This will require both time and study, but the Sunday-school teacher is of little worth who does not give a measure of both.

The questions should bear upon the very core of the subject and not start up a series of side issues.

A skilful teacher can, with a few pertinent questions, open up the heart of the lesson. It is not best, as a rule, to ask leading questions, or questions that suggest their own answer, as this is too easy, and does not give sufficient mental spring to the scholars. Upon the other hand, questions so difficult that the teacher alone can furnish the answer soon paralyze a class and discourage all attempts to respond.

When a question is fairly before a class it is best, if possible, to insist upon an answer. The best teacher, like the best preacher, is the one who sets others to thinking.

Especially should the questions reach down to the spiritual truth of the lesson. There is such a thing as playing with the surface thought and historic facts, but not getting down to the rich mine of spiritual teaching. The history, the incidents, and the geography of the lesson are simply the shell, the real kernel of truth being within.

The form in which a question is put before a class has much to do with the interest evoked. There is a great deal in the way of putting things.

If one way of asking a question doesn't work, try another, but keep on until the mind of the dullest in the class is awake to the subject. Happy is that teacher that can not only ask, but elicit questions in return. This shows that the teacher has struck fire, and awakened a lively interest in the subject. One

word of caution: Questions should be questions and not conundrums. Questions that are asked merely to puzzle are of little worth; they show more skill than tact upon the part of the teacher. There is one question above all others that the faithful teacher will ask of each scholar, and, as a rule, it had better be asked alone and in the quiet of the home: "Are you saved? Have you a personal interest in the Lord Jesus?" Faithful seed-sowing and earnest prayer will sooner or later, in the most of cases, bring such an answer as will make the teacher's heart sing for joy.

Sunday-school Lessons for 1900-'06.

The series is to include three years and a half of study in the New Testament, and two years and a half in the Old Testament, and is to follow a line of biography. Beginning with 1900 there will be a continuous study of the life of Jesus until July, 1901. This will be the first time that eighteen months of unbroken study have been given to the biography of Christ, and the lessons will not stop with his resurrection, as heretofore, but will follow him through John's visits to the home and throne above and contemplate him in his glory. In the other lessons for the series the plan heretofore followed will be continued, that is, the passages selected will not be consecutive, and there will still be gaps between. Members of the committee say that no other plan has been found feasible, but it is believed that the Bible readings selected for 1900 and 1901 will greatly aid in filling up the gaps. The lesson will still be the same for adult and infant classes. The demand for a different lesson for the younger classes proved to be impracticable. The Golden Texts are to be selected as often as possible from the lesson, but always to do so and at the same time retain the name, the committee declares to be impossible. As to length, the lessons will be shorter rather than longer, and two didactic lessons will not be given consecutively.

The prophetic, doctrinal, and didactic lessons have met with much objection, because it is not easy to interest children in lessons which lack incident, and hence the selection of a biographical

series for the opening of the new century. The preference for New Testament lessons is on the increase. But one member of the committee thought that this demand did not come from the children or average teacher, because the Old Testament was the Bible of the race in its infancy, and its striking biographical and historical features catch the interest of the child.—Advance (Cong.), Chicago. Excerpt.

Methodist Magazine and Review for July.

A specially patriotic character is given to the Dominion Day number, with which the forty-eighth volume of this magazine begins, by a brilliant article by the Rev. Principal Grant, of Queen's University, on "The Relation of Canada to the Empire." No topic can be more timely or more ably treated than this. Of similar interest is an optimistic paper by the Rev. George S. Payson, on "The Future of the Anglo-Saxon Race," and one by Prince Kropotkin, a distinguished visitor to the British Association last year, on "The Resources of Canada." Another timely paper is a copiously illustrated one by the Editor on "The Spaniard at Home," showing the contributions of Spain to civilization. Throwing much light on the International Sunday-school studies for the month is a paper by Canon Tristram on "Carmel, and the Syrian Coast," with seventeen illustrations, and one by the Rev. S. Parkes Cadman, a brilliant English leader of the Forward Movement in New York, on "Elijah." Other illustrated articles are, "Our National Sanitarium for Consumptives in Muskoka," and "An Outstation in Western China," by the Rev. Dr. Hart, Superintendent of Canadian Methodist Missions in that country. A generous instalment of the story by Rev. Charles M. Sheldon, of which everybody is talking, "In His Steps," and of the Welsh mining story, "Rhoda Roberts," are given. The World's Progress, Science Papers, Gleanings from Gladstone, Current Topics, with numerous illustrations, are also given. Now is a good time to subscribe. Only \$1.00 to the end of the year.

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Book Notices.

"The Scripture Way of Salvation." By John Wesley, M.A. With Preface and Notes by J. Agar Beet, D.D. London: Charles H. Kelly. Toronto: William Briggs.

This is a reprint of a sermon by John Wesley, published about a hundred and thirty years ago. It is marked by the clear common sense of the great evangelist who gave "so far-reaching an impulse to the spiritual life of the Anglo-Saxon race."

"Pebbles from the Path of a Pilgrim." By Mrs. H. L. Hastings. Fourteenth thousand. Boston: H. L. Hastings. Toronto: William Briggs.

This is a collection of true stories, a book of facts, not fancies, illustrating Christian life. One of the most interesting sections of the book is that describing Southern Mission work after the war. It is a record of faithful labour and hallowed results. The book is handsomely brought out, with numerous illustrations, by H. L. Hastings, of whose anti-infidel library over a hundred tons have been circulated since 1880.

"The Way of the Cross." A pictorial pilgrimage from Bethlehem to Calvary. London: George Newnes, Limited. Toronto: William Briggs. Price, \$2.50.

Next to visiting the Lord's Land for one's self, one of the best aids to the comprehension of the Bible text is such a collection of admirable photographs of the scenes made sacred by the life and labours of Jesus, as contained in this volume. From personal acquaintance with the scenes we can bear witness to their accuracy. The descriptive text on the same page explains each picture and greatly enhances its interest. To the Sunday-school teacher they will be of very great service. In turning these pages we walk again the streets of old Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth, we visit the ruined towns of Galilee and its lovely and lonely sea. We visit the sacred Garden of Gethsemane and the sombre valley of Jehoshaphat. We behold the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, and the glory of Hermon. They vividly recall to the writer many days spent beneath the Syrian blue, and will help to make stay-at-home travellers familiar with these holy scenes.

ORDER OF SERVICES—THIRD QUARTER.

OPENING SERVICE.

LESSON SERVICE.

- I. SILENCE.
- II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.
 - SUPT. Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
 - SCHOOL. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.
 - SUPT. For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidder from thee, neither is it far off
 - SCHOOL. But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.
 - SUPT. Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.
 - SCHOOL. But these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.
- III. SINGING.
- IV. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, OR THE APOSTLES' CREED.
- V. PRAYER, followed by the Lord's Prayer in concert.
- VI. SINGING.

- I. CLASS STUDY OF THE LESSON.
- II. SINGING LESSON HYMN.
- III. RECITATION OF THE TITLE, GOLDEN TEXT, AND OUTLINE by the school in concert.
- IV. REVIEW AND APPLICATION OF THE LESSON by Pastor or Superintendent.
- V. SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON. [Special lesson in the Church Catechism may here be introduced.]
- VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS [especially of the Church service and the Epworth League and week-evening prayer-meetings.]

CLOSING SERVICE.

- I. SINGING.
- II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.
 - SUPT. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.
 - SCHOOL. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

THIRD QUARTER: STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF THE TEN TRIBES.

LESSON VI. ELIJAH'S SPIRIT ON ELISHA.

[Aug. 7.]

GOLDEN TEXT. How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Luke 11. 13.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

[Read the chapter.]

2 Kings 2. 6-15. [Commit to memory verses 11-14.]

6 And E-li'jah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jor'dan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

7 And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jor'dan.

8 And E-li'jah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.

9 And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that E-li'jah said unto E-li'sha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And E-li'sha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and E-li'jah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

12 And E-li'sha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Is'ra-el, and the horsemen thereof! And he saw him no more; and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

13 He took up also the mantle of E-li'jah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jor'dan;

14 And he took the mantle of E-li'jah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of E-li'jah? And when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and E-li'sha went over.

15 And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jer'i-cho saw him, they said, The spirit of E-li'jah doth rest on E-li'sha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

REVISED VERSION.

6 And E-li'jah said unto him, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jor'dan. And he said, and as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood over against them afar off: and they two stood by Jor'dan.

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I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee;

11 but if not, it shall not be so. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, which parted them both asunder; and E-li'jah went up by a whirlwind into

12 heaven. And E-li'sha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariots of Is'ra-el, and the horsemen thereof! And he saw him no more; and he took hold of his own clothes,

13 and rent them in two pieces. He took up also the mantle of E-li'jah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jor'dan.

14 And he took the mantle of E-li'jah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD, the God of E-li'jah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they were divided hither and thither: and E-li'sha

15 went over. And when the sons of the prophets which were at Jer'i-cho over against him saw him, they said, The spirit of E-li'jah doth rest on E-li'sha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

Home Readings.

- M. Elijah's Spirit on Elisha. 2 Kings 2. 1-8.
 Th. Elijah's Spirit on Elisha. 2 Kings 2. 9-15.
 W. The water healed. 2 Kings 2. 16-22.
 Th. Enoch translated. Heb. 11. 1-6.

Time.—Probably between 892 and 890; the exact date is uncertain. **Place.**—The valley of the Jordan, not very far from Jericho. **Rulers.**—Jehoram, son of Ahab, king of Israel; Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah; Shalmaneser, king of Assyria.

1. See
 itage of
 are of the
 2. See
 —knock

- F. Waiting for the Lord. Luke 12. 32-40.
 S. Parting words. 2 Tim. 4. 1-8.
 S. Promise of the Spirit. John 14. 8-17.

Lesson Hymns.

No. 19. New Canadian Hymnal.

Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove,
 With all thy quickening powers,

No. 20. New Canadian Hymnal.

Holy Spirit, faithful guide,
 Ever near the Christian's side,

No. 21. New Canadian Hymnal.

Come, Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire,
 Let us thine influence prove.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR SCHOLARS.

1. Elijah's Power, v. 6-8.

What journey did Elijah and Elisha take together?

What thrice-repeated request did Elijah make?

What was Elisha's thrice-given answer?

Who watched the progress of the two?

How did Elijah show his power?

What strange thing followed?

Name any other instances of the miraculous parting of waters.

2. Elijah's Translation, v. 9-12.

What privilege did Elijah give to his follower?

What was Elisha's request?

What did he mean?

What promise incited his faith and vigilance?

What better gift is promised to us? GOLDEN

TEXT.

What interrupted the conversation of the two?

How was Elijah taken away?

What was Elisha's cry?

What did it signify?

How did Elisha show his grief?

3. The Spirit of Elijah, v. 13-15.

What symbol of power did Elisha inherit?

How did he exhibit the spirit of Elijah?

What conclusion did the sons of the prophets draw?

What request did they make? Verse 16.

Why did Elisha refuse? *

Teachings of the Lesson.

1. See the value of godly friendships. The heritage of righteousness comes only to those who are of the household of faith.

2. See the reward of urgent prayer. Ask—seek—knock; the answer is sure.

3. See the proof of another life. Elijah went up to heaven; when and where was he again seen? After how long an interval?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. Elijah's Power, v. 6-8.

What did Elijah request of Elisha?

What did Elisha say to this request?

Who here met Elisha?

What did these men say to him?

How did he reply to them?

What request did Elijah again make?

How did Elisha answer this time?

Who stood watching their journey?

What did Elijah do at the Jordan?

What was the result of smiting the waters?

2. Elijah's Translation, v. 9-12.

What did Elijah bid his companion to ask?

What was Elisha's request?

What did Elijah reply?

What suddenly appeared as they journeyed?

Where did Elijah go?

What did Elisha say when Elijah disappeared?

When and where was Elijah again seen? See Matt. 17. 3.

What did Elisha do in token of grief?

3. The Spirit of Elijah, v. 13-15.

What did he have that belonged to Elijah?

What did he do with the mantle?

What question did he ask?

What was the result of smiting the waters?

What Christian grace did he show in this act?

What did the sons of the prophets say about Elijah?

How did they show him honor?

Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson are we given—

1. An example of true fellowship?

2. An illustration of persistent faith?

3. An evidence that faith is sure of reward?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

How long did Elijah and Elisha work together? **About ten years.**

What did they do on their last journey? **They visited the schools of the prophets.**

How did the two friends cross the Jordan? **Elijah struck the waters with his mantle, and a dry path opened.**

Who stood looking on? **Fifty of the sons of the prophets.**

What did Elisha ask? **For a double portion of Elijah's spirit.**

What did he mean? **He wanted to be as loving and as wise as Elijah was.**

What appeared as they talked? **A chariot and horses of fire.**

What took place then? **Elijah was taken up to heaven.**

What did Elisha cry out when he saw this?

What did he pick up?

What did it become in his hand?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

(For the entire school.)

1. How did Elijah part the waters of the Jordan? **He smote them with his mantle.**
2. What did Elisha ask? **A double portion of Elijah's spirit.**
3. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **"How much more,"** etc.
4. What appeared while Elijah and Elisha

THE LESSON OUTLINE.

BY J. L. HURLBUT, D. D.

The Spirit of Elisha.

I. SAINTLY FELLOWSHIP.

I will not leave thee. v. 6.

Two walk...agreed. Amos 3. 3.

All may be one. John 17. 21.

II. MIRACULOUS POWER.

Smote the waters. vs. 8, 14.

Greater works than these. John 14. 12.

I give you power. Luke 10. 19.

III. HOLY ASPIRATION.

A double portion. v. 9.

Covet...the best gifts. 1 Cor. 12. 31.

Seek those things...above. Col. 3. 1.

talked together? **A chariot of fire, and horses of fire.**

5. Where was Elijah carried? **By a whirlwind into heaven.**

6. What did Elisha receive when his master was taken to heaven? **Elijah's mantle.**

7. What did he do with it? **He parted the waters of the Jordan.**

NEW CHURCH CATECHISM.

23. Who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, the Second Person in the glorious Trinity, who for us and for our sins became man, and so was, and continueth to be, truly God and perfect man, in two distinct natures and one person forever.

John 1. 1.

IV. SPIRITUAL INSIGHT.

If thou see me...Elisha saw. vs. 10-12.

Walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Cor. 5. 7.

Spiritually discerned. 1 Cor. 2. 14, 15.

V. STRONG FAITH.

Where is the Lord God? v. 14.

Have faith and doubt not. Matt. 21. 21.

According to your faith. Matt. 9. 29.

VI. DIVINE ENDOWMENT.

The spirit of Elijah. v. 15.

All things are yours. 1 Cor. 3. 21-23.

Ye shall receive power. Acts 1. 8.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Ahab, "which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up, and who did very abominably in following idols," improved a little in his later years. He was killed in a war with the Syrians, and was succeeded by his son Amaziah, who died two years later. Jehoram, Ahab's grandson, then became king; and soon afterward the Lord led the prophet Elijah across the Jordan and up to heaven. God had already revealed to Elijah his will concerning the overthrow of the royal dynasties of Israel and Syria, and concerning his own successor as prophet in Israel. That will was now to be carried out in strange ways. Jehu is the man whose abilities, if thoroughly consecrated to God, will make him the greatest and best of Israel's kings. So he must be anointed. But, in spite of all anointings, if his faith fail, he never will sit on the throne; and if, after triumphing by faith, "subduing kingdoms," and mounting the throne, his moral rectitude and his devotion to Jehovah fail, then his dynasty must be overthrown by another, just as Ahab's was by him. So shall it be with Hazael, the Lord's chosen one to rule Syria. If he waits for God to open the door, God will surely open it, and a prosperous reign will result; but if he climbs up some other way, he will label himself as a thief and a robber, and the family of royal freebooters he founds will at length find the doom of plebeian freebooters. All this Elijah knows. He knows also that God has chosen from among all the thoughtful and pious young men of Israel Elisha of Abel-meholah to be his successor as prophet. Elisha has been formally called to that high and holy office; but he, like Jehu and Hazael, is on trial. Whether he will receive in full measure the spiritual prerogatives of a prophet is to depend on the earnestness of his

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desire and the clearness of his faith; and these are to be divinely evidenced by the clearness of his physical vision in the hour of miracle. And whether, having been fully inducted into the office of prophet, Elisha will fulfill God's plans and the hopes of the godly remnant of his nation will depend on his persistent faith and constant consecration. We are to study Elisha's behavior in the critical moment of his life.

Verse 6. Elijah said unto him. To Elisha. **Tarry, I pray thee, here.** At Jericho, the largest city in the valley of the Jordan. This is the third time Elijah has urged Elisha to stay behind. Probably neither man knew distinctly and exactly what was before them, but God knew the end from the beginning, and step by step he reveals his plans. From Horeb to Abel-meholah the older prophet had gone; then, accompanied by Elisha, from Abel-meholah to Samaria; from Samaria to the Ekron highway; from the Ekron highway to Gilgal; from Gilgal to Bethel; now from Bethel to Jericho; and presently from Jericho to the region beyond Jordan. (1) *So God knows our future, and reveals our life's paths one step at a time.* This gradual revelation brings into bold relief Elijah's awe in facing his future terrors and glories, and Elisha's persistent love. (2) *They sin who tell us love can die.* **The Lord hath sent me to Jordan.** About five miles from Jericho is a bend in the river where, according to tradition, Elijah ascended. Several of Elijah's stopping places on this journey were notable at once as "schools of the prophets" (seats of those prophetic communities whose zeal did so much to maintain faith in Jehovah during dark years), and as strongholds of hostility to Jehovah. For instance, Gilgal is mentioned by Hosea and Amos as a center of idolatrous iniquity; Bethel was the shrine of calf-worship; and Jericho had been rebuilt under the direct curse of Jehovah. **As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.** This double form of adjuration was the most sacred known to the Hebrews. Young Elisha's passion of love embarrassed, the old man, who, with true humility and modesty, seems to have desired solitude before his glorification. **They two went on.** (Compare Gen. 22. 6.)

7. Fifty men of the sons of the prophets. These were young men who had set themselves apart for holy studies and activities. Evidently the sect was numerous; it may have been monastic in some of its features. That its members were all in a literal sense sons of the prophets is unlikely, for it was a Hebrew idiom to call the outcome of anything its son. That by a regular course of training they were all graduated into full prophetic responsibilities is a notion without warrant. **Stood to view.** On the high ground of Jericho, whence they could watch the descent of Elijah and Elisha into the river bed, and their

ascent on the other side. **They two stood by Jordan.** The Jordan and the Dead Sea, like all of men's frontiers and boundary lines, are God's highways. (3) *No obstacle can hinder God or God's children.* The arid rocks are by him turned into fountains, and those things which to human foresight would seem to guarantee destruction are made vehicles of choicest blessing.

8. Elijah took his mantle. The skin of a beast, dressed with the hair on, was the almost universal sign of a professionally holy man. Elijah's mantle was probably a sheepskin. By a remainder of the ancient custom certain graduates of English universities wear lambskin hoods, and kings on state occasion wear ermine. This particular mantle had had a rare history. In it Elijah had wrapped his face amid the mystic terrors of Horeb; it had been thrown about Elisha as a sign of his earliest prophetic call. **Wrapped it together.** Probably whirled it round and round. Its present use as a symbol of the wonder-working power reminds us of Aaron's rod. **Smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither.** It was not Elijah's sheepskin, but Elijah's faith, that worked this miracle. (4) *God can use one means as readily as another with which to work his wonders.* **On dry ground.** On solid ground.

9. When they were gone over. Into Elijah's native land. Holy scenes were all about them. Not far from this place Joshua and the Israelite hosts had crossed by a similar miracle; not far from this place Moses had passed in silent glory to the world of spirits, and no man knoweth his sepulcher to this day. **Ask what I shall do for thee.** The awful silence was broken by this loving offer. Elisha's true character will be shown by his answer. The majesty of Elijah's bearing in the presence of death is notable. (5) *What would be our answer to such a question?* The measure of the petitioner's faith is to be the measure of his reward. **Before I be taken away.** He does not say, "What shall I do when I get to heaven?" Elijah, as a man of like passions with us, could do wonders for Elisha by the exercise of faith, but there is no intimation that as a departed saint he could do anything for him at all. **Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.** The portion of a firstborn son. "Let me be the heir of your prophetic power."

10. Thou hast asked a hard thing. Because God only could give it. **If thou see me.** This shall be a sign that your request will be granted. Elijah knew that Elisha was divinely chosen to be his heir, but, as we have seen, his full inheritance was conditional on his faithfulness. If Elisha's heart is true to the end, he shall see the vision and gain the prize.

11. They still went on. "Went on" indicates perhaps a toilsome ascent after the long journey in the midst of the gathering storm."—*Moulton*. A sweet communion of soul is indicated, not unlike the disciples' talk with Jesus before his ascension. **A chariot of fire.** What this was we do not know, and it is a waste of time to argue about it. (6) *God would have revealed to us the environments of heavenly life with the same distinctness that he has revealed to us the terms of salvation if he had desired us to understand those characteristics.* **Went up by a whirlwind.** That there was an awful storm and that the fiery revelation was one of the incidents of this storm seem clear. **Into heaven.** From whence he came again to talk with our Saviour on the Mount of Transfiguration.

12. Elisha saw. The condition was fulfilled, and he was to receive the boon he craved. **My father.** The title, in all ages and countries, of the religious teacher. But Elisha was now adopted spiritually as Elijah's firstborn son, and he calls "My father!" in the ecstasy of his assurance. **The chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.** The standing army of the nation; the strongest defense of Israel. (See 2 Kings 13. 14.) **Saw him no more.** This shows the suddenness of Elijah's translation to heaven. **Took hold of his own clothes, and rent them to pieces.** Going beyond the usual sign of grief, which did not involve tearing the garment through.

13. Took up also the mantle of Elijah. His grasp of the mantle shows his faith in God's cause. As he took it up his whole nature must

have thrilled. It was the second time it had rested on his shoulders. For nine years he had been Elijah's companion and servitor. Observe that in character and life the two men were almost a perfect contrast. Elisha was not a wanderer, but a quiet citizen, of gentle, sympathetic disposition. (7) *God raises up workers according to his people's need, and employs them according to their natures.* **That fell from him.** The old Gileadite needs not that mantle in the land whither he has gone. (8) *So we drop our robes of flesh as we mount from earth to heaven.* **Went back.** Instantly Elisha enters upon his new work. (9) *Let us spend our strength not in sorrowing over the dead past, but by holy action in the living present.* **Stood by the bank of the Jordan.** Just opposite where he and Elijah had stood a little while before.

14. Smote the waters. Elisha acts just like his venerable master. **Where is the Lord God of Elijah?** The utterance not of doubt, but of exultant faith. (10) *We must confide in God to carry us through.* **When he also had smitten the waters.** (11) *We must also confide in ourselves if we would be effective.* **They parted hither and thither.** As they had parted before the ark of God and before Elijah. (12) *God never fails.*

15. The sons of the prophets which were at Jericho. "Which were at Jericho, opposite." They had unceasingly watched the two prophets, but had not been able to discern the ascension of Elijah. **The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha.** Whether they knew this by his ownership of Elijah's mantle or by some other indication we cannot tell. (13) *There is always something about a true man of God which reveals his calling and commands respect.* **Bowed themselves to the ground.** The men trained in the schools bow before the man taken from the plow. (14) *It is a great talent to be able to recognize a God-ordained leader when he comes.*

CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

The events of this lesson took place about ten years after those of the last lesson. Ahab was dead, and his son Jehoram was king of Israel; and Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, reigned in his stead as king of Judah. Elijah had called Elisha, and together they had labored for about eight years. There was a striking contrast in their personalities. Elijah was rugged; Elisha was gentle. The former was a pioneer; the latter was an organizer. The work of Elijah was accomplished, and Elisha, entering into his la-

bors, was to solidify and develop the beneficent influences that had their source in Elijah. Though there seems to be such diversity in the methods employed by these prophets, yet there is a decidedly harmonious element running through their careers, as one was the complement of the other, and both with fidelity cooperated loyally with God in the working out of his great plans.

Verse 6. Tarry here. The old prophet, knowing that his earthly career was drawing to a close, manifested the natural desire for soli-

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tude. The close of life is a mysterious and awful moment. Only one refuge and source of strength remains then, and the soul instinctively shrinks from earthly associations and reaches out for support from divine sources. Elijah was accustomed to solitude, especially in the crises of his career, and he naturally desired it at this time. **I will not leave thee.** The devotion of Elisha is too great to be thwarted even at the approach of a crisis. Then if at any time, it should be unfeeling. He is willing to endure the test, and show himself a true son of the great prophet, in spite of the fact that Elijah had made the request for the third time. Compare with this the devotion of Ruth to Naomi, and the professions of fidelity made by Peter to his Master.

8. Smote the waters. The power was not in the mantle; nor was it in the rod of Moses when the Red Sea parted; nor in the rod of Aaron when he smote the dust, but in the faith exercised by these servants of God. The real potency of faith in God is not sufficiently emphasized or realized in these days; and when the legitimate fruits of a strong faith are seen and experienced some people begin to wonder and seek for explanations that take no account whatever of the supernatural element.

9. Gone over. The companions were now in Elijah's native land and not far from the place "where, in former times, a prophet greater even than Elijah had been withdrawn from the eyes of his people." **Double portion.** This shows that Elisha had unbounded confidence in Elijah. He believed that the old prophet was approaching the end of his earthly career, and that he was able to perform even the "hard thing" that Elisha had requested of him. It is hardly fair to say that Elisha was ambitious to eclipse Elijah as a prophet, and took advantage of his offer for that purpose. It is more reasonable to infer that Elisha had the Mosaic law in mind, by which the firstborn son received two parts of his father's estate, and, as Bahr suggests, "Elisha begs that Elijah will regard him as his firstborn."

11. Chariot of fire. This has long been a fruitful subject of controversy. It presents difficulties only when the attempt is made to make it appear what it is not. The things of the visible world are not the only real things. There is reality in the invisible world. Elisha was not afflicted with an hallucination, but had a glimpse of certain real things that are ordinarily invisible. Just as at a later time "the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." **In a whirlwind.** This was probably an accompaniment of the manifestation of divine power. The translation

of Elijah suggests the remarkable circumstances of the death of Moses, and the transfiguration and ascension of our Lord. These events are remarkable because they are unusual, but there is no substantial reason why we should not accept them as facts. Elijah passed into the larger life without passing through the door of death, as is ordinarily the case, but in the twinkling of an eye he was changed and spiritualized, and fitted for that glorified and eternal state.

14. Elisha went over. He was a different man from the one who accompanied Elijah a short time before, and he was a larger man. New duties and responsibilities transformed him, and the first successful exercise of his new authority, by smiting the waters with Elijah's mantle, gave him confidence in the divine approval. The choice of his successor was not Elijah's alone, but it was God's also. With the consciousness of this fact, of the unlimited resources that it represented, Elisha entered upon his new career. The servant of God who has the undoubted approval of God is panoplied with power, and should be able to achieve great things for God.

Thoughts for Young People. God's Leadership.

1. One step at a time. God did not tell his servant to go from Gilgal to the other side of Jordan, though he intended him to go that way; but he revealed his purpose first only as far as Bethel, then as far as Jericho, and then the rest of the way. So now God tells no secrets of the future, but leads us through a series of providential tasks.

2. By example. God could have taught Elisha all he wished him to know without the intervention of Elijah, but that is not generally his way. Every good man has two uses—his direct usefulness, and the beneficence of his example.

3. Stumbling-blocks turned into stepping-stones. God placed Jordan as a barrier, and it served its purpose well. It is not, like other streams, a popular highway—a sort of artery for trade; it stood in the way of both merchant and invader. God made it a highway for his servant.

4. God guides to heaven. A train or a steamer is known by the name of the place it is destined to reach. We talk of the New York steamer and the St. Louis limited, and we judge the value of the trip almost exclusively by the value of its destination. So in secular life. A man sets out to amass wealth; if he succeed, he and we make little of the self-denials necessary in attaining it. So of scholarship. We do not ask how many headaches Huxley and Darwin had, but how

much they discovered. Why not so of heaven? The success of a man's spiritual life is after all dependent on where it leads him to.

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

There have been many attempts to show the relation between the ascetics of Bible times and those of the modern Asiatic world. This element is found strongly amongst the primitive part of the population of Palestine, and also throughout Persia, Turkey, and India. Something of this character is sought to be imputed to Elisha, a well-to-do if not wealthy farmer, as indicated either by his having twelve yoke of oxen at once working his fields, or by the extent of the farm estimated as large enough to require twelve yoke of oxen. He immediately, at the call of Elijah, abandons his worldly prospects and becomes what in the East to-day would be called a mendicant, or a fakir, and during seven or eight years lives as Elijah does, or like John the Baptist, with his home in the rough mountain regions, sleeping in caves and feeding on the most primitive food.

He was not to this "manner born." He was not naturally a child of the desert, but had been nurtured in refined society and settled life, and to that he returns after the death of Elijah. There is nothing of the dervish in his life after Elijah is taken from him, but during these seven or eight years of his association with the rugged prophet Elijah he must have more or less assumed his habits and dress. What this may have been can scarcely be affirmed with confidence. The ordinary religious mendicant seen in Persia at the present time has a girdle composed of a bunch of rough threads; his cloak is of fanciful patchwork or embroidered cloth or the skin of a beast with its hoofs or claws hanging down; his hair is long and disheveled, he wears a close fitting skull-cap, sometimes embroidered with verses from the Koran or with names of the prophets and bound with a fillet with hanging tassels. He carries in his hand a mace or cane which may be a heavy stick of iron, or tomahawk, or an immense club with a knob driven full of spikes. The last is common to these fakirs throughout India. This rod of iron or uncouth club, like the wand of a wizard, is held by some to be a symbol, like the rod of Moses, or Elijah's mantle, or Elisha's staff, of miracle-working power.

Such savage figures as Elijah has been imagined to be are still found in the East and are revered for their sanctity. They have a girdle of skin, and wear a cloak of camel's hair thrown over their shoulders and tied in front on the

breast. It appears from a French traveler of the sixteenth century that this "sheepskin" was a symbol of the sanctity and supernatural power of these unusual persons.

By Way of Illustration.

BY JENNIE M. BINGHAM.

Elijah's spirit on Elisha. A man's best monument is a successor who has his spirit and who carries on to greater success his work. David Brainerd, that man of God, missionary to the American Indians, died when thirty-one years old. Jonathan Edwards stood at his deathbed and thanked God that he had heard the words of such a man. He himself became a missionary, and he sounded the call that rallied the Church of God to begin missionary work abroad. Brainerd's *Journal* went across the sea, and determined William Carey to be a missionary. Murray McChesney read it, and as a result we have fifty missionary societies for taking Christ to the Hebrews. A young woman returned from a foreign mission field broken in health and ready to die. She formed a friendship with a bright young woman, upon whom so much of her missionary spirit descended that she became a missionary, taking up her friend's work where she laid it down.—A. J. Gordon.

Elisha's cry. By the words "My father! my father!" Elisha expresses what the departing one was for himself; and by the words "The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof" what he was for the whole nation. One such man as Elijah is more than equivalent to an entire army. Such was Luther for the German people.—Lange.

The old Greeks said, "Better an army of stags with a lion for a leader than an army of lions with a stag for a leader."

"How many do you count me for?" asked Alexander the Great of a private soldier who was contrasting the smallness of the Greek forces with the great numbers of their enemy.

Triumph over death. Frances Willard's last words were, "How beautiful to be with God!" The dying injunction of the mother of the Wesleys was, "Children, when I am gone sing a song of praise to God." Dr. Judson said, "I am not tired of my work, neither am I tired of the world; yet when Christ calls me home I shall go with the gladness of a boy bounding away from school."

Elijah's successor. Elijah is swept out of sight in the whirlwind of the Lord, but Elisha returns in the spirit of Elijah. In this scene we have almost a solution of the death of the great and good. They lose nothing, for they rise to their

reward, and their place here is better taken by another. In the order of God as he works his great work he changes his implements. He lays aside the stone mason when the stone is set, that the sculptor may begin to adorn the temple of God. Anon he stills the sound of the chisel, for the temple is ready for worship, and the ring of the chisel must be exchanged for those organ notes which shall lead the praise of God's worshipers in God's house. Joshua must take the place of Moses; Elisha must follow Elijah. Not only another, but a new and original man must displace the old.—*C. L. Noyes.*

The work goes on. In Westminster Abbey is a marble tablet containing the medallion portrait of John and Charles Wesley, and underneath is the inscription:

"God buries his workmen, but carries on his work."

Versé 15. If you have spiritual power, others will know it. You say that spiritual power is an invisible thing. Yes, but its results are visible. The life which spring puts into a tree is unseen, but the buds and leaves and fruit which result are apparent to the most casual observer. The power of an electric battery is invisible, but its results are widely known and seen. So with spiritual power—there will be visible results, and men will say, "He has his Master's spirit."

Heart Talks on the Lesson.

BY MRS. J. H. KNOWLES.

It was perhaps eight years before the time of our lesson. A young man was plowing with oxen in a field, when an old man with a furrowed face, a piercing eye, and majestic though bent figure, passed by. This was the grand epoch of the young man's history. Right there, in his daily work of plowing, he was called to his great life's mission. So Matthew was called from the receipt of customs to follow Jesus, and the other disciples from their nets to be made "fishers of men," and William Carey from the shoemaker's bench to become one of the most influential factors in the world's progress during this century. Honest work of any kind is no hindrance to God's high purposes for us, if we are ready to know and do his will. Go right on in your appointed lot, contented and faithful; if you have the right spirit, God will either open the way for something better, or he will bring to you in the place where you are the best it is possible for you to have under any conditions. Real success or failure in life depends upon our attitude toward God, not upon our circumstances.

The study of Elisha is full of suggestion. When the old prophet, by throwing his mantle

over him, opened before him an opportunity to advance from the honorable occupation of tilling the field well to that of being his successor as prophet, Elisha saw the better thing and promptly put himself in the way of getting it. God did not force it upon him, nor did Elijah. The story as we read it in 1 Kings 19 shows that he followed Elijah from his own choice. For many years he was not prominent at all. He was only the prophet's pupil, companion, and servant—an unassuming, patient learner. Companionship with a strong character, daily converse with a man of noble mind, reverent attention to the teaching of the prophet, and faithful service as occasion required, gradually fitted him for the commanding place he was to take. Fitness for a place of influence does not come by accident. If you would have the best, you must use every opportunity to get ready for it.

Again there came an epoch in Elisha's history. The time arrived for him to take Elijah's place; and the story shows that this promotion was not by favor alone, but because of qualities inherent in the young man's character. Knowing that the time was near when the young prophet should succeed him, Elijah put his faithfulness to final tests. "I want to go to Bethel," he said, "stay thou here." "No," said Elisha, "as the Lord liveth and thy soul liveth I will not leave thee." Again Elijah said, "I must go to Jericho; stay thou here;" but, filled with an overmastering desire to lose nothing he could possibly gain from association with the man of God, Elisha would not stay. At the last Elijah said, "Ask what I shall give thee before I leave thee," and Elisha, enamored of the great ideal which had for years inspired him, said, "Give me a double portion of thy spirit, I pray." "Thou hast asked a hard thing," the prophet said. The best things are costly. A character towering above surroundings, a God-filled soul, are not gifts lightly bestowed for the asking. They are for those only who are prepared to possess them. "If thou see me when I leave thee, thy request shall be granted." And "Elisha saw him." The chariots and horsemen of heaven were as real to him as Elijah's physical form had been before he was translated. The young men looking on from the nearby hills did not "see." They searched three days for the prophet's body in the mountains, while Elisha knew it was not there, for he had seen the chariots of God carry him to heaven. And because he had this spiritual perception the blessing he asked could be given, and all who knew him said, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest upon Elisha."

God cannot give us his best things until we are ready to receive them. Like Elisha, we must

choose, obey, learn of, and faithfully serve our great Teacher, and thus gain spiritual capacity to receive the inheritance of the firstborn, the double portion of all that God has prepared for them that love him.

The Teachers' Meeting.

Time and place....I. Sketch map; trace journey....II. Study of personalities. 1. Elijah; 2. Elisha; 3. "Sons of the prophets"....III. Symbols of lesson. 1. Turning whirlwinds into triumphal chariots; 2. Turning barriers into highways; 3. Virtue of silence; 4. Symbol of the mantle....IV. State briefly Elijah's achievements—what his life had really effected for Israel...V. Show character of Elisha from his request and of Elijah from his answer. Elisha's inheritance was made dependent on Elijah's vision. "The sons of the prophets stood to view, but only Elisha saw"....VI. General traits of Elijah's character. 1. Fidelity—thoroughly on Jehovah's side; 2. Courage; 3. Severity—like Oliver Cromwell, "God gave him stern work to do, and he did it"....VII. Contrast Elijah with Elisha....VIII. Scenes connected with the translation of Elijah. 1. The journey, sons of the prophets, etc.; 2. The crossing of the Jordan; Elisha's request and Elijah's answer (see V); 3. The rapture of Elijah; compare with triumphant Christian's death....IX. Elisha's history and character. 1. His self-sacrificing choice; 2. Lowly service; 3. Fellowship; 4. Holy ambition; 5. Prophetic insight; 6. Prophetic authority.

Before the Class.

BY GEORGE W. PEASE.

Introduction. The events of the lesson for to-day occurred some eight or ten years after those of last Sunday's lesson. We have but two glimpses of the prophet during these years. Once he visits the sick Abaziah, giving him a message of condemnation from the Lord (2 Kings 1. 15, 16); and once again he is mentioned as sending a warning letter to Jehoram, king of Judah (2 Chron. 21. 12-15). Very little is known of Elisha. Elijah, on his return from Mount Horeb, summoned him as his assistant. Elisha obeyed the summons and remained with Elijah until the latter's translation. He seemed to be of a gentler nature than Elijah. He wrought numbers of miracles, mostly of a beneficent character. In opening the lesson draw upon the board an outline map of Palestine, showing the journeys of Elijah and Elisha as given in the first five verses of the chapter.

Development of the text. Place upon the board the subject of the lesson, "Power for Service," and the following divisions as they are reached in the teaching process: 1. Divine power manifested; 2. Divine power desired; 3. Divine power given, and 4. Divine power proved.

1. *Divine power manifested.* Elijah and Elisha, journeying from Gilgal, come to the Jordan, where Elijah takes off his mantle, the sign of his prophetic office, and with it smites the waters of the river, which part before them, and they walk over on dry land. Thus the power of God is again manifested through his servant. Note here: (a) That Elijah honors God by his faith. He knew he was doing that which was in accordance with God's will, so he had faith to believe the desired result would follow his act. (b) That God honors Elijah by manifesting his divine power in his behalf. Thus it will always be—true faith honors God and is honored by him. Call from the class opinions as to a similar honoring to-day of great faith in the Lord's workers. Is the day of miracles over?

2. *Divine power desired.* Elijah and Elisha are alone. Elijah in the hour of parting is not thinking of himself, but of his friend: "Ask what I shall do for thee." Note that this was to a certain extent a test of Elisha's character and of his fitness for the mission for which God had chosen him and Elijah had trained him. In Elisha's answer we see how grandly he met the test. Note in this answer: (a) There is nothing of selfishness or ambition. He did not ask for twice as much as Elijah had, but for the share of the eldest son—a double portion (Deut. 21. 17). (b) Elisha's great desire was that he might be fitted for the work as Elijah's successor. His request was for spiritual fitness, not for a high position of any kind. (c) He felt the need of the same power which he had seen in Elijah. He knew his own weakness; his answer showed that he realized that success lay in the possession of God's spirit in abundant measure. Elisha's supreme desire was made apparent. What would be our answer to-day to a similar question? Give this question to the class for silent answer.

3. *Divine power given.* "Thou hast asked a hard thing." Why? Because (a) It was a spiritual gift which was asked for. (b) It was not in Elijah's power to bestow—he could only pray that it might be given. (c) It required a certain fitness on the part of Elisha. Speak of the sign by which Elisha was to know whether his prayer was to be answered or not. Briefly note here the three parts of the great closing scene. (a) The fiery display, (b) The taking up of Elijah, and (c) Elisha's sorrow. Elisha had seen Elijah

depart; he thus knew that the desired gift of the spirit was to be his. The legacy he thus received was: (a) Elijah's mantle, signifying his office, (b) Elijah's spirit, (c) Elijah's work.

4. *Divine power proved.* Elisha turns back to recross the Jordan. As he comes to the river he takes the mantle of Elijah, smites the waters, they part, and he goes over on dry ground. Thus God proves to him by an actual demonstration that he has called him to be the successor of Elijah and has endowed him with the same power.

Specific application. God's workers die; his work continues. As one and another come into the ranks as workers in the Lord's vineyard, power for successful service is needed. This power is the gift of no man—it is the gift of God. If we would carry on God's work for the redemption of the world, let us voice again the prayer of Elisha, "Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me."

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BY REV. S. G. AYRES, B.D.

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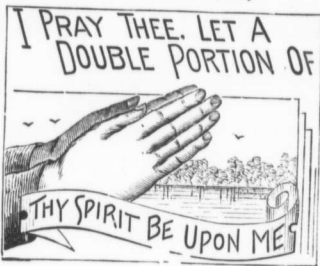
OPTIONAL HYMNS.

O happy day,
Take my life.
O, when I shall sweep thro' the gates.
Shall we gather at the river.
Sweet by and by.

Ever looking upward.
My body, soul, and spirit.
All for Jesus.
O home to-night.
One sweetly solemn thought.

Blackboard.

BY T. J. HARTNAGEL, ESQ.



LESSON VII. THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON.

[Aug. 14.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee. Psalm 55. 22.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

[Read the chapter.]

2 Kings 4. 25-37. [Commit to memory verses 32-35.]

25 So she went, and came unto the man of God to mount Car'mel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Ge-ha'zi his servant, Behold, yonder is that Shu-nam-mite:

26 Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well.

REVISED VERSION.

25 So she went, and came unto the man of God to mount Car'mel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Ge-ha'zi his servant, Behold, yonder is the Shu-nam-mite: run, I pray thee, now to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well. And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught hold of his feet. And Ge-ha'zi came near to thrust her away; but the man of

27 And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet : but Ge-ha'zi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone : for her soul is vexed within her : and the LORD hath hid it from me, and hath not told me.

28 Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord ? did I not say, Do not deceive me ?

29 Then he said to Ge-ha'zi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way : if thou meet any man, salute him not ; and if any salute thee, answer him not again : and lay my staff upon the face of the child.

30 And the mother of the child said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her.

31 And Ge-ha'zi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child ; but there was neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked.

32 And when E-li'sha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed.

33 He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD.

34 And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands : and he stretched himself upon the child ; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.

35 Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro ; and went up, and stretched himself upon him : and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

36 And he called Ge-ha'zi, and said, Call this Shu'nam-mite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.

37 Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.

God said, Let her alone : for her soul is vexed within her ; and the LORD hath hid it from me, and hath not told me. Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord ? did I not say, Do not deceive me ? Then he said to Ge-ha'zi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way : if thou meet any man, salute him not ; and if any salute thee, answer him not again : and lay my staff upon the face of the child. And the mother of the child said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her. And Ge-ha'zi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child ; but there was neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he returned to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked. And when E-li'sha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD. And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands : and he stretched himself upon him ; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house once to and fro ; and went up, and stretched himself upon him : and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. And he called Ge-ha'zi, and said, Call this Shu'nam-mite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son. Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground ; and she took up her son, and went out.

Time.—Between 895 and 884 B. C. **Places.**—Shunem, a little town in the very heart of Israel. Mount Carmel, in the neighborhood of the scene of Elijah's victory over Baal's prophets. **Rulers.**—The kings of Israel and Judah now had the same name, Jehoram, but Jehoram of Israel is sometimes called Joram. They were brothers-in-law. Jehoram of Israel was the son of Ahab and Jezebel ; Jehoram of Judah had married Athaliah, who was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

Home Readings.

- M. Kindness rewarded. 2 Kings 4. 8-17.
 Tu. Sorrow in the home. 2 Kings 4. 18-24.
 W. The Shunammite's Son. 2 Kings 4. 25-37.
 Th. Elisha's care for the Shunammite. 2 Kings 4. 1-6.
 F. The widow's son. Luke 7. 11-17.
 S. The ruler's daughter. Luke 8. 41, 42, 49-56.
 S. Praise for deliverance. Psalm 116. 1-13.

Lesson Hymns.

- No. 438, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Safe in the arms of Jesus,
 Safe on His gentle breast.

- No. 217, New Canadian Hymnal.
 What a Friend we have in Jesus,
 All our sins and griefs to bear !

- No. 86, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,
 Weak and wounded, sick and sore.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR SCHOLARS.

1. **The Shunammite's Sorrow**, v. 25-28.
 By what miracle did Elisha relieve a debtor ?
 What gracious courtesy was shown him near Shunem ?
 What great sorrow came to the Shunammite's home ?

Where did she go for help in trouble?
What greeting did she receive from the prophet?

How did she appeal to Elisha's sympathy?
What was the prophet's explanation of her action?

What question disclosed her sorrow?
Upon what promise did she rest? GOLDEN TEXT.

2. Gehazi's Experiment, v. 29-31.

What was Gehazi bidden to do?
Of what was the staff a symbol?
Why was he forbidden to exchange greetings by the way?

What was the mother's determination?
What was the result of Gehazi's experiment?

3. Elisha's Miracle, v. 32-37.

What did Elisha find on reaching the house?
What was his first resort?
What was his second expedient?
What was the third step in the miracle?
What result followed?
What relation between prayer and works is here shown?

Teachings of the Lesson.

1. See the value of sympathy. Trouble needs comfort. God makes us ministers of mercy. His comfort to us is in order that we may comfort others. See 2 Cor. 1, 3, 4.

2. See the power of prayer. It illumines the intellect; it warms the heart; it inflames zeal; it wins divine favor; it brings heaven "down our souls to greet."

3. See the need of works. God helps such as help themselves. Prayer brings power; but power must be used to be effective.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Shunammite's Sorrow, v. 25-28.

What journey did this mother make, and why?
Who saw her while yet a long way off?
What did Elisha say to his servant?
What was the mother's answer?
What did she do when she met Elisha?
What did Gehazi attempt to do?
What did Elisha say?
What question did the woman ask?

2. Gehazi's Experiment, v. 29-31.

What four things was the servant told to do?
What two things was he not to do?
What did the mother say?
What did Elisha do?
When the servant laid his staff on the child's face what happened?
What report did Gehazi bear to Elisha?

3. Elisha's Miracle, v. 32-37.

In what state did Elisha find the child?
What was his first act when he came to the house?
What did he then do to the child?
What was the effect on the child?
What did the prophet do?
What was the effect of his second visit to the child?
Whom did he then summon?
What did he say to the mother?
What did the mother do?

Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. The duty of trusting God when in trouble?
2. The duty of praying when in trouble?
3. The power of God to help us in trouble?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What did Elisha do after Elijah went to heaven?

Have you read how the waters were healed?
How the jars of oil were filled?
What place did Elisha often visit?
What did a Shunammite woman do for the prophet?

Do you know why she did it?
What did Elisha do for her? **He asked God to give her a child.**

What did God do? **He heard and answered the prophet's prayer.**

What happened when the boy was grown?
Where did the mother lay the dead child? **On the bed of the prophet.**

Then what did she do? **Hurried away to find Elisha.**

What did this show? **Faith in the God of Elisha.**

What did Elisha do? **He prayed to God to raise up the child.**

What did the mother do when she saw her boy alive? **She fell at Elisha's feet.**

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

(For the entire school.)

1. Who was dead? **The Shunammite's little son.**
2. To whom did she go for help? **To the man of God.**
3. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **"Cast thy,"** etc.
4. What did Elisha send by Gehazi to bring the boy back to life? **His staff.**

5. When it was found that the staff did not restore the child what did Elisha do? **He prayed.**

6. What did he do besides praying? **He used natural means.**

7. What was the result? **God restored the boy's life.**

NEW CHURCH CATECHISM.

24. How doth Jesus Christ accomplish the work of redemption?

Jesus Christ doth accomplish the work of redemption, as Prophet, Priest and King, by revealing to us the grace and truth of God the Father, by making atonement for sin and intercession for sinners, and by ruling in His Church and over the world for the world's salvation.

John i. 17, 18. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

Hebrews x. 12, 13.

THE LESSON OUTLINE.

A Godly Mother.

I. HER SOCIAL POSITION.

A great woman. 2 Kings 4. 8.

Not many noble. 1 Cor. 1. 26.

Any of the rulers. John 7. 48.

II. HER RELIGIOUS SPIRIT.

New moon, nor sabbath. 2 Kings 4. 22-23.

Toward thy holy temple. Psalm 5. 7.

Not forsaking....assembling. Heb. 10. 25.

III. HER SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT.

An holy man of God. v. 9.

Took knowledge of them. Acts 4. 13.

Lights in the world. Phil. 2. 15.

IV. HER HOSPITALITY.

1. *Constrained him to eat.* v. 8.

Entertained angels. Heb. 13. 2

2. *Make a little chamber.* v. 10.

Done it unto me. Matt. 25. 40.

V. HER HUMILITY.

I dwell among mine own. v. 13.

Be clothed with humility. 1 Peter 5. 5.

Be content. Heb. 13. 5.

VI. HER FAITH.

I will not leave thee. v. 30.

Casting all your care. 1 Peter 5. 7.

Thy burden on the Lord. Psalm 55. 22.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Seven years before the date of our present lesson a rich woman of the village of Shunem, which lies at the foot of the mountain known as Little Hermon, had entertained Elisha at her home, providing him a chamber where he might rest when on his journeys. This was much more than a mere act of hospitality or an act of reverence to a religious minister. The times were not generally favorable to the true religion; though the power of the priesthood of Baal had been broken, idolatrous practices and degraded habits prevailed in Israel, both in city and country, and the families that came out on the Lord's side were few in number. Therefore the Shunammite woman's entertainment of Elisha had in it the quality of a brave stroke on the right side in the great struggle going on between the true God and paganism. God, who allows no act done for him or his to go unrewarded (Matt. 10. 41, 42), gave to this woman a child of promise—the most highly appreciated gift, perhaps, that could be bestowed upon an Israelite woman. But one day, sad to say, when this little boy had grown old enough to accompany his father to the harvest field, playing around while the farmers worked, he suffered a sunstroke, and, rapidly growing worse, died. The woman's faith wavered not. She astonished her husband by her sudden resolution to visit the prophet, though it was neither a "new moon nor a sabbath"—that is, it was not one of the regular days for worship, when the devout were accustomed to gather about Elisha. Placing the loved form of her boy in the prophet's chamber and on the prophet's bed, the Shunammite hastened forth to him through whom the promise came, that that promise might be rendered true. And, as always in the economy of God, she found that he is faithful that promised (Heb. 10. 23; 11. 11), and that all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and testimonies (Psalm 25. 10). God's goodness, God's power, and God's truth are the prominent points in this whole story.

Verse 25. She. The Shunammite woman. **The man of God.** "God's man," Elisha, now preeminently the prophet of Israel. **Carmel.** From verse 23 it seems that Elisha had a place

on Carmel (probably not far from the scene of Baal's discomfiture before Jehovah), whither on new moons and on Sabbaths the people came for worship and instruction. The distance from

Shunem was perhaps seventeen miles. **Afar off.** She would come across the plain of Jezreel, which is overlooked by Carmel; and her little party could be plainly seen from the mountain side. **Gehazi.** Elisha's attendant, first mentioned in this story. Of his origin nothing is known. His later history involves a sad record of disloyalty, greed, blindness to spiritual opportunity, and awful punishment. A **Shunammite** is a resident of Shunem, a city in the tribe of Issachar, situated on the northern slope of Little Hermon (Josh. 19. 18). This woman was the prophet's highly esteemed personal friend. She was, apparently, a regular attendant on the periodical religious services held at Elisha's home. But her unexpected gallop across the plain made the prophet wonder; it was an evidence of some trouble or sorrow, which Elisha's sympathetic heart would anticipate.

26. Run now, I pray thee, to meet her. An evidence of Elisha's great esteem for her. **Is it well.** "Is it peace?" The oriental way of saying, "How do you do?" **It is well.** "It is peace." The oriental way of saying, "Pretty well, I thank you." The phrases are not more definite in their meaning than their Western equivalents. There is no deception in her reply. She simply evades Gehazi, and presses on. Only to the man of God can she unburden her heart's sorrow.

27. The hill. Where Elisha resided, and which, as we suppose, was a recognized seat of the worship of Jehovah. **She caught him by the feet.** Great grief shrinks from speech. The action was one of supplication. Elisha, who regarded this woman with gratitude and affection, and who, watching her approach at this unseasonable hour, had observed how she had pushed past Gehazi, shared her silent agony with profoundest sympathy. **Gehazi came near to thrust her away.** So would the disciples have driven loving mothers from Jesus (Mark 10. 13, 14), and the officious multitude would have repulsed the blind men (Matt. 20. 30, 31). **Let her alone.** Elisha's gentleness showed his true strength, for gentleness is not weakness, but power controlled. **Her soul is vexed.** "Her soul is bitter." **The Lord hath hid it from me.** Prophets were far from being infallible either in knowledge or judgment. (See 2 Sam. 7. 3.) It was only when the Lord had spoken to them that what they said to others had special weight.

28. Did I desire. She would remind the prophet that her son was a free gift, and had better never been given if he were so soon to be taken. (See verse 16.) **Did I not say, Do not**

deceive me? Even with the promise had come the fear of disappointment. Note that this sorrow-stricken woman does not recount the pathetic story of her boy's illness in the cornfield. Those who are bereaved often are inclined to linger on every detail of the scenes that led to the death of their beloved ones. Why did not this woman? Because she still trusted, in spite of all fears, that her child would be restored to life. This trust accounts for both her silence, her haste, and the persistence of her demand for Elisha's personal presence.

29. Gird up thy loins. "Tighten your girdle." Equivalent to "Put on your coat and hat" with us. **Take my staff.** A badge of Elisha's prophetic office. He may have thought he could thus confer the prophetic power upon Gehazi. If so, the result showed his error. Not even the Church can confer the gift of the Spirit. **Salute him not.** Oriental salutations take time. Haste was the object of the embassy, for in that climate decomposition must set in speedily. Besides, concentration of purpose is as needful to success in religious effort as in secular business. **Lay my staff upon the face of the child.** Elijah intended to delegate his prophetic power by the loan of his staff, exactly as an ancient king might delegate his royal power by the loan of his signet ring.

30. The heart of the mother will take no denial. She may well have doubted the efficacy of Elisha's staff in the hands of one who showed so little of Elisha's spirit. **I will not leave thee.** Persistence is the characteristic of strong faith and strong desire. (Compare Exod. 33. 15; Gen. 32. 26; Luke 15. 1.) **He arose, and followed her.** The child died at noon. It must have been nearly sunset when the mother reached Elisha.

31. Hearing. "Attention." Gehazi's voice could not reach into the world of spirits. **To meet him.** Gehazi had made haste, had failed, and returning met Elisha and the mother on their way. Symbols are of no use where spirit and power are absent. Never mistake the sign for the thing signified, nor outward form for inward grace. **Child is not awaked.** No evidence that he supposed him not dead, as the term "sleep" was commonly used for death (1 Kings 1. 21).

32. Dead. Both here and in verse 20 it is expressly stated that the child was dead; there is, therefore, no room for supposing it a case of suspended animation or a trance. **His bed.** Not the child's bed, but Elisha's. (See verse 21.)

33. Prayed unto the Lord. Thus had Elijah done (1 Kings 17. 21); and thus did Peter (Acts 9. 40). But Christ spake the word, and it was done (Mark 5. 41; Luke 7. 14; John 11. 43).

God alone giveth life, temporal or spiritual, but he is pleased to give it in answer to prayer. The shutting of the door was indicative of intense earnestness and of the impropriety of any interruption. (See Matt. 6, 6.)

34. He went up. (Compare Psalm 132, 3, suggesting a high bedstead.) **Lay upon the child.** The prayer of faith is to be supplemented by personal effort. It is frequently through the personal contact of soul with soul that God works in bringing to life those who are "dead in trespasses and in sins." **The flesh of the child waxed warm.** This is a miracle; an unusual manifestation of God's power in answer to prayer; but the method of the miracle is the transference of the prophet's superabundant life to the child's dead body.

CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

Elisha was recognized far and wide as "the man of God." His long and intimate association with Elijah had marked him as Elijah's successor, and his own wonderful works had emphasized his choice. He wrought many miracles, but his chief efforts seem to have been directed toward the general building up of the Lord's cause. He went about instructing, organizing, and inspiring the people. His relations with his friends at Shunem indicate that he had the respect and confidence of persons of wealth and social position, and that he was accomplishing a work for which the fiery spirit of Elijah was not adapted.

Verse 25. Mount Carmel. The distress of this mother and her confidence in the prophet's power to grant her request were so great that she was eager to undergo a journey of five or six hours up the rough and steep mountain side. Elisha was probably living at the scene of Elijah's great triumph over the false prophets, which now had become of historic interest.

26. The courtesy of Elisha is in sharp contrast with the gruff manner of Elijah. The courteous man is always at the point of advantage, and Elisha, although he was a great prophet, lost nothing by presenting his gentler side when met by this sorrowing and importunate mother. **It is well.** This has the appearance of deception, but it is simply an awkward translation of the word "shalom," which even at best is ambiguous in its meaning. Besides, it is not likely that the woman cared to tell her sorrow to Elisha's servant. Her sad story was for the prophet's ear alone. The word of Sirach is wise: "Do not make known at once to everyone you meet that which distresses you, but keep it to yourself until you can find one who

35. Walked in the house to and fro. Intense emotion is frequently thus exhibited. The recovery seems to have been gradual—first the warmth, then the sneezing, showing restored respiration, then opening the eyes. It was returning life that produced the warmth.

36. Take up thy son. Elijah delivered the risen son to his mother (1 Kings 17, 23), as did Jesus (Luke 7, 15), who also charged the parents of the damsel (Mark 5, 43) to give her something to eat. And thus he commits to our care those whom he has quickened to live, that we may nourish and feed them (John 21, 15).

37. Fell at his feet. A grateful acknowledgment of the priceless favor. The thankful heart bows itself in praise before it takes to itself the blessing it has sought.

understands you, and whose heart you have tested."

27. To thrust her away. Gehazi does not seem to have had the same degree of worldly wisdom and covetousness in this case as he did later in the case of Naaman, else he might have cooperated with the wealthy woman of Shunem for his own financial benefit. His treatment of this distressed mother recalls that of the prophets who rebuked those who brought little children to the Master, and other similar instances. **Hide it from me.** There is an intuitive element in human sympathy. It is not necessary to tell the sad story; the heart is touched before the mind seizes the situation, and immediately the floodgates of sympathy are opened.

29. Take my staff. It is hardly to be supposed that the prophet's staff in the hands of an unsympathetic servant would give the poor mother the desired answer to her entreaty. Whatever the motive of the prophet in dispatching his servant to the house, it is clear that the mother's faith was fixed upon the personal intervention of "the man of God." So it was when the disciples could not on one occasion perform a certain service which, when the Master attempted it, was easily done. Gehazi the rough was a useless and impotent agency in the eyes of this woman, even with the staff of Elisha in his hand.

33. Shut the door. This brings to mind the words of our Lord as found in Matt. 6, 6, and suggests also that no great work for God should be undertaken without much private communion with him. If a prophet must preserve this relation in all its privacy and sacredness in order to accomplish his work, so ought all the children of God who are coworkers with Christ in the great work of the world's redemption. The

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more private prayer the more power; and the more power the greater satisfaction to the soul and the greater glory to God.

34. He went up. The method used by Elisha is a good illustration of the potency of the personal element in the spiritual restoration of men. Prayer is a valuable and necessary agency, but it needs to be supplemented by works, by individual effort. God can accomplish his plans in other ways, but he chooses to use human instruments, not only in the salvation of men, but in their spiritual development as well. As the dead body of the lad was warmed by contact with the prophet's body, so a feeble faith is quickened and vitalized by personal contact with one of a sturdy type.

37. Fell at his feet. She did this also when she met him at Carmel, but then it was to plead for the life of her only son; now it is in gratitude for his wonderful intercession and for the restoration of her boy. Great is a mother's faith; great is the prophet's power; great is the tenderness of God!

Thoughts for Young People.

Godly Womanhood.

The Shunammite woman, portrayed by the sacred penman, stands forth as a model.

1. *She was "rich toward God,"* generous toward his cause, and helpful toward his workers.
2. *She was consistent,* and by her religion made her daily domestic life helpful and gracious. God was enshrined in her heart as really as in the temple at Jerusalem.
3. *She was "strong-minded,"* Burdened with the cares of wifehood and motherhood, her life is, nevertheless, instinct with a force which is felt in all directions. She is not "swamped" by domestic cares, but, "nobly planned," she warns, counsels, and commands.
4. *She was humble,* and not ambitious of great things. If she had desired worldly glory, Elisha could have secured it for her, but her heart's home was in Shunem, and she welcomed God's gift and loved her child.
5. *She was an attendant upon the means of grace,* going regularly to worship among God's people.
6. *In her trouble she sought the "man of God."* The only real relief in time of trouble comes from God; and its shortest route is by way of God's servants. To go for sympathy and help to a "man of God" is a wise course.
7. *She had strong faith,* and believed that God could bring her child from the dead.

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

It is a thoroughly oriental picture that we get of this woman of considerable wealth ordering her servant to bring the ass saddled and mounting it herself while the manservant should accompany her as driver. Our English phrase, "Slacken not thy riding for me," does not imply that the servant was riding also, but that he was merely accompanying her as bodyguard as well as groom for the animal, and all who have had any experience with these creatures will readily understand how difficult it is to force them into any unusual pace. They are patient, plodding beasts, with a circumspect gait which can with very great difficulty be quickened. The attendants club them and shout to them, and sometimes the poor animals get so used to the association of some expletives with the beating they will get that the word itself becomes sufficient to alarm them into extra exertion. Among the Arab travelers of to-day the reserve expletives are curses, and an amusing story is told of some American divines riding one Sabbath morning at full gallop into Jerusalem shouting these Arab phrases, who, on being questioned as to what language they were using, said they knew nothing about it except that those were the only phrases which would make the mules go with speed. They were amused as well as shocked when they learned that they had been giving vent vigorously to Arab curses.

Elisha seeing her riding at such vigorous pace in the distance, assumed at once that some calamity must have overtaken her; and no calamity could overtake an oriental woman equal to that of the death of her son, especially of her firstborn and of her only son, and the son of her mature life, as was the case with this Shunammite. He sent his servant at once to her with the oriental salutation, "shalom" or "salaam," which, while it technically means "peace," has reference to general well-being, and strictly answers to our word "welfare." It is sometimes used to soothe or encourage a person, as opposed to any hurt, injury, or trouble. It is also used to signify the progress of a war. Originally it was the pronouncing of a simple "blessing," and it was common in the time of the Saviour to use it as the equivalent of "good morning," or "farewell," as it is to-day all over the East. The Master used it in his parting address to his disciples, as also in his phrase, "Go in peace." It was common to use the phrase "salaam" on entering the house, and it was a word frequently exchanged by persons of different ranks or even among strangers. Boaz said "salaam" to the reapers, and a traveler on the road would

salute workers in the field, or members of the same family address each other with "salaam" on rising in the morning. But the Jews confined their use of it to their own brethren or to Hebrews.

In the 20th verse we find Gehazi directed not to salute any man on his way to lay the staff upon the child, even though he should be saluted by the persons who met him. This would not have reference to the mere expression of "salaam," or "peace," which Elisha used himself in his inquiry whether the Shunammite was well, but to the delay of conversation which might naturally ensue after the salaam, or to the protracted salutations, which would consume time. We have before given illustrations of the usual phrases tossed to and fro as matters of compliment; besides, the act of salutation was accompanied sometimes with a variety of gestures, expressive of different degrees of compliment, and sometimes with a kiss. These acts would involve the necessity of dismounting if a person were riding or driving. Elisha wished to avoid this delay; not to give direction to omit the mere salutation or complimentary good morning.

In the 33th verse the Shunammite woman carried her salutation to the extent of falling at Elisha's feet. This is still common in the East, but is generally restricted to cases of extreme difference in the social grade of the persons, or to cases of extreme desire to secure the object for which the person is about to petition another. As we might put up our hands to implore, so the oriental world was accustomed to add great emphasis to their pleading by seizing the feet or the knees of the person from whom they desired a favor. The custom itself is not so common, however, as is the use of the phrase which implies the act, without the act itself, it being very common in complimentary address on approaching anyone whom it is desired to compliment with polite speech to add to the ordinary salutation of "peace be to you" the phrase "I have come to kiss your honor's feet."

This whole scene, however, is so thoroughly an Eastern picture that it seems difficult to reproduce it in simpler or clearer phrase than that used in the text itself. This lad went to carry refreshments, doubtless, to the men engaged in harvesting his father's crops, and while in the field became the subject of sunstroke, and cried, "My head, my head!" It is little wonder that among the evidences of providential care enumerated by David in the one hundred and twenty-first psalm we should find the expression "The sun shall not smite thee by day." It is not merely the heat element of a tropical sun which does damage, but what is known among scientific

men as the chemical rays, called the "atmic rays" of the sun, which are so dangerous. We may endure heat of a very high degree and only suffer inconvenience or possibly exhaustion, but exposure to the direct rays of the sun in many tropical countries is always dangerous.

By Way of Illustration.

A prophet's chamber is a good thing in a house. It is like the ark in the house of Obed Edom, bringing perpetual blessing. A Methodist bishop was asked, "Name the influences of your early life which helped in your education." His answer was: "Next to my mother's influence I place the prophet's chamber in our home, where the godly ministers of all that country found a welcome and a lodging place. Their intelligent conversation was always on the live questions of the day, and their prayers and benedictions and influence have gone with me all my life. I am glad that my father's house was known as 'the Methodist Hotel.'"

The staff a failure. The wrong man was behind the staff. It was the prophet who gave power to the staff. An electric wire is of no account unless the source of electricity is behind it. It fails, too, if in some part there is a bad conductor. Gehazi's spirit was a bad conductor of the Spirit of Life. The best thing in a sermon is the man behind it. The most important thing in teaching is the teacher.—*Select Notes.*

Our human relations and affections have divine sympathy. Wherever a parent pleads for a child it touches God; it pulls hard on his heartstrings. For is not he, too, a parent? Depend upon it, no Rachel in all the wide world is weeping for her little ones but that the Father's heart bleeds for her in her grief. How clearly we read this divine trait in the revealing life of Christ! Watch the effect upon him when the nobleman pleads for his son, Jairus for his daughter, the Syrophenician woman for her child, the father of the demoniac for his afflicted boy. Watch the Lord at Nain, when the funeral train winds down from the city gate, and he approaches, lays his hands upon the bier, and says to the widowed and childless woman, "Weep not." Be sure of it, you are never nearer the heart of God, fathers and mothers, you never make a stronger draught on the divine resources, than when you pray for your children.—*Monda; Club.*

Heart Talks on the Lesson.

The "double portion" of the Spirit resting upon Elisha brings forth beautiful fruit in his life. In many instances Elijah's character, grand as it

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was, seemed to have much of the human in it. He was fierce in his anger against the false prophets, he was cuttingly sarcastic in his speech to them on Carmel; he lost faith and courage when matters seemed at their worst. We do not read such things about Elisha. He was a man of gentler mien, and yet of quite as great influence. May there not be a lesson for us here?

The fruit of the Spirit is love, peace, gentleness. The fullness of the Spirit in a human heart gives force to character, not by destroying natural qualities, but by holding them in such control that a strong, impetuous nature may be the gentlest and most loving of all.

Elijah's life was tempestuous; Elisha's peaceful; most of his miracles were beneficent, soothing, comforting. Such is the mission of every truly Spirit-filled soul. What a sweetly natural story is this of the Shunammite's son! This gentle, strong, good man, full of the Spirit of God, was attractive to those who saw him passing by. Something in his very look made them wish to know him better. So a certain lady invited him to her house, and closer acquaintance made her esteem him more because his goodness was not a profession, it was his genuine self. O, this is something to be coveted—to be so genuinely good and true that one's presence in the house is counted a benediction! This lady said to her husband, "This is a holy man of God. Let us make a room ready for him so that we may entertain him as often as he passes by this way." She would have missed a great deal if she had been the sort of housekeeper who through lack of hospitality loses the chance of entertaining angels unawares. Of course Elisha could not accept all this kind attention without wishing in some way to return it. He saw this friend had all that wealth could give her, but there was one thing money could not buy—the priceless love of a little child. So he asked this gift for her of God. We may not be able to return in like measure the kindness of our friends, but we may get great, great blessings for them through prayer.

When the boy was grown one day he was with his father in the harvest field, and upon his precious head the hot rays of the sun fell with fatal stroke. We know all about that mother upon whose knees the boy lay until noon, when he died. It takes very few words to tell a great heart story. But the man who had prayed for the gift of this precious life at first could ask that it might be restored to her now. Nothing could be impossible to a good man full of the Spirit of God. So she hurried to Elisha. Sorrowing hearts everywhere turn for comfort to those whom they think lie nearest to God. And Elisha, with that ten-

der sympathy and practical helpfulness which belong with genuine goodness, left his engagements at Carmel, whatever they were, and went to the house of his broken-hearted friend in Shunem. It was not an easy thing which she expected of him. It cost Elisha all the strength of body, nerve, and spirit he possessed. He prayed; he walked in the house to and fro in the intensity of his desire; he used every power at command, both human and divine, to bring the boy to life and bind up the mother's bleeding heart. And he succeeded. We can imagine the grateful joy of the household and the chastened delight of the prophet as he listened to the merry voice of the child once more filling the home with gladness.

It is always at great cost that men and women become instruments of the divine power to bring life to dead souls and comfort to sorrowing hearts. But the joy of such service far overmeasures its price.

The Teachers' Meeting.

Have the class read the whole story of the Shunammite, beginning with verse 8.... Let the leader tell, as dramatically as possible, the story of the dead child, the hot harvest field, the cry, "My head!" etc., and then let the class tell the story of the restoration to life.... Make outline map showing Shunem, Samaria, Carmel.... Explain the oriental features of the lesson: The prophet's chamber, the bed, the staff, the salutations, etc.... A handy outline: 1. The eager mother. 2. The ineffectual effort. 3. The successful prayer. 4. The restored life.... The Shunammite's noble character. See verses 8, 9, 13, 23, 30. See also "Thoughts for Young People,"... Spiritual life imparted to souls dead in sin: 1. By earnest parents. 2. By earnest prayer. 3. By personal contact; not the staff, but the man, mouth to mouth, hand to hand. 4. By persistent endeavor. This is an allegory of a soul's salvation.... You are, more or less, in God's service. Are you Gehazi, with a prophet's staff in your hands that you cannot use; or are you Elisha, with personal power from personal holiness?... Connection between faith and life. Duties: To bring our sorrows at once to God; to claim God's promise; to be full of sympathy for every sorrowing soul, and repulse none; to give thanks for our answered prayers.

Before the Class.

Introduction. Briefly review the lesson of last Sunday, emphasizing the fact of Elisha's call to the prophetic office and his equipment for the work through the gift of the Spirit. After cross-

ing the Jordan he goes to Jericho, where he heals the impure spring. Then comes the account of the mockers and their punishment, and Elisha's journeys to Mount Carmel and Samaria. In chapter three we find him as the counselor of kings. In chapter four we have the account of the miracle of the multiplied oil and the story of the rich woman of Shunem, in whose home Elisha was a welcome guest. The story of this woman forms an introduction to to-day's lesson. Elisha seems to have traveled about the country teaching and exhorting the people.

Development of the text. Place the subject upon the board, "Help for the Needy," and the following divisions: 1. The gracious inquiry; 2. The reproachful answer; 3. The unsuccessful remedy; 4. The answered prayer; 5. The mother's gratitude.

1. *The gracious inquiry.* Elisha, standing on Mount Carmel, could see a great distance. His eye caught the figure of the Shunammite woman hurrying toward him. Something of importance had happened, and Elisha's first thought was concerning the welfare of his friend. He at once sends his servant to inquire, "Is it well with thee?" Note Elisha's (a) Ready sympathy—his heart went out toward her even before he knew what the trouble was; (b) Thoughtfulness—his inquiry extended to the entire household. There is great need to-day of just such thoughtful, sympathetic inquiries, as expressions of an earnest desire to know where help is needed, and to gain light as to the best ways by which help may be given.

2. *The reproachful answer.* "Did I desire a son of my lord?" This was the real answer given to Elisha's inquiry. The words seem to imply reproach that an unasked-for blessing should be given and so soon taken away. But note in this connection that (a) She had had the great blessing for a time; (b) The love which the child called forth developed her character; (c) The death of the child might be a further blessing to her by drawing her nearer to her God. The words of the poet are indeed true:

"'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all."

So to-day anything which calls forth from us our higher feelings is a great blessing.

3. *The unsuccessful remedy.* Elisha at once took measures for the woman's relief. He sent the servant with the prophet's staff. Note (a) Elisha's promptness in acting; (b) His urgent orders to his servant—"Tarry not;" (c) The woman's anxiety and appeal to the prophet to go in person; (d) The answer to this appeal; (e) The unsuccessful journey of Gehazi. People to-day are like

the woman of Shunem, not satisfied unless the ministrations of God's servants are made in person. Let us go and give, instead of giving while we stay away.

4. *The answered prayer.* Note with reference to this prayer that it was (a) The united prayer of the interested ones; (b) Secret prayer; (c) Accompanied by works; (d) Repeated more than once; (e) Answered by God, although the answer was not immediate.

5. *The mother's gratitude.* The mother's first thought was to worship the Lord and return thanks unto him for his great gift of restored life. Then she took up her child and went out. What a lesson for us! How often we forget to thank God at all for the manifold blessings which he gives us daily and even hourly.

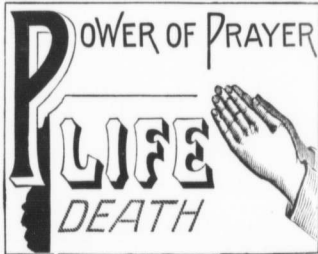
Specific application. The specific thought of the lesson, in addition to what has been suggested in the text development, which we should seek to impress upon the class, is the giving of help—personal help—where need of such help is found. Sending help is good, and many times all we can do, but there are cases where the help must be given in person to be effective. God helps his people when in need, but he uses his servants as the means through whom this help is given. Let us be ready to be so used of God.

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

Lord, we come before thee now.
There is a Friend.
Come unto me.
My Jesus, as thou wilt.
What a friend we have in Jesus.

Father, to thee.
Saviour, I come to thee.
Jesus Christ is passing by.
I bring to thee, my Saviour.
Go tell it to Jesus.

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LESSON VIII. NAAMAN HEALED.

[Aug. 21.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved.
Jer. 17. 14.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

[Read the chapter.]

2 Kings 5.1-14. [*Commit to memory verses 13, 14.*]

1 Now Na'a-man, captain of the host of the king of Syr'i-a, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syr'i-a: he was also a man in valor, but he was a leper.

2 And the Syr'i-ans had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Is-ra-el a little maid; and she waited on Na'a-man's wife.

3 And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Sa-ma-ri-a! for he would recover him of his leprosy.

4 And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Is-ra-el.

5 And the king of Syr'i-a said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Is-ra-el. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.

6 And he brought the letter to the king of Is-ra-el, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Na'a-man my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

7 And it came to pass, when the king of Is-ra-el had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? Wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

8 And it was so, when E-li'sha the man of God had heard that the king of Is-ra-el had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Is-ra-el.

9 So Na'a-man came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of E-li'sha.

10 And E-li'sha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jor'dan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

REVISED VERSION.

- 1 Now Na'a-man, captain of the host of the king of Syr'i-a, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the LORD had given victory unto Syr'i-a: he was also a
- 2 mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. And the Syr'i-ans had gone out in bands, and had brought away captive out of the land of Is-ra-el a little maid; and she waited on Na'a-man's
- 3 wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Sa-ma-ri-a! then would he recover him of his
- 4 leprosy. And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of
- 5 the land of Is-ra-el. And the king of Syr'i-a said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Is-ra-el. And he departed, and took
- with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of rai-
- 6 ment. And he brought the letter to the king of Is-ra-el, saying, And now when this letter is
- come unto thee, behold, I have sent Na'a-man my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover
- 7 him of his leprosy. And it came to pass, when the king of Is-ra-el had read the letter, that he
- rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send
- unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? but
- consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh
- 8 a quarrel against me. And it was so, when E-li'sha the man of God heard that the king
- of Is-ra-el had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent
- thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Is-ra-el.
- 9 So Na'a-man came with his horses and with his chariots, and stood at the door of the
- 10 house of E-li'sha. And E-li'sha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in
- Jor'dan seven times, and thy flesh shall come
- 11 again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. But Na'a-man was wroth, and went away, and said,

11 But Na'-a-man was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

12 *Are* nor Ab'-na and Phar'par, rivers of Da-mas-cus, better than all the waters of Is'-ra-el? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

13 And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

14 Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jor'dan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Ab'-na and Phar'par, the rivers of Da-mas-cus, better than all the waters of Is'-ra-el? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jor-dan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

Time.—Between 890 and 884. **Places.**—Damascus, the capital of Syria; Samaria, the capital of Israel, about one hundred and ten miles apart. **Rulers.**—Jehoram, son of Ahaz, king of Israel; Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah; Ben-hadad II, king of Syria.

Home Readings.

- M.* Naaman Healed. 2 Kings 5, 1-7.
Tu. Naaman Healed. 2 Kings 5, 8-16.
W. Christ's healing touch. Mark 1, 35-45.
Th. Gratitude for healing. Luke 17, 11-19.
F. Obedient faith. John 9, 1-11.
S. Grace abounding. Rom. 5, 12-21.
S. The source of cleansing. 1 John 1.

Lesson Hymns.

- No. 122, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Down at the cross where my Saviour died,
 Down where for cleansing from sin I cried.
- No. 123, New Canadian Hymnal
 I am coming to the cross;
 I am poor, and weak, and blind.
- No. 127, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Blessed be the Fountain of blood,
 To a world of sinners revealed.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR SCHOLARS.

- 1. The Smitten Soldier, v. 1-4.**
 Who was this smitten soldier?
 What was his affliction?
 Describe his disease.
 Of what is it a scriptural type?
 What good gift had war brought to his home?
 What words of hope did the captive speak?
 To whom?
 How did her words reach the soldier?

2. Naaman's Journey, v. 5-9.

- With what indorsement did Naaman set out?
 What presents did he bear?
 Why?
 What were the contents of the king's letter?
 How did the king of Israel construe the letter?
 What did his words imply as to leprosy?
 What message came to the king's relief?
 Where was Naaman sent?

3. The Prophet's Command, v. 10-12.

- What command did the prophet give?
 Why seven times?
 What had Naaman supposed would be done?
 What wrathful question did he ask?
 How did he show his displeasure?

4. A Perfect Cure, v. 13, 14

- Who sought to appease Naaman's wrath?
 What did the servants say to him?
 What did Naaman finally do?
 What resulted from his obedience?
 What was the real cause of Naaman's cure?
 What three agencies entered into the cure?
 What should be the prayer of every spiritual leper? **GOLDEN TEXT.**

Parables of the Lesson.

1. God employs humble instruments. A God-fearing child may teach a king. Elisha out-ranked Jehoram. Galilean fishermen count for more than scribes or Pharisees. "Not many mighty" hath God chosen. See 1 Cor. 1, 26-29.
2. God works through humble means. A branch sweetened the waters at one time, salt at another; a rod and a sheepskin mantle divided the flood; dipping in the Jordan cured leprosy, and in the pool of Siloam blindness. Why? That the real source of power may not be forgotten. "Our sufficiency is of God."
3. God effects perfect cures. The leper's flesh

became as "the flesh of a little child;" the blind saw clearly; the lame leaped for joy; the dead were raised to life. So of spiritual cures; our God does no imperfect work.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Smitten Soldier, v. 1-4.

Of what man of valor does the lesson tell?

Why was he held in honor by the king of Syria?

What affliction was on him?

What captive had the Syrians taken?

To whom was the maid a servant?

What did she say to her mistress about Naaman?

What report was brought to Naaman?

2. Naaman's Journey, v. 5-9.

What did the Syrian king say that he would do?

What presents did he send to the king of Israel?

What was the letter which he sent?

How was the king of Israel affected by the letter?

What question did he ask?

What did he think was the purpose of the letter?

Who heard of the king's distress?

What message did he send to the king?

What did Naaman then do?

3. The Prophet's Command, v. 10-12.

What message did Elisha send to him?

How did Naaman receive this message?

What did he expect Elisha would do?

What did he ask about the rivers of Damascus?

4. A Perfect Cure, v. 13, 14.

What did his servants say to him?

What did Naaman finally do?

What was the effect on his leprosy?

Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That a child can serve God?

2. That God can bring good out of seeming evil?

3. That God can work great results by small means?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What do you know about Naaman? **He was a rich, honored Syrian general.**

Why was he not happy? **He had the dreadful disease of leprosy.**

Who pitied Naaman and tried to help him?

How could a little girl help a great man? **She could tell of One who could help.**

What did the king of Syria do when he heard the child's story? **He sent Naaman to the king of Israel.**

Who was the king of Israel then? **Jehoram.** Could he cure the leprosy? **No, but the God of Elisha could.**

How did Naaman come to the prophet? **In great state.**

What simple thing did Elisha tell him to do? **To dip himself in Jordan seven times.**

Why did this vex him? **It was so easy.**

What did he finally do? **Just as the prophet said.**

What followed? **He was cured.**

How may our hearts be made clean? **By giving them to Jesus.**

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

(For the entire school.)

1. What great sorrow had Naaman, the great Syrian soldier? **He was a leper.**

2. Who told Naaman's wife about Elisha? **A little captive maid.**

3. To whom did the king of Syria send for help for Naaman? **To the king of Israel.**

4. When Naaman came to Elisha what did the prophet send him to do? **To wash in Jordan seven times.**

5. How did that impress Naaman? **He became very angry.**

6. Who persuaded him to follow the prophet's advice? **His servants.**

7. What was the result? **He was made clean.**

8. What is the GOLDEN TEXT. **"Heal me, O Lord," etc.**

NEW CHURCH CATECHISM.

25. What is the Atonement?

The atonement which Christ hath made for sin is that offering of Himself as the gift of the Father's love in which He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and for the sake of which God doth forgive sin.

1 John iv. 10. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Romans iii. 25, 26. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

THE LESSON OUTLINE.

Sin and its Cure.

I. THE DISEASE OF SIN.

1. *A great man.* v. 1.
No respecter of persons. Acts 10. 34.
2. *But he was a leper.* v. 1.
All have sinned. Rom. 3. 23.

II. THE REMEDY FOR SIN.

1. *A little maid.* v. 2.
Revealed. . . . unto babes. Matt. 11. 25.
2. *Am I God. . . . to make alive.* v. 7.
Who can forgive. . . . but God? Mark 2. 7.
3. *Let him come now unto me.* v. 8.
Come unto me. Matt. 11. 28.
4. *Go and wash in Jordan.* v. 10.
Believe on. . . . Jesus Christ. Acts 16. 31.

5. *Rivers of Damascus, better.* v. 12.
Hewed out cisterns. Jer. 2. 13.

III. THE CURE OF SIN.

1. *Then went he down.* v. 14.
Humbleth himself. . . . exalted. Luke 14. 11.
2. *Dipped. . . . seven times.* v. 14.
Endureth to the end. Matt. 10. 22.
3. *Flesh came again.* v. 14.
A new creature. 2 Cor. 5. 17.
4. *Like. . . . a little child.* v. 14.
As little children. Matt. 18. 3.
5. *He was clean.* v. 14.
Washed. . . . sanctified. 1 Cor. 6. 11.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Elisha's life was one steady forth-putting of divine power, constantly affecting men by his force of character, and sometimes exerting miraculous potency. Shortly after the raising of the Shunammite's son from the dead Elisha prevented the evil effects of poisonous greens which had been accidentally gathered for food during the dearth or famine in Gilgal. During the same famine he fed one hundred men with a meager portion of barley loaves and ears of corn. Next comes the story of the miraculous cure of Naaman's leprosy, which, perhaps, has been oftener read than any other portion of the Old Testament. How easy to reproduce it: We see the great captain robed in purple, riding in state through the streets of Damascus, but pitted by all because of his living death as a leper. We hear the simple words of the captive maiden which brought tremulous hope to his troubled heart. We watch the splendid caravan as it moves over the uplands of Bashan and across the Jordan Valley in search of health for the Syrian soldier. We behold the terror that whitens the king's cheek and the calm and confident behavior of the prophet when Ben-hadad's strange letter is read. We watch the procession wind its way between the hills to the prophet's lowly home, and hear his command to wash in the Jordan seven times. But the nobleman has thought out a better plan for the miracle than this, and gives way to passion. Better counsels, however, prevail. He bathes and is renewed in flesh and spirit. Let us read this Old Testament story in the light of its New Testament teachings concerning the diseases of sin and the divine Healer, man's helplessness, and God's love for every race and individual of mankind.

Verse 1. Naaman means, probably, "beautiful." **Captain of the host.** Commander in chief. His station was, next to the throne itself, the most important in the realm. **Great . . . and honorable.** One word refers to his rank, the other to the personal regard of the king. **By him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria.** Revised Version, "victory unto Syria." This may have been in the wars between Syria and Israel, or, as the monuments would indicate, in an Assyrian war, in which the Syrians secured independence. The pious Jew who wrote these words regarded, as we should regard, every event of life as being under God's control. **A mighty man of valor.** Personally brave. **What a series of advantages** were his: General of the army, favorite of his king, popular with the nation, dwelling in a palace, wealthy, afraid of

nothing. **But he was a leper.** All his honors were as nothing to that "but." Who would exchange places with him? There were two kinds of leprosy, one of which was surely fatal. The disease in both forms was hereditary; was believed to be contagious; was deceptive, from its painless character; rendered a man unclean, so that none could come near him; and was absolutely incurable. Under the strict law of Israel Naaman would have been deposed and excluded from society, but the Syrians were less careful. (1) *What a perfect picture of the disease of sin!*

2. The Syrians had gone out by companies. Guerillas; freebooters. Even in times of peace such parties might dash across the line from either country into the other, and capture what they could. **Brought away captive.** War, always barbarous, was in ancient times

more cruel than now. Prisoners were generally killed, especially the aged, the wounded, and the useless; and all who were worth keeping were enslaved. **A little maid.** A young girl, valued, like a horse, or a vase, or a rug, for beauty and for usefulness.

3. She said. (2) See the power of a child's word for good! **Would God.** This phrase is elsewhere better translated "O that." **My lord.** Her title of respect for Naaman. **The prophet that is in Samaria.** For a while Elisha's residence was in the city of Samaria. (See 2 Kings 5, 9; 6, 32.) **He would recover him.** Perhaps he had healed other lepers; at all events, his fame as a wonder-worker reached far. This verse should impress our minds with the fact that there are good words for us all to speak, and good deeds for us all to do, and not even the least of these shall lose its reward.

4. One went in, and told his lord. The Italic letters in which *one* is printed indicate that that word was supplied by our English translators; it is probably a mistake. The Revised Version in its margin supplies "he," and thus makes Naaman hasten into the presence of "his lord," Ben-hadad, to repeat what his wife's maidservant had said.

5. Go to. "Come now." **I will send a letter unto the king of Israel.** An exceedingly imposing result of the young girl's remark to her mistress. The king of Israel was probably Jehoram, the son of Ahab. **Talents . . . pieces of gold.** The treasure has been variously estimated at from twenty to sixty thousand dollars. Coined money was not yet invented. **Change of raiment.** Orientals are fond of gorgeous robes; these are changed frequently, and are a sort of standard of value.

6. That thou mayest recover him. Himself an absolute ruler, he supposed that the king of Israel could command his subjects at will; and he considered it quite a complimentary way of expressing his desire that the king would use his influence to effect the cure. Doubtless Ben-hadad had magicians drawing rich salaries at his court, and in their supernatural power he had a good deal of religious faith; but they could not cure Naaman. He supposed Elisha also to be a magician, but with greater power. How utterly does this world fail to comprehend the things of God!

7. Rent his clothes. An oriental gesture, expressive of sorrow, alarm, and terror. The king does not seem to have thought of Elisha. (3) *Kings have all the trouble of ordinary men and sometimes heavier troubles.* **Am I God.** Even a king finds limits to his power. A closer intimacy with the Lord and his prophets would have

lessened his alarm. **He seeketh a quarrel.** He supposed that as Ben-hadad had made impossible demands upon his father, Ahab, in order to provoke war, so his successor was now doing with like purpose.

8. Elisha . . . sent. A plain man, calm while the king is terror-stricken; a subject rebuking his sovereign's want of faith. **Let him come now to me.** Spoken not in arrogance, but under divine direction. He knew the might of the arm on which he leaned. **There is a prophet in Israel.** One who could speak and act for God among men.

9. Naaman came. A contrast: Naaman with princely retinue, and underneath his dazzling robe a leper's skin and an aching heart; Elisha in humble surroundings, yet swaying a scepter mightier than a king's. **His horses** for his attendants, and **his chariot** for himself. (4) *The seeming is not always the real.* (5) *When a sinner seeks for mercy let him not come in state, but on his knees, in the poverty and nakedness of his soul.*

10. Elisha sent. He does not honor the haughty Syrian by his presence, but sends his commands by a servant; thus respecting the ceremonial law, showing the dignity of his office, and humbling Naaman's pride. **Go and wash in Jordan.** (1) A simple act; (2) A self-denying act; (3) An act of obedience; (4) An act of perseverance; (5) An act of faith; (6) A symbolic act, showing as in a picture the process of salvation.

11. Naaman was wroth. He had already planned an impressive way of healing, altogether befitting the dignity of a Syrian nobleman. Now he finds himself treated precisely like a common outcast leper. **The name of the Lord his God.** Literally, "of Jehovah his God." He regarded Jehovah as the God of Israel, just as Rimmon was of Syria, and Chemosh of Moab. **Over the place.** Showing that the leprosy was recently manifested, and as yet touched only a part of the body. **Recover the leper.** He wanted to be rid of the "leper," yet preserve the grandeur of the "captain." How many cling to their own unclean hearts, from which they would fain be free, because they cannot receive salvation on their own terms and in their own proud way.

12. Abana and Pharpar. The Barada and the Awaj, two crystal streams rising in Mount Lebanon and flowing across the plain of Damascus, only to be lost in the desert; fit types of the worldly morality, cold ceremonialism, and intellectual culture which men would substitute for the Gospel of salvation. **Went away in a rage.** How foolish is that rage which makes a man turn away from purity and

life just because its conditions are not of his own choosing! (6) *Naaman has left many descendants in the world.*

13. His servants. They knew the quickness of his temper and the real worth of his character. Well for him that he had wise advisers, and better that he followed their advice. **Some great thing.** He would have been ready to spend a great fortune or to take a great

journey if he could have obtained healing. **How much rather then.** So now, since it is so easy, why should any hesitate to obtain salvation?

14. Like the flesh of a little child. Gone the chalky, clammy skin; in its place comes the glowing freshness of childhood. He is "a new creature." What a picture of that mightier work of grace by which the sinner becomes a new creature!

CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

The reading of the beautiful story of the famous Syrian leper deepens one's appreciation of the truth contained in Faber's lines:

"For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind,
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind."

Naaman was a Syrian, and Elisha an Israelite. These nations were in a condition of chronic antagonism, and it is hardly to be supposed that a Syrian would ask a favor of an Israelite, or that an Israelite would consider himself justified in granting the favor if it were asked. But those of high degree are sometimes brought low, and Jehovah is the Lord of all mankind, and his prophet is the servant of all; just as he gave his Son, that "whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Verse 1. Naaman. Syria was not at this time a very important nation, having suffered greatly from the invasions of its enemies. But Naaman, the captain of the host, was evidently one of the men who stood high in royal and public esteem for his services to the nation. It is doubtful whether he was the man, who, according to the rabbinical tradition, slew Ahab; it is more likely that he rose to eminence because he had repelled the invading Assyrians. **Leprosy.** One of the most dreadful diseases that prevails is leprosy. In the East it has always been common. Thomson says of it: "It is feared as contagious; it is certainly and inevitably hereditary; it is loathsome and polluting; its victim is shunned by all as unclean; and it is most deceitful in its action." The Mosaic law that compelled the leper to live alone outside of the city, forbade his participation in public worship or association with the public, and placed other humiliating restrictions upon him, was evidently not in force in Syria, else Naaman could not have remained in his position as captain of the host. Nevertheless the affliction was grievous to him and to his family and friends.

2. Little maid. It is impossible to tell what means God will use in the working out of his

plans, or how he will use them. This young woman, captured by a band of marauders, never dreamed that she might be the instrument of the accomplishment of a great service. Naaman was eminent; she was unknown. He was a great soldier; she was only a slave; and yet "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty."

5. He departed. This leper was so anxious to be recovered of his leprosy that he did not hesitate to go into the country of an old enemy, and even seek a favor of the king of Israel. He went laden with riches, \$16,400 in silver, \$48,000 in gold, and costly apparel with which to dazzle the king and win back his health. But that could not be purchased with money. Neither can salvation from sin be purchased with silver and gold. As the leper was cleansed by the power of God operating through his prophet, so "the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

10. Elisha. He probably knew about Naaman before he left Syria, and was ready to receive the proud but disheartened man. To wash in Jordan seemed a burlesque, for if that stream had any curative properties, there would not have been a leper in the country. It was humiliating for a captain of the host to obey the foolish command of a prophet's servant, and Naaman's pride drove him away.

11. I thought. Naaman is not the only man who had laid plans for his restoration and was disappointed because his schemes failed. God has plans also, and his plans must carry, or nothing is done that will abide. Naaman learned what we must all learn, that the Lord saith: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Shedd says: "Men invent a God in their own minds, and go to the Bible to see if they find the same God there; if not, they reject him. If their *a priori* notions of Christ and the way of salvation are not satisfied, they turn away angry. If the diseases of their souls cannot be healed as

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they have made up their minds they ought to be healed, they will not have them healed at all."

14. His flesh came again. Obedience to God's law always brings a rich reward. Dipping a certain number of times in a certain stream was a necessary accompaniment of this miracle simply to emphasize the necessity of obedience on the part of the leper. The voice of God should be supreme, and he who gives eager heed to it is sure to be abundantly rewarded; for it is a characteristic of God in his dealings with his obedient children to do for them "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

Thoughts for Young People. Some Slanting Rays of Truth.

1. Remember the two "buts" of the lesson. Naaman was rich and honorable, "but" a leper. The little maiden was a slave, "but" had at command the cure of leprosy. We all have our hard earthly conditions, but are they as hard as hers? Is there not a "but" in our case as favorable as in hers? Is it not possible that we have as wide means of doing good as had she? Uncounted sermons have been preached about the discount on the happiness of the Syrian general and on ours; let us not forget the premium on the Hebrew maiden's lot and on ours.

2. We should all benefit our betters. Everybody knows that old folks should care for the young, that rich people should help the poor, that wise men should advise the foolish, and so on. Of course. But here was (1) A little girl guiding a mature and experienced man; a slave by her spiritual knowledge and homely common sense securing the greatest of blessings for her high-born master. (2) When this great man had followed the direction of his slave girl, and had come up to the very doorstep of salvation, he would have lost all if other inferior advisers had not again guided him. Let your light shine "in your little corner," as the hymn says, and its rays will brighten and gladden many hearts.

3. It is very easy to be diverted from the end to the means. Very many people start out to perform some great thing, but get more enthusiastic about their plans than they do about the outcome. Many a general has fought harder to have his own way among his allies than to whip his enemy. Many a church member will exert more force in getting a majority vote in a teachers' meeting or a trustees' meeting than he will in securing the glory of God. Naaman really sought salvation, but he wanted to claim it in its own way, and, until his servant advised him, he was in danger of losing the end by his close adherence to the means that he had chosen.

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

The highest scientific experts of modern times declare that leprosy is contagious and incurable. This lends a great deal of emphasis to the cure of Naaman by Elisha, but there is still a query as to how Naaman should have been admitted to the social intercourse which his position necessarily implied as an army officer. This may be accounted for in either of two ways. The Hebrews seem to have, at an early date, made a profound study of this disease during its several stages, as well as in making a difference as to its various kinds. In the thirteenth chapter of Leviticus and at the thirteenth verse we read that if the leprosy has covered all the flesh of the subject of it, he should be pronounced clean by the priest. "It is all turned white; he is clean. But when raw flesh appeareth in him, he shall be unclean;" but if the raw flesh be changed into white, the priest is to pronounce him clean. It may seem strange that a partial leper should be pronounced unclean, and a person totally covered with the disease, clean; but it would seem that the partial was contagious, and the total not. If a person was all covered with a white enameled scurf, it was an advanced stage and not considered contagious, while that of the earlier process, when the flesh was raw and quick, would communicate the disease.

It is also recognized that there was a species of leprosy, or what was called leprosy, which was held by the Arabs to be so far from being contagious that one may "sleep with the person affected without danger." The Arabs call it *bahak*. The spots of this leprosy do not appear on the hands, but on the neck and face, though not where the hair grows thick. They gradually spread and continue sometimes only about two months, sometimes one or two years, and then disappear by degrees by themselves. This is neither contagious nor hereditary, nor does it occasion any inconvenience. This is supposed to be the "freckled spot" of Lev. 13. 39, which was to be pronounced clean by the priest.

But leprosy itself is everywhere still recognized throughout Egypt and Syria as a terrible, contagious disorder. It commences with only a few reddish spots on the skin, which give no pain, but which cannot be removed. These spots gradually become larger, spread over the whole skin, and sometimes are slightly raised, though generally flat. Any minute description of its progress is necessarily revolting. Leprosy, when it was mild, did not necessarily unfit a man for war.

It is little wonder when Naaman found himself so suddenly and miraculously cured, that his

"flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean," that he should at once have asserted "there is no God in all the earth but in Israel," and that he should have proposed to bestow a "blessing" on Elisha. This blessing was pay in the form of some great presents to Elisha himself as an expression of his gratitude, and was entirely distinct in kind from the complimentary gifts which he had made to the king of Syria. These complimentary gifts were common among all classes, as they are still, but especially from the lower to the higher ranks of society, and may consist of a few vegetables or other trifles, or of great gifts, as in this case, of ten talents of silver and six thousand pieces of gold, besides the ten changes of costly garments.

What was the value of these talents of silver and gold we have no possible means of determining, for the Hebrews at this time had no coinage of their own. They were taught to abhor idolatrous images of all kinds and to avoid handling them. On the coins of the Gentiles almost invariably appeared images of men and of gods. The temple tribute or offering of atonement, fixed in ancient days at a half shekel of silver by weight, probably became the unit of exchange on foreign coins in Jerusalem. But even when what we may call coining came at first into use it was only a rude punch mark, which did not certify the weight of the piece of money, but only the measure or degree of the purity of the metal. It therefore follows that it is difficult to tell what was the value of the money even by weight. If, however, it were calculated in the exact coinage of the Roman period, the silver would approach eighteen thousand dollars, but would leave in doubt still the value of the six thousand pieces of gold. If pieces meant shekels, and one were to read them as the Arabic does, they would be worth over fifty-five thousand dollars, while of course there is no estimating the value of the ten changes of raiment, as it is not at all infrequent for these wardrobes to cost fabulous sums of money.

By Way of Illustration.

Naaman the leper. He was next to the king. He was rich. He was surrounded with splendor, and his gifts for the prophet were worthy of a king's ransom. Strength, honor, riches, power—all were his. "But—he was a leper!" How that little phrase changes it all! It is like a wet sponge erasing the list of his blessings. A single "but," like a decimal point before millions, reduces all the gifts of fortune to fractions of trifling value.—*E. M. Noyes.*

The little maid. The Bible continually emphasizes the value of humble folk in the divine economy. Moses was the son of a slave. Joseph and Daniel were prisoners who rose to almost royal power. David was a shepherd lad, the youngest of his father's sons. Amos was a rustic, but the king trembled before him. The apostles were but fishermen. Our Lord himself chose the humblest surroundings for his earthly life. The list of "poor boys who became famous" in the service of God and their fellows is a long one. "The things that are despised, did God choose."—*Monday Club.*

Maria Millis. The greatest philanthropist that England has ever produced was Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftsbury, and he was brought to Christ and to his service for humanity by an humble, unlettered servant girl. His parents were aristocratic and worldly in the extreme. But an humble servant, who was housekeeper in the family, formed a strong attachment for the gentle, serious child, and would take him in her arms and tell him the sweet story of the manger of Bethlehem and the cross of Calvary. Although not yet seven years old, there was in his heart a distinct-longing to be Christlike, which ultimately developed into an intelligent faith. She taught him a prayer, the first he had ever learned, and when an old man he often found himself repeating those simple words. This lowly handmaid little knew that generations unknown and years untold would rise up to bless her.

Seeking salvation in the wrong place. There are still many earnest seekers after salvation who go to the king instead of the prophet, and are disappointed. Some seek salvation from their own good deeds, acts of kindness, or honesty. But they cannot there find forgiveness and a new heart. Some seek it in forms of worship, in acts of prayer and devotion, but they misunderstand the very nature of salvation. Some expect to be saved because they belong to respectable classes, and are members of the church. So the Pharisees believed that they would be saved because they were children of Abraham, no matter what their lives or hearts might be. Some look to science and knowledge for salvation. But all these alone, while helps by the way, are powerless to save men.—*Blouet.*

A miracle. Drummond was asked, "Do you believe in miracles?" He answered: "Yes; I have witnessed many. I have seen a cruel, profane, drinking man become kind, reverent, sober, honest, and trustworthy. I have seen women who were immoral, sinful outcasts become pure and true and good. It is not strange that I believe in the possibility of miracles."

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ous for his profanity and impiety. Webster heard that he had been converted and went to see him. After a visit, during which he watched his brother-in-law very closely, he said, "If this is not a miracle, what is?"

Heart Talks on the Lesson.

"Thus and thus said the maid." Who can measure the influence of a word? A little girl says something; it is repeated to another, who repeats it again; it stirs a king to write a letter to another king, which rouses his anger; finally it results in the healing of a distinguished general in the Syrian army, and the story is told through the centuries, touching powerfully the lives of thousands. All that is said about this little maid is embraced in very few words. She waited on Naaman's wife; she was a captive, far away from her kindred; she was not there by choice, nor by chance either, for the God to whom she was true, in the midst of idolatry, had his eyes upon her, and had work for her to do in that place which she could have done nowhere else. Evidently she was faithful to her early training, when it might have appeared to her advantage to worship the gods of her master and mistress. If she had not been thus true, she would have missed the great opportunity of her life.

There must have been something in the character of this little maid which favorably impressed the lady whom she served. If she had not been good and faithful and agreeable in her service, no attention would have been paid to her remark about the prophet in Samaria. Instead of sighing over her unhappy lot as an exile, she had a real interest in those whom she served. So in the faithful discharge of her daily duties this great opportunity came to her. She never thought what results would follow this simple expression of good will. Out of the kindness of her heart she spoke. O, to have a heart full of wishes and prayers for the salvation of others! If we have such a heart, we are always in the way of doing good. Even a humble little waiting maid can tell where a blessing may be found. Naaman would probably never have been cured of his leprosy but for the words of this little girl, and the world would never have heard this beautiful story which illustrates so perfectly the way of salvation through faith and obedience. He was a great man, distinguished and honored—but—there was something in his life which threw a shadow over all—he was a leper. The "but" in every life comes from sin, of which leprosy is a type.

Leprosy is hereditary, painful, contagious, loathsome, fatal; so is sin. There was only one

way for Naaman to be cured, and his pride came very near keeping him from it. The streams of Damascus were more clear and beautiful than the rivers of Israel; to the natural heart our own ways of making ourselves better seem much more reasonable than the way of the cross. But he would have gone back to his home a leper still if he had not implicitly obeyed "the saying of the man of God." The manner of the cure humbled his pride and tested his faith. Suppose he had held to his preconceived notions of what he should do to be saved. He would have been a leper still. In simple obedience he found the remedy. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "Behold, now I know," Naaman said. O, the blessed experience when pride and doubt give place to obedience! "His flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." Whenever you kiss the soft cheek of a baby remember that the transforming power of the Holy Spirit can make your heart pure as the flesh of a little child, and the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin.

May the words of our mouths and the meditation of our hearts bear as good fruit always as this simple saying of the little captive maid.

The Teachers' Meeting.

Practical outline: 1. The captain. 2. The captive. 3. Two kings. 4. The messengers. 5. The servants. 6. Analogies....Or, treat it in a series of pictures: 1. The leper. 2. The captain. 3. The journey. 4. The prophet's command. 5. The cure....On a sketch-map trace Naaman's journey from Damascus to Samaria, to Elisha's home, to the Jordan, back to Damascus. In teaching this lesson we should trace the analogies between the physical and spiritual world. Many lessons will come to mind. Take leprosy as a symbol of sin. 1. Its heredity. 2. Its contagion. 3. Its loathsomeness. 4. Its deceptive and almost painless character. A leper hardly realized his condition at first. 5. No physician on earth can cure it. 6. It leads toward death....The symbol of washing in the Jordan: 1. A simple act. 2. A self-denying act. 3. An act of obedience. 4. An act of perseverance. 5. An act of faith....Evils of pride....Naaman's pride nearly cost him his cure. The same pride keeps souls from salvation....Faith cometh by hearing.... The child pointed Naaman to God.

Before the Class.

Introduction. Our knowledge of the life of Elisha is so limited that we do not know whether the different recorded incidents in his life are in

chronological order or not. Between the last lesson and the present one two miracles are given, the healing of the poisoned pottage and the feeding of the one hundred men with twenty loaves. Note in passing that all the miracles thus far presented have been miracles of beneficence. The scenes of the lesson are in Damascus, the capital of Syria, and Samaria, the capital of Israel, about one hundred and ten miles from Damascus.

Development of the text. Place upon the board the subject, "Life Conquering Death," and the following divisions: 1. The awful need; 2. The message of hope; 3. The kingly request; 4. The simple command; 5. The marvelous result.

1. *The awful need.* Naaman was rich, honored, powerful, but he was a leper. This was the drop of intense bitterness in his cup of happiness. Concerning this disease note that it was (a) Incurable—save by direct interposition of divine power; (b) Loathsome, making the sufferer a disgusting object to the eye; (c) Gradual in its workings; but (d) Inevitable in its consequences—the sufferer was doomed. Show how in these respects it may be taken as a type of sin. Those to-day who are held by the power of sin are in the same awful need of life-giving power as was Naaman of old.

2. *The message of hope.* In the work the little Israelitish maiden did we have a beautiful lesson of the power of little things, and especially of the wonderful results which are sometimes brought about by children. Note in connection with this incident (a) That the little maiden remembered what she had heard about Elisha and used her knowledge to bless others; (b) Although a captive, she thought of her master and desired his healing; (c) She had faith in the God of her people. Our knowledge and faith to-day should be put to similar uses—the blessing of others, even though they be those who have wronged us.

3. *The kingly request.* On hearing of the word of the little maid the Syrian king sent to the king of Israel the request for Naaman's healing, accompanying his request with rich gifts. This showed (a) His regard for his captain, Naaman; (b) His faith in what he had heard; (c) His belief in the ready acquiescence on the part of the king of Israel. But the king had sent for help to the wrong one; life-giving power was not at the disposal of any king but the King of kings. There are those to-day who are seeking for life—everlasting life—in the wrong place. It is not in good deeds, not in forms of worship, not in knowledge, but is the gift of God through Jesus Christ.

4. *The simple command.* The king of Israel was

greatly distressed upon receipt of the Syrian king's letter, but was reassured by Elisha, who had Naaman sent to him. As Naaman appears before his house the simple command is sent out by a messenger, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times." Note concerning this (a) Its simplicity and ease of accomplishment; (b) It imposed a certain duty upon Naaman; (c) It had a promise attached. Thus it is with the Gospel to-day; it is simple, requires something from the sinner, and gives promise of life.

5. *The marvelous result.* Naaman rebelled at Elisha's command, but was finally persuaded by a very sensible servant to fulfill the conditions and see what the result would be. And the result came exactly as promised. The cure was (a) Immediate; (b) Complete; (c) Permanent.

Specific application. The general thought of the lesson has been suggested in the text development. Seek to impress the great need of life from God to conquer the element of death in each one of us. The Christ-life as it grows and expands in the human heart transforms the whole life and we become like unto the perfect man, Christ Jesus, a new creature in him.

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

Deep are the wounds.
There is a fountain.
O, now I see the crimson wave.
Come with thy sins to the fountain.
Just as I am.
Lord Jesus, I long to be.

I bring my sins to thee,
All glory to Jesus be given.
Come, every soul.
The great Physician.

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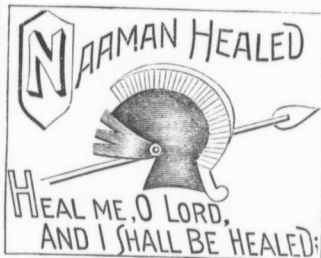
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Blackboard.



LESSON IX. ELISHA AT DOTHAN.

[Aug. 28.]

GOLDEN TEXT. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. Psalm 34. 7.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

[Read 2 Kings 6, 1-23.]

2 Kings 6. 8-18. [Commit to memory verses 15-17.]

8 Then the king of Syr'i-a warred against Is'-ra-el, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp.

9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Is'-ra-el, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syri-ans are come down.

10 And the king of Is'-ra-el sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

11 Therefore the heart of the king of Syr'i-a was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Is'-ra-el?

12 And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king; but E-l'i'sha, the prophet that is in Is'-ra-el, telleth the king of Is'-ra-el the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.

13 And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Do'than.

14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host; and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

17 And E-l'i'sha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and

REVISED VERSION.

8 Now the king of Syr'i-a warred against Is'-ra-el; and he took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp. And the man of God sent unto the king of Is'-ra-el, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syr'i-ans are coming down. And the king of Is'-ra-el sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of; and he saved himself there, not once nor twice. And the heart of the king of Syr'i-a was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Is'-ra-el? And one of his servants said, Nay, my lord, O king; but E-l'i'sha, the prophet that is in Is'-ra-el, telleth the king of Is'-ra-el the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber. And he said, Go and see where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Do'than. Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host; and they came by night, and compassed the city about. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host with horses and chariots was round about the city. And his servant said unto him, 16 Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us 17 are more than they that be with them. And E-l'i'sha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of

he saw; and behold, the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire round about E-li'sha.

18 And when they came down to him, E-li'sha prayed unto the Lord, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of E-li'sha.

Time.—Probably between 803 and 884.
Places.—Dothan, a little town north of the city of Samaria; the capital of Syria; the court of Israel in the city of Samaria. **Persons.**—1. The king of Syria, probably Ben-hadad II. 2. The man of God, Elisha. 3. The king of Israel, probably Jehoram, the son of Ahab. 4. The servant of the man of God, not named, but not Gehazi.

Home Readings.

- M.* Elisha at Dothan. 2 Kings 6. 8-18.
Tu. Good for evil. 2 Kings 6. 19-23.
W. Safety. Psalm 125.
Th. Faith gives courage. Psalm 27.
F. God with us. 2 Chron. 32. 1-8.
S. Who against us? Rom. 8. 24-32.
S. Trust in God. Psalm 37. 1-10.

Lesson Hymns.

No. 52, New Canadian Hymnal.

The Lord's our Rock, in him we hide:
A shelter in the time of storm!

No. 50, New Canadian Hymnal.

Oh, safe to the Rock that is higher than I,
My soul in its conflicts and sorrows would fly.

No. 51, New Canadian Hymnal.

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in his excellent word!

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR SCHOLARS.

1. **Elisha the Prophet**, v. 8-12.

What plot was laid against Israel, and by whom?

Who was king of Syria, and who king of Israel?

What warning did the king of Israel receive?

Who was this "man of God"?

How did the king thwart his enemy?

What suspicion did this awaken in the king of Syria?

What defense was made by his servants?

2. **The Army of Syria**, v. 13-15.

How did the Syrian king learn the whereabouts of Elisha?

What measures did he take to secure the prophet?

What alarming discovery did the morning bring?

What did the terrified servant ask?

horses and chariots of fire round about 18 E-li'sha. And when they came down to him, E-li'sha prayed unto the Lord, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of E-li'sha.

3. **The Army of God**, v. 16-18.

What assurance did the prophet give his servant?

For what did Elisha pray?

With what result?

When and where else was ever the army of God seen?

What similar prayer did David utter?

What similar miracle did the Saviour work on some disciples?

What further prayer did the prophet utter?

What was the answer to this prayer?

What was the purpose of this visitation?

What truth of providence does the lesson illustrate? GOLDEN TEXT.

Teachings of the Lesson.

1. God can thwart evil men. The counsels of the wicked come to naught. No plotters can hide from his gaze; no secrets can escape his scrutiny.

2. God is the keeper of Israel. He is a strong tower to his people. His angels encamp about those that fear him. Where God is guard no ill can come.

3. Fear not. Faith is the antidote to fear. Confide in God. Trust his love. Rest in his promises. Hope in his word. His covenant cannot fail.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. **Elisha the Prophet**, v. 8-12.

Who waged war against Israel?

Who warned the king of Israel of the enemy's plans?

What was his warning?

What did the king of Israel do when warned?

How was the Syrian king affected by these results?

Who did he think had revealed his plans?

What did a servant say about Elisha?

2. **The Army of Syria**, v. 13-15.

What command did the Syrian king give?

What was he told?

What preparation did he make for taking the prophet?

What did Elisha's servant see in the morning?

What did he say to his master?

Who protects God's people from their enemies? Psalm 34. 7.

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3. The Army of God, v. 16-18.

What prayer did Elisha offer for the servant?
 How was the prayer answered?
 What did Elisha ask for his enemies?
 What answer to this prayer came?
 To whom should we pass over all our rights of
 vengeance? Rom. 12. 19.

Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That God knows men's thoughts?
2. That God can defeat wicked men's plans?
3. That God can protect us from all our foes?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Against whom did the king of Syria make war?
 How did he plan to surprise the Israelites? **By moving his army very often.**
 How did the king of Israel hear of his movements? **Elisha told him.**
 How could Elisha know? **The Lord showed it to him.**
 When the king of Syria found this out what did he do? **He sent his soldiers to take Elisha.**
 In what city was the prophet at this time? **In Dothan.**
 Why was Elisha not afraid? **He knew that the Lord was able to take care of him.**
 What did he tell his frightened servant?

That there were more for him than against him.

When shall we know how safe we are in God's hands? **When God opens our eyes.**

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

(For the entire school.)

1. Who told the king of Israel the plans of the king of Syria? **Elisha.**
2. What did the Syrian king send to capture Elisha? **A great host, with horses and chariots.**
3. What did Elisha's servant discover early in the morning? **That they were surrounded by enemies.**
4. What did Elisha pray the Lord to do? **Open the young man's eyes.**
5. What did the young man discover? **That they were surrounded by angels.**
6. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **"The angel of the Lord," etc.**

NEW CHURCH CATECHISM.

26. What are the universal and unconditional benefits which flow from the Atonement?
 The universal and unconditional benefits which flow from the Atonement are the dispensation of God's grace for all mankind, the offer of eternal life in Jesus Christ to all, the probation of all, and the ability of every man to accept salvation through the grace of God.

THE LESSON OUTLINE.

The Man of God.

I. THE MAN.

1. **Patriotism.** *Sent... the king.* v. 9.
 Subject unto... powers. Rom. 13. 1.
 To the king as supreme. 1 Peter 2. 13.
2. **Courage.** *Fear not.* v. 16.
 The righteous... as a lion. Prov. 28. 1.
 Will fear no evil. Psalm 23. 4.
3. **Faith.** *Move... with us.* v. 16.
 The angel... encampeth. Psalm 34. 7.
 If God be for us. Rom. 8. 31.
4. **Prayer.** *Lord, I pray thee.* v. 17.
 Prayer of a righteous man. Jas. 5. 16.
 I am come to show thee. Dan. 9. 23.

5. **Mercy.** *Blindness.* vs. 18-22.

Blessed are the merciful. Matt. 5. 7.
 Put on... mercies. Col. 3. 12.

II. THE PROPHET.

1. **Knowledge.** *The Syrians.* v. 9.
 Know the mind... Lord. Rom. 11. 34.
 By his Spirit. 1 Cor. 2. 10.
2. **Helpfulness.** *Saved himself.* v. 10.
 Bless them that bless thee. Gen. 12. 3.
 God hath given thee. Acts 27. 24.
3. **Enlightenment.** *He saw.* v. 17.
 Walk by faith. 2 Cor. 5. 7.
 The evidence... not seen. Heb. 11. 1.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Ben-hadad II, of Syria, was Israel's implacable foe. He inherited power from his royal father, and brought thirty-two vassal kings with him when he first besieged Samaria (1 Kings 20. 1). Ahab was forced to submit to him, but afterward, under prophetic direction, fought and utterly destroyed a great Syrian army, and was sharply censured for sparing the life of the merciless king. Ben-hadad did not venture to renew the war while Ahab lived, but lost no time in attacking his successors, King Ahaziah and King Jehoram. Probably truces—such as that during which Naaman was healed—were frequent, but guerilla warfare seems to have prevailed most of the time on the

frontier. God, who had kept from Elisha's knowledge the sorrow of the Shunammite woman, revealed to him the plottings of the Syrian king, and more than once Elisha warned the king of Israel against a coming attack. His fame had already filled Damascus, and Ben-hadad, with the same low estimate of a Hebrew prophet that had characterized his attempted negotiations in behalf of Naaman, determined to rob his rival of a seer with such marvelous powers, and attach him to the company of astrologers and magicians which surrounded his throne. Learning that he was at Dothan, on the edge of Mount Carmel, he sent thither by night a detachment of soldiers to seize him. The morning dawned and revealed to Elisha's frightened servant a cordon of glittering armor and a circling forest of spears. Such a sight might well spread terror; but Elisha was calm, for he knew that with God on his side he was more than conqueror. In answer to his prayer his servant's spiritual eyes were opened, and he saw—what his master all along had seen by faith—the hill surrounded by fiery warriors protecting the man of God. No wonder that with such defenders Elisha walked forth to meet his enemies. God blinded their eyes, and the host that came forth as conquerors were at the prophet's mercy.

Verse 8. King of Syria. Ben-hadad II. See the introductory note. The Syrians were not a race as clearly defined as were the Hebrews. Damascus was so situated as to be a center of population and political power through the centuries, and the kingdom that gathered about it, no matter of what races made up, was called the kingdom of Syria. **Warred against Israel.** War was the rule and peace was the exception between Israel and Samaria. **Took counsel with his servants.** Held a council of war. The chief civil and military officials of the country were known as "the king's servants." **In such and such a place shall be my camp.** Ben-hadad's "counsel" was that of a true despot. He does not ask the advice of his servants, but tells them what he has already decided to do. His plan was to set an ambushade with the expectation of capturing the king of Israel.

9. Man of God. Such was Elisha; filled with God's Spirit, enlightened by God's wisdom, fulfilling God's will, protected by God's power. **Sent.** The man of God employs his gifts of seership not for himself, but for the good of others and the defense of his nation. He was in friendlier relations with the successive kings of Israel than Elijah had been. **King of Israel.** Probably Jehoram, son of Ahab. **Beware.** May mean either "Fail not to protect such a point," or "Do not be entrapped at such a place." What an advantage he possesses who has God's wisdom to guide him! **Are come down.** "Are coming down."

10. Sent. He sent either spies to ascertain the danger or troops to avert it, according to circumstances. How many, like the king of Israel, give more heed to bodily dangers than to the perils of their souls! **Saved himself.** Literally, "he was wary;" he followed Elisha's directions and escaped the enemy. **Not once nor twice.** A phrase meaning "many times."

11. The heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled. Men whose evil purposes have

been thwarted often blame others, and are engaged instead of submissive under the hand of God. But Ben-hadad had real cause for anxiety. Unprecedented military tactics were being used by his foes. **His servants.** His officers. **Which of us is for the king of Israel?** A tyrant naturally suspects treason.

12. One of his servants. Perhaps Naaman. **None, my lord, O king.** A prompt denial of the treason so sharply suspected and so bluntly charged would naturally be promptly made, but this servant had a good explanation to make of the cause of the king's trouble. **The prophet that is in Israel.** Great deeds and great character soon make a man known. "He could not be hid" (Mark 7. 24). **Telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.** And that means more than the council chamber. The expression is proverbial, having special force from the privacy and seclusion of an oriental harem.

13. Go and spy. The king of Syria supposed that Elisha was only some magician of uncommon skill; he had no suspicion that the hiding of his power was with the Highest. **Behold, he is in Dothan.** "Two-cisterns," a place on the southern border of the plain of Esdraelon, twelve miles north of Samaria. Elisha was not a resident, but a visitor at this place.

14. A great host. It seemed an unequal warfare; a great king and a considerable army against one defenseless man. But Ben-hadad left Elisha's Helper out of his account. The "host" was made up of infantry. The army was larger than would have been sent to capture any man who was not a magician. **By night.** What folly to imagine that he who had been aware of Ben-hadad's plans in Damascus would be ignorant of his night march against Dothan! **Compessed the city.** Dothan was probably walled and fortified, and the Syrians would attend especially to its gates.

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Gehazi. **Behold, a host.** He beholds the sun rising over the hills of Gilead, but its early rays reveal around the walls the tents and chariots of a serried host which seem to have sprung up like magic in the night. **How shall we do?** He knows well why the Syrians have come, but his is not the faith that moves mountains.

16. He answered. See, 1. The security of faith. 2. The courage of faith. 3. The insight of faith. 4. The encouragement of faith. **Fear not.** The loftiest faith is not without sympathy and strengthening for those who are weak. **They that be with us.** Faith gives insight into spiritual surroundings. The natural eye sees the host of Syria; the eye of faith beholds circling nearer and mightier the host of God. One looks upon the visible foes, the other the invisible and almighty allies. **More than . . . with them.** "One with God is a majority."

17. Prayed. Not for himself, but for his

servant. Let us employ prayer for one another. **He saw.** In response to the prophet's prayer, God unveiled his inner sense and lifted him up for the moment to the high plane of faith and insight whereon his master dwelt. **Horses and chariots of fire.** The whole hill was girdled with the blazing symbols of divine majesty and power. Such are ever the invisible attendants of every true-hearted child of God.

18. They came down. The Syrian host. **Blindness.** God opens the eyes of his servants, while he closes those of his enemies. It was not total, material blindness, or they could not have marched (verse 19), but false, mistaken perceptions, and ignorance of the way. They saw, but dimly and dubiously. The object was not to do them harm, but to make them realize their own helplessness. Read in the succeeding verses how they were led captives to Samaria, how they were saved and restored by the prophet's interposition, and how a happy result followed.

CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to fix the exact relation of this event to the other events in Elisha's career that we have been studying. It may be that the section of the record describing the miracles is, as Keil suggests, "taken from a prophetic monograph and inserted into the annals of the Kings," and their chronological arrangement and location may be correct. It would seem, however, from the reference to one of the king's servants in verse 12, the servant undoubtedly being Naaman, that this incident at Dothan must have taken place after the cleansing of Naaman from leprosy, for as Moulton says, "That any Syrian courtier knew so much about Elisha is a point somewhat in favor of placing the event after the healing of Naaman, before which he was unknown in Syria." But, after all, while the fixing of an exact chronology affords satisfaction, it is not all-important.

Verse 8. King of Syria. He was Ben-hadad II, who had sent the letter to the king of Israel concerning Naaman and his leprosy. In the British Museum there is a black obelisk on which there is a record of three victories of the Assyrian king, Shalmanubar, over this Ben-hadad. Israel must have been in a weakened condition or Ben-hadad would not have been able to carry on his guerrilla warfare and to penetrate to the heart of Israel's territory, even to within a few miles of Samaria.

9. The man of God. Elisha being generally recognized as a prophet, was held in high esteem by the king, and was probably consulted by him on important occasions, just as the king

of Syria took counsel with his men of high position. This relation with royalty was totally different from that sustained by the intrepid Elijah, and indicates that a radical change had been wrought in Israel. The king was now tractable and obedient, and was in a position to receive evidences of the Lord's favor. This is one of the rich rewards of obedience. Ahab might have enjoyed it, but his disregard of God's warnings and his participation in the wickedness of Jezebel prevented it. **Beware.** The danger was speedily pointed out by the prophet. So the trusting and obedient child of God may expect warnings, premonitions, guiding suggestions, that will help him to pass the dangerous places of life in safety. The wisdom of God is able to circumvent the most enticing and cunning devices of the adversary of souls.

10. Saved himself there. The king supplemented the warning of the prophet by the exercise of greater diligence on his own part. Good counsel is worthless unless wisely used. Some men are entrapped by the enemy in spite of repeated warnings and entreaty. They simply disregard every effort of God and man in their behalf, and the result is destruction, for which they are themselves to blame.

11. Sore troubled. It is always vexatious to those who do evil and who plan distress for others to have their performances brought to naught. So

"Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees."

That the king should suspect treachery in some of his servants was natural, for one who is endeavoring to perpetrate an evil deed is quick to suspect the same wicked purpose in another.

12. The words that thou speakest. This servant is supposed to have been Naaman, and his words must have had a startling significance to the king. Lange says, concerning this gift of secret sight, that "while one is in clear possession of all the faculties of consciousness, it is similar to prophecy. The prophet only sees what others do not see when Jehovah grants it to him, and his sight does not apply to all things whatsoever, nor to all events as its legitimate objects, but only to those things which pertain directly or indirectly to the relation to Jehovah, and to the guidance of the people of Israel as a nation or as individuals."

15. How shall we do? This servant was evidently not Gehazi, nor one who had been with Elisha in any crucial hour, or he would not have faltered or doubted now. The timid, fearful saint is not in entire accord with God. The prophet, with confidence in God's power to deliver him from this dilemma unshaken, is not alarmed. It needs

"A closer walk with God"

to buttress a feeble faith and to put strength into weak knees.

17. Opened the eyes. There is wonderful spiritual significance in this passage which should not be lost sight of in an effort after an exact statement as to whether the "horses and chariots of fire" were real or otherwise. Whatsoever they were, Kell's suggestion is good, that they were "symbols of the protecting powers of heaven which surrounded the prophet;" and the symbols may be made to apply to all those who are the Lord's. They, too, have their invisible defenders, for "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."

Thoughts for Young People.

Plans in Life.

1. "Remember thy Creator." In forming our plans in life it is a great mistake to reckon without God, for such plans will surely come to naught (verse 8).

2. Consult good men. Those plans are well undertaken which are by the advice of a man of God, for those who live in fellowship with God are safe counselors (verse 9).

3. Avoid harmful associations. In our plans it is well to avoid all places, all men, and all acts which are dangerous. The king was wise not

to pass "where the Syrians are come down" (verse 10).

4. "No weapon formed against thee shall prosper." The plans of worldly and wicked men against God's servants and God's cause are sure to fall, however strong they may seem to be (verses 13, 14).

5. "How blest a foundation!" He who dwells in the arms of God is safe against earthly enemies and surrounded by angelic guards (verses 15-17).

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

The learned scholar, M. Dieulafoy, pointed out recently to the French Academy of *belles-lettres* that, so far as any records are preserved to us, David's tactics at Rephaim were not only entirely new, but have been the base of modern military maneuver. They were copied by Frederick II at Mollwitz in 1741, and in 1757 against the Austrians at Austerlitz. This maneuver was that he brought his flank forward, then made a rapid change of front, and so entirely shut in the left side of the Philistine ranks that they fell an easy prey to his men. But original as that was, it was not so distinctly oriental in type as these surprises and panics of military forces. The Syrians had pitted themselves against Elijah because he had divine revelations about their movements which made them suppose the secrets were communicated by treasonable spies in the Syrian palace and army, so that they could not expect but that what was whispered in the secrecy of the innermost bedchamber would surely get to Elijah and through him to the hosts of Israel. The power to read their thoughts and plans as an oracle or fortuneteller as a great diviner would also easily be accepted as an explanation of Elijah's supernatural knowledge. Anything that would furnish a natural rather than a supernatural presence would be attractive to the heathen hosts.

By Way of Illustration.

Unseen defenders. In the history of missions we find that when our first missionaries to South America started for that country they were pursued by a pirate ship, which drew up to them in a threatening manner. They were defenseless and the pursuing ship was large and carried guns. The little company on deck knelt in prayer, asking for divine protection, and when they arose the pirate ship was moving rapidly away. The missionary company never knew what defenders, unseen by them, had frightened away their enemies.

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"By the help of God." The English ambassador to the court of Prussia sat at a table of Frederick the Great, then meditating a war, depending mainly on English subsidies. Round the table sat infidel French wits making merry over the decay of the follies of ancient faith. When the talk turned to war the ambassador said, "England would, by the help of God, stand by Prussia."

"Ah," said the infidel Frederick, "I did not know you had an ally of that name."

"Please, your majesty," was the retort, "he is the only ally to whom we do not send subsidies."

"Over the long line." I stepped to the telephone the other day in Appleton, Wis., to call the number of a friend's house. There was a slight delay in connecting the lines, and as I stood waiting with the receiver at my ear I heard all at once, vibrating along the wire, the music of a full orchestra. The strains, though sounding very low and far away, were indescribably clear and sweet. I listened in wondering delight until the click of the instrument and the familiar voice of my friend suddenly cut short the enchanted notes. Our conversation over I hastily recalled the office.

"Central! where was the orchestra playing?"

"What orchestra?"

"The one I heard just now over the wire."

"You must have caught some vibrations over the long-distance line, from Milwaukee or Chicago, perhaps. Such a thing frequently happens."

It was the simple scientific explanation of a marvelous phenomenon. And has it no spiritual counterpart in this work-a-day world? What of those strange pauses in the discordant complaints of weariness and sorrow? Whence comes the swift thrill of courage for strenuous endeavor, of strength for sore need, if it comes not along the line which stretches above this turbulent atmosphere to the very heart of God—the long-distance line of heaven?—*Mary A. P. Stansbury.*

Two ways of deliverance. The Christian is not always delivered from sickness and pain and death, as is witnessed by a long train of saints and martyrs. They are delivered like Peter, or delivered like Stephen with his vision of the Son of God. But they are always delivered from falling, from the power of temptation, from the powers of evil, which can no more touch them than the flames could touch the three men in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace; they were delivered into the roll of heroes and martyrs, into the company who sing the new song. Many a seeming defeat is a victory. In the seeming victory of Satan when Christ was crucified there was real defeat. Very often there is an earthly deliverance too. Everyone is immortal till his work is done.—*Select Notes.*

Heart Talks on the Lesson.

The king of Syria went to war against Israel. His plans, he thought, were very secret, and he should have an easy victory over the enemy. But he was surprised to find his schemes were always discovered, and Israel escaped from his hand. Very much perplexed, he called his servants around him and begged them to tell, if they knew, who in his army was acting as a spy. One of them promptly said, "We are none of us against you, O king, but Elisha the prophet knows all that you say in secret, and he tells the king of Israel everything you proposed in this campaign." Of course then the thing to be done was to capture Elisha, and as soon as Ben-hadad learned he was at Dothan a great host of the army was sent to surround that city. But what are hosts against even one man alone in whom the Spirit of God dwells in fullness and around whom the angel of the Lord encampeth for his protection? The young man who attended upon the prophet as he had years before attended upon Elijah was greatly alarmed at the sight of Syria's army. No doubt it was formidable, and they apparently had no power to oppose it. "Alas, master, how shall we do?" he asked, quite in despair. Now, see in contrast with this helpless anxiety the calm assurance of the man who had a spiritual perception. The hosts of Syria were very real, nor did he underrate their strength, but the hosts of God were quite as real, and he knew perfectly well on which side victory was assured. "Fear not," he said, "for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." Then with the energy of prayer which brings an answer he prayed for the sightless man beside him, that he too might see, and his eyes were opened and he saw the mountain full of chariots and horses of fire. They were there all the while, but not seeing them, he quailed before the enemy. Elisha saw them and was calm and confident.

There are two ways of fighting the battle of life; you see the difference in men and women everywhere. Some are always timid and disheartened, sure that the enemy is too strong for them, crying out in despair, "Alas, how shall we do?" Others, facing the same difficulties, fighting the same temptations, beset by the same sins, and never underrating the strength of their foes, are nevertheless brave, courageous, confident, sure of final victory. These have spiritual perception. They have the victory which overcomes, even faith. They fight the battle with the shout of triumph, not with the depressing fear of defeat. How is it with you? Are you a happy, victorious Christian? Do you see God and his hosts so clearly that you cannot only be yourself strong,

but you can say to the despairing brother beside you, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." This is the sort of people the world has need of. One such clear-sighted Christian can do more than a churchful of folk who see only the trials and difficulties of the warfare against evil. Will you not pray Elisha's prayer for yourself, "Lord, open my eyes?" There are great possibilities all around you. There are better things for you than you have yet seen. God and his hosts, greater than all the powers of evil, are at hand to help you. O how glorious it is to live when our eyes are open to the possibilities and the ultimate triumphs of an immortal soul! The full indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that "double portion" which Elisha had, gives us this clear vision. Without it life is like a horizon on a rainy day, shut in by mist and clouds; with it the sun breaks out and the landscape stretches away in beauty and promise to where earth and heaven meet. Earnestly pray for my class as for myself, "Lord, open our eyes that we may see."

The Teachers' Meeting.

It would be well to draw a map showing the relation of Israel and Syria, and containing the cities of Damascus, Dothan, and Samaria.... Tell the story, or call it forth from the class by questions.... It will make the story more graphic to draw a line representing the march of the Syrians while describing it, and a ring around Dothan indicating the Syrian host. Inside this ring draw another in bright red or yellow chalk, representing the divine protectors around Elisha. Then draw the line of march to Samaria, and give an account of the blinded army, then the line of their journey back to Damascus.... What story did they tell when they reached home? What was its effect upon the people?... Show from this the ways in which God takes care of his own. 1. By giving them knowledge. 2. By giving them defenders. 3. By answering their prayers. 4. By giving them power over men.... Does God help his people now in the same way?... The "Thoughts for Young People" suggest some principles concerning conduct and character.

Before the Class.

Introduction. The punishment of Elisha's servant, Gehazi, for his covetousness, hypocrisy, and lying, and the miracle of the floated ax-head are the two incidents recorded between the last lesson and the present one. Israel was now at war with Syria, although we do not know whether this was before or after the cure of Naaman, described in last Sunday's lesson. God revealed to

Elisha the plans of the Syrian king, and thus the prophet was able to warn the king of Israel, who was saved numbers of times from possible defeat by these timely warnings. This action of Elisha caused the Syrian king to turn against the prophet and try to capture him. This story forms the lesson for to-day.

Development of the text. The subject of the lesson to-day is "Divine Deliverance." Place this upon the board and develop the lesson under the following divisions: 1. Deliverance needed; 2. Deliverance despaired of; 3. Deliverance assured; 4. Deliverance seen; 5. Deliverance realized.

1. *Deliverance needed.* By night a large force of Syrians surrounded the city of Dothan, where Elisha was staying, and completely cut off his escape. The enemy was successful, Elisha was caught, and the prophet's work would soon be ended unless deliverance came. But man's extremity is God's opportunity, and, although to human eyes there was no way of escape, God had further work for his servant, so deliverance came. The servant of the Lord, while in the line of duty, will be preserved and delivered from enemies until that duty is accomplished.

2. *Deliverance despaired of.* In the early morning light the servant saw the besieging force and, probably knowing little of Elisha's past life, at once concluded that all hope must be given up. "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" Under the circumstances we might say that this giving up was (a) Natural, the odds against them was so great; but (b) It showed a lack of spirit on the part of the servant; (c) It showed a lack of faith on the part of the servant in the prophet and his power. Even with the odds tremendously against us, while we are on God's side we must never despair of deliverance. We must show the spirit of courage and of faith, and the Lord will help us.

3. *Deliverance assured.* In contrast to the terror of the servant was the calmness of the prophet. The assuring words, "Fear not! for they that be with us are more than they that be with them," were based upon the large experience of Elisha, and he drew upon that experience to comfort his servant. So to-day nothing is quite so reassuring to one in trouble as comforting words based upon a deep Christian experience.

4. *Deliverance seen.* To give additional assurance to his servant Elisha prayed that the servant's eyes might be opened to see the invisible defenders which were round about the prophet. The prayer is heard, and the young man sees the spiritual forces by which they are surrounded. Our eyes are holden that we cannot see, but we have faith to believe that the servants of the

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Lord are surrounded by spiritual realities and forces which are used of God for our good. Although our eyes may never be opened to see these defenders as were the eyes of the servant, still the eye of faith sees them, and in the sight finds peace.

5. *Deliverance realized.* The prayer of the prophet is again heard, and by the working of some of the forces at God's command the servants of the Lord are delivered from their position of danger.

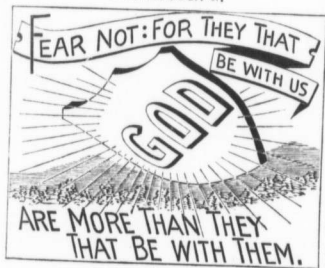
Specific application. We are in constant danger, physical and moral, seen and unseen. In our daily life we do not know, we cannot know, how much is due to the unseen defenders who deliver us from many evils. Everything in the world of sense and in the world of spirit is under God's control, and we need to realize more completely the great truth that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

Though troubles assail,
Fear not!
Precious promise,
O, holy Saviour,
Never alone.

A mighty fortress,
I am safe in the Rock,
Fear not, O troubled soul,
In heavenly love abiding.
Go forward, Christian soldier.

Blackboard.



Library References.

For Elisha see previous references of the month.

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Thoughts for the Quiet Hour.

—We have the habit of thinking our own opinions law, instead of recognizing a law in the will of our Creator. We judge the truth of God by our opinions, instead of *vice versa*.—*Ruskin*.

—Once let friendship be given that is born of God, nor time nor circumstances can change it to a lessening. It must be mutual growth, increasing trust, widening faith, enduring patience, forgiving love, unselfish ambition, and an affection built before the throne, which will bear the test of time and trial.—*Throckmorton*.

—Why fret thee, soul,
For things beyond thy small control?
Do but thy part, and thou shalt see
Heaven will have charge of these and thee.
Sow thou the seed, and wait in peace
The Lord's increase. —*Osgood*.

—God leads us by inward impulses not only, but by judgment, providence, sound sense, his word applied to hearts made tender by the Spirit. It is a great mistake to imagine that God's voice within us comes wholly through impressions and impulses.—*Ploubet*.

—Faith tells us what the senses do not tell us, but not the contrary of what they perceive to be true. It is above the senses, but not in opposition to them.—*Parcal*.

—Love is active, sincere, affectionate, pleasant, and amiable; courageous, patient, faithful, prudent, longsuffering, manly, and never seeking itself. For in whatever instance a person seeketh himself, there he falleth from love.—*Thomas à Kempis*.

—Let us always ask about this or that opinion, not "Is it safe?" "Is it useful?" "Is it agreeable?" but "Is it true?" Let us remember, with the apostle, that, if we wished ever so much, we can do nothing against the truth. Truth is great, and truth will prevail.—*Stanley*.

—Experience often charges high for her lessons, but they are invaluable.—*Thompson*.

PRIMARY TEACHERS' DEPARTMENT.

Notes.

DROUGHT time in the city. People gone to the country or seashore. Zion is like a pasture in a heated term. The country, though, is in clover. It is knee-deep. The summer visitor helps fill up the congregation. The city strengthens the country. The Sunday school shares in the blessing. Haymaking weather all the time, if you will have it so, fellow-workers. The children are on hand. How they come tripping down the road or across the fields! No music can beat that of churchgoing feet. Now improve this hay-making weather and make hay. Put time into Sunday school work. Add money. Get some new hymns to sing. Rake and scrape and get money for some new library books. Brighten the school with some new thing. In an earnest, loving way tell the old story of the cross. Gather the children to its foot. Time for work; now work up all the time.

Vacation time, and what about your class? We believe in a rest, though one may not get it. You ought not to go without a vacation, though the Sunday school cannot well go on without you. The absence of a teacher may not kill a class, but if protracted, it leaves the class dreadfully sickly. The boys and the girls, in the absence of the teacher, have a dazed look. They wonder what they are there in school for. They conclude to go home. But you need a rest and ought to have it. What can you do? Time absence so as to have it interfere as little as possible with Sunday work. Be sure that you leave a substitute behind you. Your seat then, it is true, will not be filled; neither will it be empty. Try, also, to be present, even if absent. We mean, try to keep up a connection with your class by a letter now and then. Though away, make them feel that you are with them. Follow them in your thoughts, your wishes, your plans, your prayers. Never, in that way, will you leave them.

Helpful Hints on Primary Work.

BY MRS. W. F. CRAFTS.

The demand for a special primary lesson has almost ceased since the decision of the Lesson Committee to devote six years to the biographical study of the Bible. This plan will enable the primary teacher to "tell stories," and at the same provide material for the study of man in a profound manner by older scholars.

A special primary lesson is to be deprecated because it would break up the unity of Bible study in the home, and, indeed, interfere with home worship, as the Sunday school lesson is quite generally made the basis of exercises at the family altar.

A special lesson for the primary classes would work against the home department, which is one of the best agencies yet devised for evangelization.

A Sunday school without a home department can make no claim to be "up to date." Let the primary teacher lay plans to get the parents of her scholars to study the Sunday school lesson half an hour a week, and so begin the organization of a home department.

Even better than the forming of a cradle roll would be to get the parents of all little children to join the home department. The parents will be sure to do their duty by the Sunday school if they become members of the home department. Cradle roll membership is a less strong tie.

Have an occasional Parents' Day in the primary class, when all of the parents are invited by little notes sent by the hands of the children. If the class is large, it may be necessary to have Parents' Day in sections; first, all those whose names begin with A, B, C, D; second, those beginning with E, F, G, H, etc.

There should be materials within easy reach of the children who come rather early to Sunday school, such as an illustrated Bible, books with scenes, a sandboard, in which they could make things connected with their lessons, etc. In the kindergarten such use of materials is called "busy work." The children are thus kept from mischief-making; they become interested in right things and learn much.

Every Sunday school teacher should in conscience make some plan by which her Sunday school scholars can sit with her in church if their parents are not attendants.

There are some primary teachers so old-fashioned in their ways that they still "call a roll" every Sunday. What a foolish waste of time and energy! The attendance of the children must, of course, be kept; this is necessary to the teacher's pastoral care of the class. But it can be done, with the exception of the few tardy ones, before the beginning of the session. If the class is taught by one teacher, let that teacher or a secretary take position at a table near the entrance door half an hour before the opening of the

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school and mark each child as it enters, taking also the offering for the day. If the class is large and subdivided, the assistant teachers should do this work.

AN annual primary rally in the spring or autumn will be an interesting occasion in any small town or village. Let the primary teacher prepare for it by meeting to decide what songs they will teach their children to sing, so that all may sing in unison at the rally.

Let them also determine upon a program, the different parts of which shall be assigned to the several classes. Let there be a union service in the largest church or hall in the town to witness the rally. Have the children march to their places waving palm branches or bearing banners. All hearts will be thrilled and the thermometer of interest in the religious education of little children will rise many degrees.

THE best thing Sunday school teachers can learn from the kindergarten is to appreciate motherhood and cooperate with it. God gives to each little child its mother. It was a quaint saying of the Jewish rabbis that "God could not be everywhere, so he made mothers." All mothers are not ideal, but let the primary teacher take an ideal mother as her pattern.

Mothers' meetings should be a part of the regular class work. "We can't get on without the mothers" should be a part of every primary teacher's creed. Where there are cultured mothers there should be a child study club, and such books as Fröbel's *Education of Man, Symbolic Education* by Miss Susan Blow; *A Study of Child Nature*, by Miss Elizabeth Harrison, should be digested and discussed. With mothers less cultured, and who need to be shown how to direct their children in happy employment at home, Miss Beebe's book on *Home Occupation*.

A course of reading on Fröbel's *Mother Play* book will help all kinds of mothers and all kinds of teachers.

EVERY Primary Union ought to have a library, and soon every individual primary teacher should have a library. Every Sunday school should have a teacher's section in the library. Here is a list of books that can be bought for five dollars and thirty cents:

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| Hurlbut's <i>Normal Lessons</i> | \$0 25 |
| <i>Normal Outlines for Primary Teachers</i> , Mrs. W. F. Crafts..... | 10 |
| Fröbel's <i>Educational Laws for All Teachers</i> , Hughes..... | 1 50 |
| <i>Backboard Sketching</i> , Bertha Heintz..... | 25 |
| <i>Probable Sons</i> | 15 |
| <i>Children's Rights</i> , Kate Douglas Wiggin..... | 1 00 |

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| <i>Practical Primary Plan</i> , Israel P. Black.... | 1 00 |
| <i>Open Letter to Primary Teachers</i> , Mrs. W. F. Crafts..... | 80 |
| <i>Normal Lessons</i> , George W. Pease..... | 25 |

\$5 30

THE International Primary Union of Sabbath School Teachers publishes a quarterly bulletin which gives up-to-date news and plans of work. Up-to-date primary teachers will subscribe for it; twenty-five cents per year. Send to Israel P. Black, 2066 Park Avenue, Philadelphia, Secretary and Treasurer.

MRS. OTIS ATWOOD, of the Boston Primary Union, has prepared a pretty service which is styled "Promotion Exercises," to be used when little children are graduated from the primary class into the main school. Mrs. Atwood's address is 57 Hawthorne Street, Chelsea, Mass. The service costs five cents.

ARE PRIMARY TEACHERS BIBLE STUDENTS? They would not expect their bodies to thrive on the quantity of food which is sufficient for children; much less can they expect their souls to prosper and be in good health if they take no more Bible than their little scholars are able to receive. They should study each lesson thoroughly, as if to teach a Bible class, and in addition they should take some Bible course such as Dr. Hurlbut's or Professor Hammill's. It is not necessary to wait until a normal class is formed. It can be done as self-culture.

Mother and Teacher.

BY BERTHA W. TUCKER.

RESPONSIBILITY of parents to teachers and of teachers to parents is a subject of grave importance. May I inverse the order of treatment, and by the presentation of a few acknowledged items of the teacher's great responsibility help in making the deduction that parents also have responsibilities which are great?

First, then, the teacher must readily yield the absent as the present parent utmost courtesy. The only happy and right attitude of a child to the parent is that of reverence. One who works in the child gardens should not crush by even a look's weight so exquisite a blossom. "Mother said I must or must not do this," even if that same "must" or "must not" be an unnecessary constraint upon the rules and actions of the teacher, who must manage for fifty, should elicit always, I think, a bright assent. "We must do as mother says, mustn't we?" will make the child, who has, perhaps, instinctively hesitated to deliver the message, at ease and happy,

and will lessen the teacher's authority not one whit. If a rude note is brought the pupil neither from the words nor manner of the teacher should guess its contents. So much self-control the teacher owes to herself, so much gracious patience to a beautiful thing in the world called motherhood.

In direct communion with the parent the teacher should have the courage of her convictions. Shall that be our second point? She owes it to the parent to be an individuality, not to be blown about by every idle wind of criticism and suggestion—to have theories and plans of teaching so tried and trustworthy as to be worth as unflinching a stand as the Three Hundred made at Thermopylae. Like those brave Greeks, she need not slay to the death those who attempt the narrow pass to what she rightly feels her own domain; earnestness of purpose, clearly-set-forth plans, sunniness of temper, will usually disarm criticism. To have something to teach is the teacher's reason for being.

We refer often to Pestalozzi, and why not, when he has discovered that "the essential principle of education is, not teaching, but love?" Love only it is which can transform the teacher's art from knowledge-imparting machinery into a living agency in the molding of character. You have seen that wondrous little product of this departing century, the graphophone. The "record" is put in place, and seems but a smooth cylinder of wax; the machine is wound and the cylinder revolves; but not until the jeweled-point of the receiver drops upon the music-charged wax does the music come. The "jeweled point" love falling upon a child's heart brings forth unexpected music. Powers are there which were little guessed, endeavors which else would have been unawakened; the whole purpose of life is quickened—the child grows, and upon the ear of a world eager for such music falls an anthem of God!

Conscientiousness in teaching, as popularly defined, is not enough. The mother is right who, though her child is taught diligently, feels herself defrauded when there is lack of love. The angels who behold the Father's face do not so guard the children. Conscientiousness in what must have been its primal meaning is all that may be asked of the teacher. It is an output of the word "conscience," and can but mean the life referred to God. A teacher who refers her life among the children to God will love them; it cannot be otherwise.

If the teacher owes the mother even these things, what does not the mother owe the teacher?

Our Father's Care.

Lessons from the Birds, the Lilies, and the Grass (Matt. 6. 26-34)—Sunday School Concert Recitation.

BY JULIA H. JOHNSTON.

From the Birds.

Hark to the bird-notes ringing,
Who is it tunes their song,
Music and gladness bringing,
All through the summer long?
This is the lesson tender,
Taught by the birds that fly,
God is their sure Defender,
He is forever nigh;
Though without barn or storehouse,
Never in vain they cry.

From the Lilies.

Look at the bending lilies,
They neither toil nor spin,
Taking no thought for raiment,
They are all fair within.
Fearlessly, gladly growing,
So do they bloom all day;
'Tis their Creator robes them
Ever in bright array;
Hark to the heavenly message:
"You are worth more than they."

From the Grass.

See how the nodding grasses
Bend to the passing breeze,
God in his loving-kindness
Watches o'er things like these.
If for the grass he careth,
And for the lilies too,
If to the birds he giveth
Food in its season due,
Will not your heavenly Father
Tenderly care for you?

Happy Sundays.

We recognize it to be a sad but true fact that very few children in our Christian homes to-day regard the Sabbath day as the happy Lord's day God meant it to be.

In many homes it is a day of such restraint, of unceasing "must and do nots," until it is no wonder that many of our little people think of the day only as the time of "mustn't do things." In other homes it is a day of utter weariness—"I don't know what to do times"—when father and mother are off taking their naps and the children are left to amuse and entertain themselves as best they can. While again in homes where parents are conscientious and make an

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honest effort to keep the day with their children, it often proves a very trying time, because no thought or preparation for the Sunday hour has been given beforehand, and the effort to keep the children interested is so exhausting that when night comes parents and children too are glad the day is over.

Beloved, these things ought not so to be. How may we, as teachers of these little ones, help parents and children to make this day truly the best day of all the week?

Our lesson for this month on "Jesus and the Sabbath" will give us an opportunity to help, by suggesting some definite Sunday work for the children, giving them the material to work with, if need be. For instance, suggest that they make the story of the first Sunday, and give them pictures to cut out for the different days, or tell them where to find the pictures.

Then can we not in the teaching of our lessons give the children a new conception of keeping the spirit of the day—not as a day when little children must rest from their play and sit down and think about heaven, as we sing almost every Sunday, but as a glad, active day, when they can be making and doing something which is to be used for other little children somewhere—as a day when voices are sweeter, faces brighter, and hearts happier, because the dear Saviour is our guest that day and comes to spend the day with us in a very peculiar sense.

Again, would this not be an opportune time for a mother's meeting, choosing the topic of "The Children's Sunday; How to Help Them Keep It," as the subject for discussion? Perhaps the mothers have never tried the plan of a pleasant surprise every Sunday kept a secret for the Sunday hour—a bit of candy with a new story—or a Sunday drawer, where during the week something fresh and new is stored away and kept for Sunday—new pictures to cut out; new verses to paint; a new map to draw; the little preview book, like teacher's, for the Sunday lesson; or the new Sunday game. Or, again, perhaps they have never tried the home Sunday school, where the children take turns and give the lesson, using their small blackboard to illustrate it, while father and mother are the interested listeners. What an opportunity this gives the parents to strengthen the teacher's work! All of these plans have been tried very successfully and many come as new suggestions to your mothers.

How to Make Sabbath Afternoons Profitable and Pleasant for Children, by Mrs. F. A. Welcher, Newark, N. Y., is one of the most helpful books for mothers. It is a little booklet of thirty pages, full of beautiful suggestions. Every

mother should have a copy. Extra copies can be obtained, and will be sent, postpaid, for 20 cents. Address Mrs. Welcher, Newark, N. Y.

Finally, may the Son of man, who is Lord even of the Sabbath day, teach us how to teach his children to be "in the spirit" on his day.—*The Evangel.*

How Shall We Bring the Children to Christ?

BY ALICE MAY DOUGLAS.

Of course all the little children belong to Christ, yet sometimes the very smallest become naughty and of their own accord begin to feel that they are away from God and must return to him. Because the children feel a need of being drawn to God is the reason why we must instruct them along this delicate yet all-important subject.

Concerning this need Niemeyer writes thus: "As religion is a universal human want, so it is undeniable that it is one of their original innate faculties, and that it is the capacity for religious training which both affords the basis and constitutes the requirement of education. In at least very many children may be observed at a very early age a tendency to religious impressions and susceptibilities, usually connected with the earliest movements or awakening of the conscience. The latter, however, usually becomes active first. Children feel approbation and disapprobation, accusations or acquittals, within themselves. At a later period they feel the necessity of seeking after the ultimate cause of this constitution; the hand which has inscribed this law within their breasts."

Again the same author writes thus: "However childlike and imperfect the conception of God may be, this fact is not in the least injurious to the purity or strength of religious feeling; for a pure and childlike character is a prominent trait of a religious man, who is in the noblest sense like a child (Matt. 18. 3). Only, care should be taken not to try to invigorate and nourish the religious feelings by precocious wordy preachments, mere mechanical memorizing of formulas and prayers. Such instruction only blunts the feelings, and children brought up in this manner, so injurious to religion, are often the most irreligious."

The only way to bring the children to Christ is to bring them to him, and this is very simple when one is led by the Holy Spirit.

Said one who was greatly blessed in this special line of work, "I just say, 'Jesus, here are the children,' and 'Children, here is Jesus.'"

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

THIRD QUARTER.

LESSON VI. (August 7.)

ELIJAH'S SPIRIT ON ELISHA.

2 Ki: gs 2. 6-15.

GOLDEN TEXT. "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke 11. 13.

Primary Notes.

BY MARTHA VAN MARGER.



Two little boys were talking one day about Elijah and the chariot of fire which took him to heaven. "Wouldn't you be afraid to ride in such a chariot?" said one. "No," said the other, "not if God drove!"

Elijah was not afraid, and we need not be if we have Elijah's God for our God. Would you like to have something for your own which had once belonged to some good and great man? Elisha was glad to have the mantle of Elijah, we may be sure. But, do you know, we may each one of us have the Spirit of Christ to wear as our mantle? Would you like to have it fall upon you?

Elijah's work. Elijah did many different things. Sometimes he had to go to wicked kings with messages which made them very angry. He did not always have easy things to do, and we shall not if we are doing the work God wants us to do. But we shall have a great Friend to help us, as Elijah had, if we are faithful as Elijah was. Did you know that Elijah was a teacher as well as a prophet? In many of the towns there were schools, something like our colleges, and Elijah went first to one and then to another of these schools to teach the young men to love and serve God. Do you remember that two Sundays ago you learned how Elijah was sent to anoint a king and a new prophet? Perhaps you remember that the new prophet was a plain young farmer. So you see that the good prophet had many kinds of work to do. Who can tell the name of the new prophet?

The two friends. The prophet Elijah had some one now to help him in all his work for God. It was the young farmer whom he had anointed, you remember. Do you think the two would work happily together? O yes; when people love God they find things to love in one another.

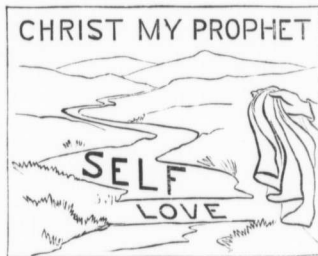
We may be quite sure that the people who quarrel do not love the God of peace! What was the name of the prophet's friend and helper? Yes, it was Elisha. For ten years the two were together, happy in doing work for God, and then the time came when the Lord wanted Elijah to come and live with him. So he sent for him, but not in the way that he usually sends for his children. Do you want to know about it?

Going home to God. [With flat crayon make a river, narrow at first, but growing broader. Print "Self" on it and make "Love" span the river.]

Here are two marks which we will call two men. We will name them. One is the old prophet—what is his name?—and the other is his friend, with a name much like the old prophet's. This little square—we will print "G" on it—may stand for Gilgal. This was the gilgal not far from Bethel. Here is another square for Bethel. The two men are going together to Bethel from Gilgal. See, here are marks to stand for men who are watching the two prophets.

[In some such way interest the children in the journey to the Jordan, and let them wonder how the two men can get across the wide river, since there is no boat to carry them. Finish the story, keeping before the children all the time that the men could not fail to go right since they were following the Lord's directions.]

The best choice. Do you think Elisha was wise to choose as he did? He knew that Elijah had the Spirit of God, and he wanted it to come to him—a double measure of it. He was not satisfied with a little. We have to make a choice, too, and we have a greater Prophet than Elisha had to give us whatever we ask. Who is our Prophet? [Print on the board.] What does the Golden Text teach us to ask for?



[Show how love can help across the dark river of self if only we have taken Christ for our

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Prophet. We may tell the children, too, what some of God's chariots for us are, ready and waiting for us to get into them.]

Kindergarten Hints.

BY MRS. MARY J. CHISHOLM FOSTER.

KINDERGARTEN DEPARTMENT. Elijah and His Friend. 1 Kings 19. 19, 20; 2 Kings 2. 2-13.

GOLDEN TEXT. "I will not leave thee." Josh. 1. 5.

AIDS TO THE KINDERGARTNER. Holy Bible, Josh. 1; Isa. 41. *Illustrative Notes* (Drs. Hurlbut and Doherty); *Literary Attractions of the Bible* (Halsey); *Studies in Old Testament History* (Phelps).

ATTENTION STORY.

Though Elijah was strong and free and brave, he was just like you in his loving heart, because he loved people and he needed friends. Some one has asked, "Who would like to live alone in this world?" I am sure not one of us alone. You remember that Elijah was lonesome under the juniper tree, and so God's voice comforted him by saying that there were many thousands of people who were good and loved God, and he was not the only one. By and by Elijah found a friend. One day while he was walking in the country he saw a man plowing in a field. The man must have been very busy, for he had twenty-four oxen at work and he had to guide them. Perhaps Elijah saw that he was strong as well as busy, and was cheerful and happy at his work. Elijah took his great cloak and put it over the young farmer's shoulders. It must be that he walked away then, for this book says that the farmer ran after him. (Elisha is not introduced by name here because of the similarity of his name to the sound of the name Elijah. When done using the latter name, or nearly so, the other name may be given.) This young farmer's father had charge of the king's cattle—Shaphat (1 Chron. 27. 29). [Read for the lesson of to-day 1 Kings 19. 20 to the first period in verse 20.] Then the young farmer heard the Voice telling him to go and be a helper to Elijah; so he made a feast for his neighbors, said good-bye to them and started off. I wonder where they went! We find out here—listen! [Read 2 Kings 2, second verse, last six words, and fourth verse, last clause.] Bethel was a pretty town where long, long ago a good man prayed beside a little tower which he made of stones. People liked that and remembered the praying place. Bethel means "house of God." Elijah said that he must go to Jericho and that he would go alone, but his new friend said, "I will not leave thee!" After that Elijah must go to the river Jordan, and the new friend said he would go with him, and they started off, followed by fifty men, who went part way and then watched these two as they stood by the river. [Read verse 7.]

OUTLINE.

Here is the best point to leave the lesson for to-day, as the next portion of the story might depress the mind of the child. Let the talk for one

day or for the six days of instruction be upon the need of friendship. Daily stories may be told of David, Jonathan, Ruth, and Naomi, and lead to the thought of our best and dearest Friend, who loves the children. The Golden Text shows the friendship between Joshua and his Father, who is our Father too. The beauty and sacredness of this will appeal to each child. The faithful love of David toward Jonathan is shown in the care he took of the poor little lame son of his friend (2 Sam. 9. 3-7.) The companionship of friends is illustrated by the story of Ruth and Naomi and by many incidents of Jesus and Paul with their friends.

NATURE TALK. Jericho, the place where the palm trees grew and where the moon shone brightly, was called "City of the Moon." The air was full of sweet odors. Palms, the moon, flowers, and the motion song, "O, mother, how pretty the moon looks to-night," will interest the children and fix in their mind the lesson facts. A brief study of sensation in some good psychology will give much useful information to the teacher, and she may have the conversation upon the five senses, and lead the children to think of the goodness of God in giving us these. Notice, I say, conversation, because in all Bible teaching it is necessary that the children be encouraged to talk of the lesson, for they will always talk of what interests them. The teacher should lead only and not do all the talking or any of the hand work.

HAND WORK. Recall to the children the names of places and objects in the lesson, "yoke," "oxen," "mantle," "stone pillar" (of Jacob at Bethel), "palms," "figs," and "moon" (of Jericho), and "river" (Jordan), allowing them to choose what sign of the lesson they will take. Show them how to illustrate with drawing, stick-laying, rings, building blocks, or other materials of the kindergarten.

The TRANSITION CLASS of older children may write a little description of some of these things or a story of this lesson.

SCIENCE AT HOME WITH THE MOTHER. The children may be instructed in the blessedness of friendship among relatives. We cannot choose our brothers and sisters, but we may choose our friends; however, God has given to us already in the home those who may be the dearest and nearest friends. Then come the little neighbors and the Sunday school and day school mates. Tell the children of the dearest Friend of all, who will be with us always, and who whispers to our hearts what was said to Joshua, "I will not leave thee."

LESSON VII. (August 14.)

THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON. 2 Kings 4.
25-37.

GOLDEN TEXT. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee." Psalm 55. 22.

Primary Notes.



When you see a sword of what does it remind you? Yes, of a soldier. Of what does a scepter make you think? Of a king, of course. Just so a staff is the object which reminds you of a prophet.

This lesson tells how a prophet, who lived a long time before Jesus came into the world, brought life to a little boy that had died. Was it the power of the prophet which did this? No, it was the power of the great God working through the prophet. This great God is living now, and has life to give to each little child who wants it. Do you know which is better, the life of the body or the life of the spirit?

Review. Recall the death of Elijah and the falling of his mantle upon Elisha. Tell that now he was the great prophet, and that soon all the people learned to love and trust him. Let the children tell all they can about Elisha, and show that he was able to do wonderful works because he had a heart of simple love and trust.

Blackboard. Make a large hand on the board, and print "Life" on it in large letters. Talk a little about the life of the body, helping the children to realize what a blessing from the Lord is physical life. If the children know "Little Beating Heart," this is a good time to sing it. "A Wonderful House Have I" is also well adapted to this lesson. Make the prophet's staff on the board also, and let this introduce a little talk about the prophet.

The good teacher. In some parts of the country the teacher of the neighborhood school goes first to one home and then to another, to stay a little time. The children are very glad to have "Teacher" come to the home, especially if well loved, as teachers ought to be. Elisha was one kind of a teacher, and he used to go about from one town to another, teaching the people to love and serve the true God. He was a kind man, and I think the children loved to see him coming. Then he was able to do very wonderful things, and that made them look up to him and believe in his God. [Tell about the rich woman of Shunem who was so kind to Elisha that he asked God to give her the greatest desire of her heart. That was to have a dear little child of her own, and God heard Elisha's prayer

and sent to the kind woman a dear little boy, to be her very own. This made her very happy, and she must have made Elisha happy too. Does it not make you happy to do a kindness to some one?]

[Tell the dramatic story of the sudden death of the child. Bright, happy, gay in the morning, and dead at noon! Tell the story vividly, as you will be able to do if you take it into your own heart.]

Do you wonder why the mother went to see the prophet? She believed in his God! She knew that he gave the child to her, and now she thought he could give him back to her. She wanted something that not all her money could buy! It was the life of her little boy. Who makes your little heart beat? And who keeps it beating, day after day and all the long night? Yes, it is the great God! He will not let it stop beating until he is ready to have you come and live with him if you are his good child. How glad the mother must have been when Elisha came home with her and went into the room where the dead boy lay! What is the word on the hand you see on the board? Do you think Elisha had the life to give to the little boy? No, but he could ask God for it, and that is what he did do. He prayed to God to reach down his mighty hand and put life into the dead child. He looked for God's hand, and he found it by praying. [Print "Prayer finds God's hand."]

Jesus our Prophet. Do you wish you might know a man like Elisha? We have a greater Prophet than he was. His name is Jesus, and every little child may know him. Only a few could know Elisha, but all may know Jesus! He can put life into dead spirits. Do you know what makes the spirit seem to die? It is sin! Sin is just another word for death, and if we want our spirits to be alive, we must come to Jesus and ask him to touch them with his life-giving hand. His life will save us from naughty tempers and all the things which make his heart sorry. Who will ask him now?



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Kindergarten Hints.

KINDERGARTEN DEPARTMENT. Friends and Helpers for the Minister. 2 Kings 2. 13-17; 4. 8-11.

GOLDEN TEXT. "Be strong." Josh. 1. 6.

AIDS TO THE KINDERGARTNER. Holy Bible, Job 23; *Beauties of Nature* (Lubbock); *The Earth and Man* (Dawson); *Poems of Mrs. Browning*.

ATTENTION STORY.

You and I and other people have many friends whom we have not seen. Do you really love some one your mother or your teacher has told you about? We all love this good friend of Elijah, and so we are sorry for him when we talk about the first part of our lesson for to-day. You remember the two men were standing beside the river and fifty men not far away were watching them when the wonderful part of this wonder story happened, for a beautiful chariot [explain this word] came and took Elijah up to heaven. How lonesome his friend was then! God always helps people who are in trouble and are lonely, so he helped this lonely man and gave him many other friends. Our lesson for to-day is about some of them. Let us all speak the name of this good man Elisha, and we will call him by his name now. He wore the cloak of the minister, which was left behind, and as he came back alone from the river the fifty men who had been watching met him and bowed themselves to the ground before him. [Show the children how orientals bow, spreading the hands and touching the ground with the forehead.] They saw that he had the spirit of goodness and of love, and they wanted to show that they were sorry for Elisha, so they offered to go and look for his master and friend, who had just gone to heaven. This is as they talked about it. [Read 2 Kings 2. 16, 17.] They could not find him, and Elisha knew it. Just as some of those whom we love have gone away to the bright heavenly land are not seen here any more. When they leave the body here, as Elijah left his mantle, they go where God is, and we cannot see them nor can we see him until we go too. Elisha was very brave, and he went about his work and God gave to him many friends. He was a minister who went about helping people, and once a good woman fixed up a little room just all for him, that he might call it his and go to it whenever he wanted to. Let us read about it. [Read 2 Kings 4. 8-11.]

OUTLINE.

The lesson story has abundant material for the six days' talks with appropriate handwork to fix the impression on the memory. As much may be taken on Sunday as the teacher can find time to use. Give different suggestion topics and Elisha's grief when he forgot himself and tore his clothes. His brave spirit, his industry, all are suggestive, also the sympathy of friends who tried to find the lost one. The knowledge Elisha had that the one who had gone would not return, and the lesson of Christian hospitality shown by loving hands in fixing up the little room where God's servant might rest will teach a lesson of care for others. Elisha accepted the offering of a loving friend and slept in the little room.

NATURE TOPICS. Take one or more suggested by the lesson. The fifty men thought the good man was upon a mountain or in some valley. Either topic is of much interest. While the men were away Elisha waited in pretty Jericho, but they came back without the one he loved.

HAND WORK. There are suggestions in "bread," "the chamber," "bed," "table," "stove," and "candlestick." These may be pictured by drawings or by use of materials of Fröbel's Gifts.

SCIENCE AT HOME WITH THE MOTHER. The talks may be of ministry to friends who came to the home. The unselfish spirit of entertainment for others and ministry to their welfare should be fostered in very small children. This is when service for others begins—in the home. A spirit of trustfulness may be cherished within the child's mind and heart if he be led to think that those who go away to the heavenly land become more like our Father than they could here, or than we can. By searching we cannot find them any more than the fifty men could find Elijah, or than Job could. The children think of these deep and mysterious questions and they should be led to think of them most naturally and lovingly. Mrs. Browning reveals the thoughtful, searching child-spirit in the words:

"They say that God lives very high,
But if you look above the pines
You cannot see our God. And why?

"And if you dig down in the mines,
You never see him in the gold,
Though from him all that's glory shines.

"God is so good, he wears a fold
Of heaven and earth across his face—
Like secrets kept for love untold."

LESSON VIII. (August 21.)

NAAMAN HEALED. 2 Kings 5. 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT. "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved." Jer. 17. 14.

Primary Notes.



A very dirty little girl was playing one day in an alley with some children just as dirty and rude as she was, when she saw a lady coming down the street. It was the lady who had asked her to come to sewing school, and to Sunday school, and who had told her that she must try to keep her face and hands clean. As soon as she saw this lady coming she ran away, calling out, "I've got to wash my face! The preacher woman is coming!" She had found that

some one cared whether she was clean or dirty, and she did not want that one to find her with soiled face and hands. This lesson teaches a beautiful story about being clean. Do you want to hear it.

An unhappy general. Naaman was the name of the unhappy general. He was very rich. He wore expensive clothes. He had fine horses and chariots, and everybody honored him. Why was he unhappy? I will tell you. He had the most dreadful disease that was ever known. He was a leper! You know in the time of Jesus there were lepers, and he used to cure them. But he was the only Physician who could cure them! No doctor ever lived who could cure the disease of leprosy. It eats away the flesh, little by little. The fingers and toes drop off sometimes from a leper, and all the time he knows he can never be any better! Do you wonder that Naaman was unhappy?

A happy little girl. The happy little girl was in the same house as the unhappy rich man. She was a little Jewish slave girl, away from her home and friends, and with nothing to make her happy but the sweet truth she had hid away in her heart about God. She knew about the prophet Elisha, and perhaps she even knew him. It may be she knew the little boy whom he had brought back to life. Do you wonder why she was a slave? In the time of war she had been carried away to a strange land by the conquering army, and Naaman had taken her to his house to wait upon his wife. Some little girls in such a place would have thought so much about their own troubles that they would not have noticed other people's trouble. But this little girl pitied her unhappy master and wanted to help him. She knew that she could not cure him, but she believed that the prophet could, and so she told her mistress about Elisha. This was all she could do. She did her little part, and left God to do the rest. Do you wonder why we call this little slave girl happy? Because she knew the love and power of God, and was willing to do her part to make it known to others. A loving and obedient heart can never be really unhappy.

How to be cured. [Show the blackboard. Tell that the disease Naaman had is the outward sign of sin.] Leprosy grows little by little, just as sin does. First there is a little sore. The leper does not mind it much, but it grows larger and deeper all the time, and new sores begin to appear. That is the way with sin in the heart. At first it seems a very little thing to be naughty and disobedient, but the sin grows and grows, and by and by the sinner finds that he cannot stop being bad. No one but God can cure sin, just as no one but God can cure leprosy. [Print across the foun-

tain "Sin cured."] How can it be cured? [Read from the Bible Zech. 13. 1.] God knew how bad a thing sin would be, and so he made a cure for it, and he tells us about it in this book. But we have to do as Naaman had if we want to be cured. We have to go to the waters and wash. Some people feel as Naaman did—that they want to do some great thing, but they will always have to do just as God says if they are to be made clean from sin.

[Sing "What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus." Explain that by the blood of Jesus we mean the love and truth and forgiveness which he shed his blood to buy for us.]

Lessons for us. There are always lessons for us in all the stories of the Bible. This teaches us first to remember God, wherever we are, as this little slave girl did.

It teaches us, too, how dreadful a thing sin is, and how we must be willing to do anything to be rid of it.



Kindergarten Hints.

KINDERGARTEN DEPARTMENT. A Little Girl's Wish and What Came of It. 2 Kings 5. 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT. "And whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them likewise." Matt. 7. 12.

AIDS TO THE KINDERGARTEN. Holy Bible, 2 Kings 5; *Jewish History* (Stanley); *Daily Bible Illustrations* (Kitto); *Pleasures of Life* (Lubbock).

ATTENTION STORY.

A little girl who lived in a beautiful city heard of Elisha. She heard that he was good and that he went from one place to another helping people who were in trouble, and telling them of God, their loving heavenly Father. This little girl lived in the house of a great soldier, a captain who was serving the king. The name of the captain was Naaman, and though he had many soldiers in his company, and could tell them what to do, yet he was not well, and the little girl felt very sorry for him. She served the captain's wife, and was brought to her by soldiers who took her from her

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own home. One day she said to the captain's wife that she wished the captain was in her country with Elisha, because he would make him well. When Captain Naaman heard about that he asked his king to give him a letter to the king of Elisha's country, and he would go and ask what he should do to get well. He got the letter and went to the king, who became much displeased and did not know what to do for the sick captain. Elisha heard about it and sent word to Naaman that he might wash in the river seven times and he would be clean and well. Naaman had come with chariot and horses and many presents for Elisha, and he was disappointed that such a little thing could cure him. He wanted to have a great fuss and take medicine or do something hard and strange. But he did just as he was told, though he was so surprised, and he was clean and well at once. Then he was very glad and very happy, and he wished to give presents to Elisha. We will read about it here. Elisha did not care for the presents, and he wished Naaman to know that it was God who made him well. [Read 2 Kings 5, 1-14.]

OUTLINE.

The topics for thought suggested by this narrative are numerous. The kingdom, the city, and the home were touched by the little loving child who tried to help others. She wished good to come to the great soldier, and her spirit of helpfulness brought good to others by her wish spoken at the right time. Show how we all need each other. The spirit of the Golden Rule appeals to each child, and if this Golden Text is repeated by the children and talked over with them, they will get somewhat of its meaning. The little girl did what she would like to have done for her if she were not well and needed help.

A nature topic of which the children never tire is the horse. It comes naturally in the lesson today. Naaman had horses. Tell the children of different horses mentioned in the Bible—the gray, red, white, and black (Zech. 1, 8; Rev. 6, 5, 12; James 3, 3). Talk of the uses of the horse and of his strength, speed, beauty, and kindness; also of his intelligence.

HAND WORK. The children may picture chariots with sticks and rings, and they may build flat-roofed houses with their Gift blocks.

SCIENCE AT HOME WITH THE MOTHER. The lesson may be of the service and influence of children. The blessedness of helping others may be shown to the little minds. If some one in the home has a heavy heart or a troubled mind, the little child may be a comfort, a joy, and a peacemaker. A sick or tired body of a dear one may be soothed by the touch and even the smile of the child in the home. The strong, helpful, sympathetic little maid is only one child in many thousands of children who have loving hearts and tender thoughts for others. All over this big world are little hands reaching out to help people and little hearts strong and full of love for others.

LESSON IX. (August 28.)

ELISHA AT DOTHAN. 2 Kings 6, 8-18.

GOLDEN TEXT. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." Psalm 34, 7.

Primary Notes.



Two little boys were talking of what they would do after school. One wanted to go swimming. The other said he could not go, because his mamma said he must come home as soon as school closed. "We can go a little while, and she will never know it," the first said. "My mother always knows when I have been naughty," said Willie. "She has such good eyes!" God always can see where we are, and what we are doing. His "is the eye which never sleeps." How careful we should be to do only the things which please this great God!

The king of Syria. [Point out Syria on the map, and tell that the king of this country was now at war with Israel. Explain that when Naaman was healed the kings of the two countries were at peace with one another. But in the old times it was very common for nations to fight with each other, for then Jesus had not come to teach people to be kind and good. Make it clear that the Syrians did not know and believe in the God of the Israelites.]

The prophet of Israel. What was his name? Yes, it was the same Elisha who raised the little boy at Shunem to life and who healed Naaman. He was the prophet of the Lord, and that is why he could do such wonderful works. God showed him many things which other people could not see. God can show his own children things now which common eyes cannot see. He let Elisha see just what the king of Syria was planning to do, so that he might tell his own king, and save him from the power of the heathen king. Do you wonder that the king of Syria wanted to take Elisha prisoner? Perhaps he thought that he could get Elisha to help him.

God cares for his people. Do you see this little city on the map? It was one of the cities of Israel, and lay on the side of a mountain. Elisha and his servant were in this city, and the king of Syria knew they were there. What do you think he would do? He sent a large army to take them. The army came in the night, and drew up all around the city, so that no one could go in or come out. There were a great many chariots and horses, besides the soldiers,

and it all looked very dreadful. Early in the morning, when Elisha's servant looked out, he saw the terrible sight. He knew the soldiers had come to take Elisha, and he ran quickly to tell his master that the city was surrounded, and that there was no way to escape—they were caught in a trap!

The prophet was not afraid. He knew that God was stronger than the whole Syrian army, and he told his servant not to fear. He said there were more on their side than against them. How strange that sounded to the servant, who knew there were no soldiers in Dothan, or any that were likely to come! Do you wonder what Elisha meant? He meant that the angels were all around them, and so nothing could harm them. [Drill on the Golden Text, and explain that we cannot see the angels of God with the eyes of the body, but God can open our spirit eyes to see them.]

Elisha had the eyes of his spirit open, and so he could see what his servant could not. But he prayed that God would open his servant's eyes, and he did. Then how different everything looked! The whole mountain was full of angels! To Elisha's servant they looked like horses and chariots of fire. When he saw them he was no longer afraid, for now he felt sure that the great God would take care of his people.

God cares for me. [Have a large circle drawn on the board, and a much smaller one inside it. Print, as you talk, "My heavenly Father cares," and tell that he loves and cares for the whole great world which he has made. Tell of his love and care for the nations of the earth. Speak of the way he puts down one and sets up another, and show that he is trying to teach all to know



and love him. Finish the story, and print in the small circle "For me," and show that God's love and care for a little child are just as great as for a king.] What each child needs is to get into the safe place of love and trust. Are you there?

Kindergarten Hints.

KINDERGARTEN DEPARTMENT. The Good Man's Message. 2 Kings 6. 13-16, 22, 23.

GOLDEN TEXT. "Fear not." 2 Kings 6. 16.

AIDS TO THE KINDERGARTNER. Holy Bible, Josh. 1; *Wilhelm Meister Goethe* (Carlyle's translation), vol. iii, "No religion that grounds itself on fear," etc.

ATTENTION STORY.

Elisha helped everybody he could, wherever he was, and he tried to show all the people that they might be loving to each other, and loving toward God the Father, who cared for all his children. After the captain was well the king of his country quarreled with the king of Elisha's country. The people who loved God and who wanted peace were sorry to have quarrels, and some of them were afraid. The king thought he would have his soldiers find Elisha and take him to the place he told them, and with the soldiers he sent many horses and chariots. One morning when Elisha awoke his servant said to him, "How shall we do?" for they saw the crowds of people all about the city. This is what the good Elisha answered. [Read 2 Kings 6. 16.] Only think! "Fear not!" was his message. That is the same message our Father has given us many times in this book. Is it not a beautiful message? Were you ever frightened and some one tried to comfort you? Did some loving voice, perhaps your mother's voice, say, "Don't be afraid?" Mothers say that often to their little children, and One who loves us more than mothers can say, "Fear not!" Jesus said to his disciples many, many times, "Fear not!" I think he would be sorry to have us say or do anything to make people afraid, for he was so careful and so kind always, and he "cared" how people felt. But another thing more wonderful than the message is the story of the way Elisha treated those who were unkind and cruel. He loved those who did not love him (his enemies), and he fed them, though he lived long before the tender Saviour preached the sermon where he said that this is just the right thing to do—give food and water to enemies. It must be that God's voice taught Elisha what was the right thing to do, because when the king said, "Shall we smite (strike) them?" this is what he answered. [Read 2 Kings 2. 22, 23.]

OUTLINE.

The two great thoughts of the lesson to-day are voiced in "Fear not!" and in the narrative of Elisha's treatment of enemies. Lead the children to connect this with the teaching of Jesus as found in Matt. 5. 44, 45.

This may be made most practical in a conversation with the children, for, though they have little friends and will remember the lesson talk on friendship, all too soon they have tiny foes and learn to be careless of the comfort, and the interests of other people. Between these two ideas another is mentioned, "They that be with us are more than they that be with them." Take the optimistic view of this in our time, for if we are followers of the good, and if we are seeking

the true and better things, we "are more" than those on the other side.

The children should know that there is more good than evil, more right than wrong, and more people ready to forgive and to feed than to strike. The spirit of Elisha is stronger than the spirit of the king who would strike. Many pretty and reassuring stories based upon "Fear not!" you may find. Among them Psalm 27. 1, of a king; Luke 12. 32, of the Good Shepherd. We are in the "flock" if we love the Shepherd and are following his voice.

The nature topic may be bread or water, for either is so full of fresh and multiplied thought it is enough for a week. In connection with the story of Jesus feeding the people you may talk of bread, and a wonder story of interest is that of God giving bread, "manna," to his people in the wilderness (Exod. 16. 12-25).

The modern bread-making is a sequence lesson of value, from the sowing of the wheat, or preparing the ground to receive it, until the loaf is upon the table. Talking of this, and showing how wonderfully God gives to us "our daily bread" as we pray, will be most fascinating to the children.

HAND WORK. Let the children carry out some idea of form as connected with water or bread. This may be in clay modeling of loaves, also folding paper into boats, with or without sails.

SCIENCE AT HOME WITH THE MOTHER. The talk may be of the treatment of others by the standard of the Golden Rule or the Sermon on the Mount. Teach the all-important lesson of returning good for evil, and of doing not as others do to us, but as we would like them to do. We cannot do this without God's help, but we will have all patience and gentleness if we learn of him as he has said we may when he asks us to "come" to him.

"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child;
Make me gentle as thou art,
Come and live within my heart."

Whisper Songs for August.

SIXTH LESSON.

Dear Father, if thine angels come
To call some holy prophet home,
To me the double portion give—
The heart to love, the mind to live.

SEVENTH LESSON.

In sorrow, Lord, I run to thee,
And tell thee all that troubles me;
Thy rod and staff, thy guiding hand,
Shall lead me through the desert land.

EIGHTH LESSON.

If sin bring sickness to my soul,
Lord Jesus, speak and make me whole;
And if thy word I disobey,
O wash the deadly stain away.

NINTH LESSON.

And when the hosts of evil rise
Like clouds between me and the skies,
Unseal mine eyes, that I may see
The angel hosts defending me.

Order of Service*

FOR THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.

Third Quarter.

DOXOLOGY.

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!"

Teacher. Praise ye the Lord.

Class. Praise God in his sanctuary.

T. Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.

C. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.

SINGING. "Little children, praise the Lord."

Teacher. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him.

Class. To all that call upon him in truth.

CONCERT RECITATION.

"Lord, we come before thee now,
At thy feet we humbly bow;
O do not our suit disdain;
Shall we seek thee, Lord, in vain?"

[PRAYER by teacher, closing with the Lord's Prayer in concert.]

Teacher. Why should we give to the Lord?

Class. (In concert.)

"We give thee but thine own,
Whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is thine alone,
A trust, O Lord, from thee."

T. Blessed is he that considereth the poor.

C. The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.

Offerings received, followed by consecration prayer.

BIRTHDAY OFFERING.

SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON.

REST EXERCISE.

I will raise my right hand,
Upon both feet I will stand;
I will turn quite around
Without making a sound,
Then raise left hand—so,
And twinkle fingers slow;
Both hands out I hold,
Then arms I will fold,
And quietly hear
What says teacher dear.

LESSON TAUGHT.

ECHO PRAYER.

Last words with the children, distribution of papers, etc.

CLOSING CONCERT PRAYER.

"Saviour, who thy flock art feeding
With the shepherd's kindest care,
All the feeble gently leading,
While the lambs thy bosom share;
Now these little ones receiving,
Fold them in thy gracious arm;
There we know, thy word believing,
Only there, secure from harm."

A Prayer.

"Lead me into the land of uprightness."

Lead me into the land, O Lord,
Of truth and uprightness,
Make me obedient to thy word,
So shall I dwell in peace.

Keep thou my feet lest I should stray,
Into some noisome road,
Of sin and folly far away
From trust and rest in God.

Go thou before me as a guide,
And I shall follow thee,
Into green pastures and abide
Beneath love's olive tree.

In the old paths help me to stand,
When in perplexity,
I cannot see thy guiding hand,
Enquiring, Lord, for thee.

When doubt and fear would cause dismay,
And drive me to despair,
Chase thou all mist and gloom away,
In answer to my prayer.

And joyfully up Zion's hill
I'll climb towards thine abode,
Thy precepts evermore fulfil,
If thou wilt be my God.

So shall I live the Lord to bless,
His name to praise always,
And clothed with robes of righteousness,
Press toward the perfect day.

—Rev. J. Laycock.

Gladstone, Man.

A Doctrinal Milestone.

BY REV. DR. ROSE.

A doctrinal milestone has in our judgment been recently passed in the history of Canadian Methodism. The Methodist Church believes in instructing the youth committed to her care in the doctrines of Christianity, and more particularly in those doctrines peculiar to the religious denomination of which they are members. The church has sought

to do this by means of her catechisms, the ancient and well-trying method of question and answer. Within the last few weeks a new catechism has been issued. Its publication has been accompanied by no sound of denominational trumpets. It has almost stolen its way into the great world of theological conflict, and yet we venture the opinion that the issue of a new catechism for the young people of Methodism marks an epoch in the life of that body.

This new catechism is a somewhat composite production. It is not the work of any one man, but rather represents the consensus of the opinion and convictions of the average teachers of the Methodist body in this country. This gives it a larger value than it could otherwise possess, as indicative of the denominational view of the doctrines which the catechism treats.

Coming to an examination of the catechism itself, one is first of all impressed with its brevity and great simplicity. Many of the old definitions are retained, but not a few questions are omitted, to the decided advantage of the revision. Less attempt is made, than in the former catechisms, to teach everything. Larger liberty in reference to things indifferent is implied.

The new catechism marks an advance and stands for more than at first sight appears. We welcome it as the herald of better things to come.—Montreal Witness.

Home Department at Mitchell,

We are pleased to receive from Mr. F. B. Holtby, superintendent of the Methodist Sunday-school at Mitchell, a report of their Home Department for its second year, which indicates progress and success. Let us have similar information from others.

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| Number on roll April 1, 1897..... | 223 |
| Number of removals | 7 |
| Number of deaths | 2 |
| Number who gave up the study.... | 9 |
| Number who united with the school | 5 23 |
| | 205 |
| Number of new members | 54 |
| Total on roll April 1, 1898 | 259 |
| Total collections for the year..... | \$37.49 |

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